

Special Issue



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Guest Editors: *Christopher Coenen, Wolfgang Hofkirchner, José María Díaz Nafria*

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New ICTs and Social Media: Revolution, Counter-Revolution and Social Change

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Editorial: On IRIE Vol. 18

The internet is a revolution – there is no doubt and no discussion about it anymore. But is it also a revolution of a second order: a (digital) revolution that causes or at least fuels a (real world) revolution? Gutenberg's technique newly invented in the beginning of the 15th century did so. The revolutionary ability to print books instead of copying them by hand potentiated about a hundred years later one of Martin Luther's revolutionary basic ideas: the concept of 'sola scriptura' – superordinating the (personal) reading of the fundamental texts of Christianity over the magisterium ecclesiae exclusively executed by the Christian authorities of these days. In fact, the driving idea of this issue in a nutshell was and is the question: What could be the revolutionary concept in analogy to the sola scriptura that might be propelled to a break through by the revolutionary abilities of the internet (in probably less than a hundred years though).

This issue does not give a simple and ultimate answer to this question (like we can do with Gutenberg in retrospect). But it gives some very appropriate suggestions and inspiring approaches. ICTs appear to enable or at least support certain new forms of political organizations (thematically oriented, loosely coupled, quickly gathered, and allowing for anonymous affiliation). They appear to be very different to "classical" forms of political organization and are used for actions targeted not only at national and international but also at local levels. Do ICTs therefore facilitate an increase in revolutionary acts, revolts or acts of resistance as political measures? On the other hand, does this ease of use in activist contexts deprave the revolutionary act to clicking an 'I like it' button? Is cursoriness the prize political movements heavily relying on the internet have to pay for their speed of constitution in and through the net?

Against the backdrop of the discussions that have taken place since the 1990s, the impacts, shortcomings and potentials of the use of new ICTs and social media by political activists must be further scrutinized. Besides a variety of political uses in Africa, Arabia, Asia and Latin America, the recent developments in Europe and North America also justify a closer look at the role of ICTs in movements aimed at bringing about radical social change. The revolts in Greece, the indignant movement in Spain and Occupy Wall Street all developed as a reaction to political and economic measures and policies that were more typical of developing countries in previous decades; this allows for interesting comparisons, for example with regard to differences between movements which claim and those which defend rights.

One if not ground yet record breaking implication we can state unerringly: These relevant and seminal questions have provoked and gathered more articles in a single IRIE issue than any other subject before. Or maybe it was the phenomenal work of our guest editors, their passion for the subject, their expertise in the field and/or their scientific network they contributed to this outstanding issue.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to Christopher Coenen, Wolfgang Hofkirchner and José María Díaz Nafría for making this distinguished edition possible and hope that it will tie in with your scientific work to provide more advanced answers to the questions driving their promising research regarding the relationship of ICTs, revolution, counter-revolution and social change.

Sincerely yours,

the editors.

Christopher Coenen, Wolfgang Hofkirchner, José María Díaz Nafria:

New ICTs and Social Media in Political Protest and Social Change

The use of the Internet and new media for political activism has been researched and debated on since the 1990s. In countries under authoritarian rule in particular, the new public sphere and scope for political organisation provided by the Internet and social media offer great potential for political and cultural democratisation and for resistance against authoritarian rule. While it is widely agreed that this potential exists, there are warnings not to get caught up in the spirit of early Internet euphoria and hope that the dissemination of new



A citizen uses his mobile phone to capture events during a demonstration on June 22nd 2012 in Tehran, Iran (source: wpmu.mah.se)

media will make democratic political and cultural change happen by virtue of some sort of technological determinism. During the 'Arab Spring', for example, some people argued that we are witnessing a new form of social and political revolution in which social media play a crucial role. Others have criticised this point of view as being exaggerated or a narrowly Western or Eurocentric perspective. The discussions often overlook the fact that the Internet and new media are not only repressed by authoritarian regimes but are also used for counter-revolutionary and anti-democratic purposes by such regimes or by pro-authoritarian social movements of various shades. Furthermore, the obstacles to realising participatory and emancipatory potentials in democratic countries are still often overlooked or inadequately dealt with in academic literature.

Against this backdrop, the special issue explores the complex interplay of old and new forms of political protest that take advantage of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and, more broadly, the roles played by the latter in social movements and social change. ICTs appear to enable or at least support new forms of political organisation, yet they are at the same time embedded in and shaped by existing social structures and power relations. Besides a variety of political uses of new ICTs and social media in 'developing countries', recent developments in Europe and North America also justify a closer look at the role of ICTs in movements aimed at bringing about radical social change. The indignant movement in Spain and Occupy Wall Street, for example, developed as a backlash to political and economic measures and policies that were more typical of developing countries in previous decades.

What role have new ICTs and social media actually played in such movements? Do new ICTs and social media allow for the development of political community building, thereby helping movements to grow, consolidate and proliferate, or do they not make any (significant) difference? What relationships exist between the use of new ICTs and social media on the one hand, and street demonstrations and other traditional expressions of social revolt and political protest on the other? Does their use go hand in hand with new, less hierarchical forms of political activism and, if so, what are the strengths and weaknesses of these new forms? How can new ICTs support human rights and anti-authoritarian social change, and what dangers are conceivable in this regard, also with respect to the shaping and use of new ICTs and social media by governments and other key players in the global 'information society'? Have these technologies and media themselves become a new sphere of political conflict and socio-cultural change? And how does their pervasive character in modern societies influence global politics and local socio-political movements?

It is these and other such questions that are discussed in the contributions to this special issue. It therefore addresses a wide variety of political protests and social movements in different parts of the world, while at the

same time providing more general analyses of the current relevance of new ICTs and social media, including reflections on core features of our global 'network society' (Manuel Castells).

Kay *Mathiesen* argues that there is a right to Internet access that can be derived from the right to communicate. States should guarantee access to the Internet. She holds that Google and Facebook – though often

seen as core elements of an "imperialistic Internet" – can be used by people in developing and least developed countries for communicating in a way that reflects their local, national and regional cultural needs and is adapted to the respective contexts.



During the Egyptian protests, the government shut down the entire Internet for almost five days (Interact SpA)

Some governments, however, disconnect "their" digital networks from the rest of the world in an attempt to limit communication by blocking domain names, disabling telephone networks and at times even trying to isolate an entire country from the Internet. Ulrik *Franke* discusses two primary self-professed reasons for such state censorship of the Internet, namely (i) protecting political authority and (ii) preserving the public good. Assessing the normative force of these reasons from the viewpoint of rights-based theories and utilitarianism, Franke concludes

that neither rights-based theories nor utilitarianism in general support the disconnection of digital networks to achieve these aims. This conclusion gains additional substance as it is supported by two normally opposing normative theories.

Naturally, the roles played by new ICTs and social media also deserve attention in crisis situations that do not involve censorship by authoritarian states. In his article on the public's use of social media in Japan in response to the TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company) Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster, Kenji *Saito* provides us with a personal account of how such media were used in the aftermath of the disaster by citizens and various societal actors (such as corporate representatives and public officials). In a moving personal account, he reveals how reactions by citizens included not only defiance aimed at protecting children, but also protests against the government's nuclear policies. A decline in the influence of mass media is apparent during the course of the events. Saito argues, however, that multiple levels of divides have prevented people from progressing beyond criticism to achieve effective activism.

The political conflicts that took place in South Korea in the late 2000s represent another example – in the same region of the world – of changes accompanying the rise of new ICTs and social media and involving more players than the state and the citizens. Dong Hyun *Song* provides us with a thoughtful and detailed analysis of the struggle between the Korean government, web portals and Internet users that emerged in the aftermath of the 2008 Candlelight protests, also reflecting the wider evolution of cyberspace in Korean society. He concludes that the distrust of power holders among Korean internet users and their traversal to global providers had a great impact on the reconfiguration and expansion of Korean cyberspace, resulting in global web service providers becoming successfully established in several sectors of the Korean market. The Korean web portals then changed their attitude: having previously been submissive to the state, they became champions of the freedom of speech of their users. In response, the Korean government changed its regulatory framework because of its inability to control global web service providers and as a result of complaints from local corporations about neutrality. While one could argue that the move to global service providers resulted in a significant destabilisation of dominant power relations in Korean cyberspace, Korean internet users also appear to have seamlessly integrated global web services into the Korean cyberspace constellation.

In a provocatively titled article, Emad *Khazraee* and Kristene *Unsworth* propose that the relationship between new ICTs and social movements should be examined from a socio-technical perspective. They argue that Actor-Network Theory (ANT) can help us better understand the relationship between social media and social movements and that the role new ICTs play in social movements and social change is neither linear nor constant over time. Following this approach in an exploratory analysis of the use of Facebook among Iranians, Khazraee and Unsworth conclude that social media can have counter-effects in the mid-stage of a social movement development by serving as a pressure valve to relieve some of the frustration built up by various societally imposed disappointments and to give vent to the steam that may drive social change. In their opinion, there is more to the situation than the technical capability afforded by the use of technology: it is also important to consider the political and historical contexts of the action.



A group of people protest against the military coup at Siam Square Thailand, Bangkok (CC, <http://gnarlykitty.blogspot.com>)

Melanie *Radue* also contests the libertarian conviction that the Internet stimulates political liberalisation and democratisation *per se*. It depends on the context, she says, emphasising that the Internet is only a means of organising a movement that must eventually act in the real world rather than solely in the virtual one. She underpins her argumentation by discussing the case of the Bersih social movement in Malaysia. According to her analysis, the main role of the Internet was to help organise the movement and to globally spread information. It was not the Internet that gave rise to the movement's success, however, but a long history of different developments and political changes, coupled with collective action on the part of the country's people as well as unintended incidents and consequences.

Examining the use of Facebook within the Egyptian 6th of April Youth Movement based on a content analysis of the movement's Facebook page, Manaf *Bashir* questions the notion of the horizontality of Internet activism and the idea that the advent of social media applications has fundamentally affected the relevance of leadership, organisation and coordination for social movements. His media content analysis shows that the leadership and ordinary participants of the movement used similar cause, motivational and consequence frames, but that the leadership used these frames more frequently than the participants and had a greater influence than the participants in the overall framing of the 6th of April Youth Movement. The findings suggest that while some social movement dynamics have changed due to the use of new ICTs and what they offer to the general participants, social movement activism, in terms of framing, primarily remains a function of its leadership.

Based on an analysis of a sample of more than 250 articles about protests and social mobilisation in three Egyptian English-language newspapers, Luis Fernando *Baron* argues that the Egyptian 'Arab Spring' of January 2011 was more than a 'Facebook revolution', emphasising the relevance of socio-political contexts. He argues, however, that social media (i) provided alternative mechanisms for political expression and organisation and (ii) decisively contributed to the genesis and consolidation of the movement, to the establishment of youth political identities, and to the movement's global visibility. His findings suggest that the combination of "bits and streets" amplified not only the movement's mobilisation but the degree of opposition experienced by the Egyptian regime.

In her article, Christina *Schachtner* summarises the results of a project that started before the 'Arab Spring'. She observed and analysed the formation of a transnational public sphere in the Middle East since the mid-2000s. With reference to a conceptualisation by Nancy Fraser, Schachtner identifies conditions that are necessary for digital media to play a political role, namely normative legitimacy and efficiency of the communicative authority of digital arenas. According to her analysis, digital media are not only means to organise 'offline' political protests but can already serve as spaces of reflection and dialogue in the run-up to such protests.

During the course of the protests, the results of the reflection and dialogue processes become globally visible – again enhanced by new ICTs – and help shape actions in urban public spaces. The ‘real life’ impacts of communication in digital media depend on action outside the Internet, but this communication can prepare the ground for street protests and enhance their efficiency and global visibility.

Enrique *Díez Gutiérrez* analyses the potential role played by ICTs in the development of direct democratic participation, referring to a number of initiatives and widespread practices in recent years. Pointing out the relevance of such instances of social and political protest as the numerous worker strikes in Egypt at the end of the 2000s, he demystifies the hype around the use of social media in social movements and political protests.



A protester holding a placard in Tahrir Square referring to Facebook

New ICTs and social media can serve emancipatory goals, but can also contribute to the creation of new and to the stabilisation of existing constellations of dominance.

Drawing attention again to the recent political protests in Egypt, *Mohammad Abdelhamid* offers an innovative analysis of graffiti as a special means of self-expression mirrored in the digital sphere. In his essay, he discusses five impressive wall writings taken from the most visited and commented-on Facebook page concerning the Egyptian Revolution. Referring to John Dewey, *Abdelhamid* argues that we have witnessed the birth of new, active publics in Egypt who are longing for political freedom. Social media give graffiti an entirely new meaning, transforming the local nature of the product into a message spread all over the world. Taking into account the difficulties associated with

analysing these ‘messages’ and their contexts, he characterises these ‘transgressive objects’ as means of anonymous self-expression, at once marginal and globally present.

Considering the global context of recent protests and youth activism and basing her statements on an analysis of the impacts and limits of political use of new ICTs and social media, *Natalia Garrido* provides us with an examination of developments in Argentina. Her article shows that a new form of political agency is emerging on the basis of Internet and social media use, but also that this agency exhibits significant limits with respect to genuine democratic participation. She discusses whether the deliberation spaces created in the new socio-technical environments really fulfil the requirements of democratic deliberation and are able to represent general interests, emphasising the relevance of the social and political contexts of such new digital environments which are highly popular among young people.

Examining the potential of new ICTs and social media to support social movements and emancipatory processes, *Julian Marcelo* provides an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) connected with their use, focusing on the recent 15M movement in Spain. He regards the different types of social networks as specific socio-technological environments. Special attention is given to the question of whether these environments help create new systems of political, social, economic and cultural relations, and what types of organisational structure are appropriate to these endeavours. In the concluding sections of his article, *Marcelo* discusses the results of his analysis with respect to the tensions between emancipatory processes, market forces and technocratic political stances.

Also referring to the recent developments in Spain, Bruno *Castillejo* and Dimitrina J. *Semova* argue that a new kind of political agency is in fact emerging. Based on a quantitative and qualitative analysis, they examine how social media were used in the Spanish national elections of 20 November 2011. In their view, the new agency exhibits a kind of collective intelligence that traditional electoral campaigning techniques are inappropriate to deal with. These elections were the first in which the major political parties used social media in their campaigns; however, small parties that achieved unexpectedly good election results also won in this field. *Castillejo* and *Semova* also discuss how members of the 15M movements used social media to attack the two major political parties, making use of a flawed online communication strategy of these parties.

In their essay, James *Anderson*, Kiran *Bharthapudi* and Hao *Cao* resort to the Foucauldian concept of "heterotopia" to analyse the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement, arguing that the movement has altered processes of collective consciousness in a world shaped by neoliberalism and that these processes prefigure the emergence of another world. In this context, new ICTs and social media can help promote cooperative autonomy and strengthen these processes. The authors argue that the networked heterotopia wherein OWS discourses perform "counterpower" should be viewed as fertile ground for igniting innate alternative praxis suppressed by normative neoliberal conceptions.



Protester with a Guy Fawkes mask in the iDemocracia Real Ya! (True Democracy Right Now!), in Puerta del Sol, Madrid, May 17, 2011. The banner hashtag is both a detournement of the Monty Python joke "Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition!" and a reference to the decisive role played by Twitter and other social networks (Wikimedia Commons)



Placard of Occupy Wallstreet. September

In his article, Dylan E. *Wittkower* uses an Arendtian framework in order to argue that we can interpret distinctive and effective elements of the OWS movements as forms of non-action related to prior strategies of non-violence, the propaganda of the deed, and coalitions of affinity rather than identity. In his view, this interpretation allows us to see that, while the use of social media in the movement does not offer the same capacities for building and maintaining power as physical occupation does, and while an online community clearly cannot be a substitute for physical community in many relevant and consequential ways, Facebook does nonetheless provide a platform well-suited to maintaining power through these distinctive forms of non-action.

In a reconstruction of the complexity of economy in our contemporary societies, Peter *Fleissner* shows the essential openness of our future. Current developments can either lead to new forms of dominance being built on existing power structures or can open up pathways to social and environmental sustainability on a global scale. Following the stepwise method of Karl Marx, but adapting it to the present situation, three additional layers are re-constructed: finance capital, the state and the information society. On this basis, *Fleissner* reflects on crucial contributions and specific opportunities offered by new ICTs to restore and strengthen "mutuality", understood as an essential element of a future society built not on competition but on cooperation.

In his article, Tomasso *Gravante* assesses the relevance of net-activism practices in the citizen protests of Oaxaca (Mexico) in 2006 on the basis of his ethnographic research in this region. Gravante focuses on the emotive aspects and motivations of collective actions and on the question of how new ICTs and media are linked to citizen empowerment. The re-appropriation of new ICTs took place in a bottom-up process that created a socio-political identity. In order to adequately understand such processes it is crucial to fully take into account the emotive elements of the construction of autonomous and emancipatory subjectivity.

With a special focus on Spain, but arguing on a general level, Josep Maria *Reniu* analyses how the use of new ICTs is and should be managed by political institutions. He warns that top-down approaches to fostering democratic participation by means of new ICTs are insufficient and can even be counter-productive. Reniu concludes that these approaches can gravely hamper civic participation and that new ICTs cannot be a substitute for 'real life' civic participation due to 'digital divides' and other reasons. E-democracy tools should therefore be introduced in a gradual manner and only as a complementary means of civic participation, targeting for example young people. They do not provide technological fixes to social and political problems.

Following his critique of new ICTs from an environmental perspective, Robert *Rattle* analyses their political use in Canada in his article. In his view, the Canadian federal government has taken a pro-authoritarian stance in this context. While many positive applications of new ICTs exist that could promote community empowerment, they can also be used to suppress democracy, foster social exclusion and stimulate wealth inequalities even in an established democracy such as the Canadian one. New ICTs serve all social actors but favour those who have the greatest capacities to project their ideologies and values, privileging and reinforcing existing power structures.



Placard of Oaxaca Popular Assembly (2008):
"They shall not pass! Oaxaca resists until victory!
Solidarity without Frontiers!"

In her contribution to the special issue, Natalia *Grincheva* draws attention to the field of digital diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy implies the use of the art of diplomacy in promoting culture, resulting in a greater awareness of each other's cultural backgrounds, but it has also served in many historical examples as a powerful tool of cultural propaganda and manipulation. With the advance of new ICTs, cultural diplomacy is increasingly acquiring new communicative dimensions. Grincheva elaborates on the theoretical underpinnings of digital diplomacy by employing the conceptual framework of collective individuation and psychotechnologies developed by Bernard Stiegler and arrives at an ambivalent conclusion: digital diplomacy can reinforce but can also help to critically engage with existing global power inequalities.

Interrelations of cultural and political aspects of the global spread of new ICTs are also discussed in an article by Gwyneth *Sutherland*. Examining the foreign policy implications of what she sees as a pervasive cultural bias of the global information society, Sutherland argues that this bias shifts power away from the populations using the technology and towards the (mainly North American and European) actors controlling the programs and codes. The potential use of these technologies for participatory actions is therefore hampered by the strong global position of the creators of new ICTs.

The special issue concludes with an article by Rainer *Zimmermann* which provides an integral perspective of social action focusing on the concept of 'networks'. Discussing first its applications with regard to physical and biological systems, he then extends his approach to include social action, thereby also shedding light on the field of new ICTs, in which this notion is of paramount importance. Zimmermann proposes revitalising the classical concept of *kalokagathía* which brings together aesthetic and ethical aspects of daily life and invites

readers to look for practical examples, for instance in intercultural discourse, as well as for possible uses of such an integral network perspective in analysing the role played by the new ICTs in social change.

Zimmermann's article is based on a speech he delivered at the international event "Social networks: from indignation to change (ethical, political and aesthetical aspects)" in the summer of 2012; the event liaised with the 15M movement in Spain and took place at the University of León, in cooperation with the Munich University of Applied Sciences, BITrum Research Group, the International Center for Information Ethics (ICIE) and the European Project myUniversity (which analyses the development of e-democracy at European universities). The aesthetic dimension of the approach chosen for this event which was inspired by Zimmermann's perspective, entailed an artwork exhibition of the Spanish feminist emancipation movement since the 1960s and a series of classical music concerts with themes related to civic emancipation, such as Giuseppe Verdi's *Nabucco*. The articles by Díez Gutiérrez, Marcelo and Fleissner are also based on their contributions to this event. More-



Placard of the international event on "Social Networks: from Indignation to change", September 2012, León, Spain

over, the articles by Díez Gutiérrez and Reniu are based on discussions held during a workshop that took place at the University of León in December 2012 within the context of the myUniversity project.

All other contributions to this special issue were submitted in response to our call for papers. The number of submissions was much higher than expected, which also confirms the topicality and relevance of the questions that were raised in the call.

Although a number of submissions had to be rejected due to the results of the peer-review process, the articles reflect the thematic diversity that becomes evident when analysing political uses of new ICTs and social media. The contributions to this special issue make it clear once again that such uses ought to be analysed within their specific social, political, economic and cultural contexts. Having become a mature and major field of research, studies of the roles of new ICTs in

political protests and social movements nowadays are very often based on thorough empirical research, yet the field still requires comprehensive and innovative theoretical analyses that take into account the complexity of the dynamic relationships between digital communication and social change. As a matter of fact, such analyses, and indeed empirical case studies, will always reflect the political antagonisms of our present world. Hopes that the global situation will improve and that problems will be solved at local levels are not only expressed within the new socio-technical environments; these digital arenas and the technologies on which they are based will also continue to be seen as drivers of social change themselves. Information ethics and media studies in general will therefore continue to have to avoid feeding the hype surrounding new ICTs and social media by contextualising their political uses, while at the same time not ignoring the pervasive character of these technologies and media – they thus need to be open to expertise from a wide variety of disciplines.

Kay Mathiesen:

The Human Right to Internet Access: A Philosophical Defense

Abstract:

The United Nations has suggested that access to the Internet is a human right. In this paper, I defend the U.N.'s position against a number of challenges. First, I show that Vinton Cerf's recent rejection of the human right to the Internet is based on a misunderstanding of the nature and structure of human rights. Second, I argue that the Internet enables the right to communicate, which is a linchpin right, and, thus, states have a duty to see to it that citizens have access to Internet technology. Third, I argue that concerns that the Internet can be used to engage in oppression and imperialism do not show that there is not a human right to it. Rather, it shows that the right to the Internet must be understood as part of a larger system of human rights.

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- Relevant Publications:
 - *What is Information Ethics?*, *Computers and Society* 32, No. 8 (2004).
 - *Censorship and Access to Information*, *Handbook of Computer and Information Ethics*. Kenneth E. Himma and Herman T. Tavani Editors. John Wiley and Sons: New York, 2008: 573-88.
 - *A Defense of Native American's Rights over their Traditional Cultural Expressions*, *The American Archivist* 75, no. 2 (2012): 456-481.

On May 16, 2011 Frank La Rue, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur for promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, submitted a report to the UN stating,

"Given that the Internet has become an indispensable tool for realizing a range of human rights, combating inequality, and accelerating development and human progress, ensuring universal access to the Internet should be a priority for all States. Each State should thus develop a concrete and effective policy, in consultation with individuals from all sections of society, including the private sector and relevant Government ministries, to make the Internet widely available, accessible and affordable to all segments of population"¹ (La Rue 2011, 22).

While the report never directly states that access to the Internet² is itself a human right, that is the clear implication of La Rue's report and many commentators have so characterized its conclusions (see e.g., Cerf 2012; Estes 2011).³

This statement coming from a United Nations official is significant for both normative ethics and policy. From the perspective of normative ethics La Rue makes a powerful case for a human right to a new information technology. His argument is something that ethicists and moral philosophers should seriously engage with. From the perspective of policy, the UN has a number of mechanisms to shape the priorities, policies, and behavior of states and other international actors, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and corporations.

In sections 1-4 of this paper I discuss La Rue's case for the right to Internet access and I appeal to recent work in human rights theory to defend this view against objections, most notably those recently made by Vinton Cerf. I argue that, given the importance of the human right to communicate and the increasingly important role of the Internet in facilitating communication, states have duties to avoid censorship and the to see to it that people have access to the necessary Internet technology.⁴ In the final section of the paper I complicate the argument by discussing the ways in which the Internet can harm human rights.

La Rue's Case for a Human Right to the Internet

La Rue's case for a human right to the Internet is extensive and detailed, but its basic outlines can be easily summarized. The Internet is growing—as of 2011 the total number of Internet users was over two billion. And, its users are increasingly global—between 2006 and 2011 the percentage of Internet users increased in the developing world from 44% to 62%. Furthermore, the Internet is not just another mass medium like the printing press, radio, or television.⁵ The social media enabled by Web 2.0, such as blogs, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, make the Internet a tool for a broad range of communicative interactions. It has allowed those whose voices would not have been heard in the past to gain a global audience.

According to La Rue, "by acting as a catalyst for individuals to exercise their right to freedom of opinion and

¹ La Rue, Frank: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, 22.

² The Internet has been described as "a vast global system of interconnected technical networks made up of heterogeneous information and communication technologies" and "a social and economic assemblage that allows diverse forms of communication, creativity, and cultural exchange..." (Kelty, Christopher M.: Internet). The Internet enables access to a number of applications, including those that enable world wide web and e-mail.

³ See e.g., Cerf, Vinton: Internet Access is Not a Human Right; Estes, Clark, The Case for (and Against) Internet as a Human Right.

⁴ States are not the only ones who have duties to respect the human right to the Internet. This human right also obligates other powerful actors such as NGO's and corporations, to respect people's right to access Internet content. In some cases, it may also obligate other states to provide some form of aid to assist countries with fewer resources so they can provide access to Internet technology to their citizens. However, to simplify the argument, I do not discuss these other duty holders here.

⁵ International Telecommunications Union: Measuring the Information Society 2011, 1.

expression, the Internet also facilitates the realization of a range of other human rights".⁶ It has been reported, for example, that use of online social media (such as Twitter and Facebook) by protestors played a significant role in Egyptian revolution.⁷ Indeed, the fact that many authoritarian states are so concerned to control citizens' access to the Internet indicates that they see it as a powerful medium for the expression and organization of dissent.⁸

La Rue states that the right to the Internet has two dimensions: "access to online content" and "the availability of the necessary infrastructure and information communication technologies, such as cables, modems, computers and software".⁹ ¹⁰ We can say, then, that the right to the Internet imposes on states both a negative duty (based on a liberty right) to not interfere with persons wishing to access on-line content and a positive duty (based on a welfare right) to see to it that people have access to the technology necessary to access that content.¹¹

A Word About Human Rights

United Nations documents ground human rights in human dignity. While inspiring, the concept of "human dignity" is also vague. A number of philosophers have suggested more detailed philosophical accounts of the nature of the nature and grounds of human rights. For the most part this essay avoids abstract theorizing about the nature of human rights.¹² Instead, I start from the relatively uncontroversial position that there are human rights and that the Universal Declaration and other UN documents generally do a good job of laying out what these rights are.¹³ My argument proceeds by showing that, if one accepts that we have the human rights listed in the UDHR, then one should accept that we have a human right to Internet access.

There are, nevertheless, a few basic premises about human rights that I will be appeal to in the argument which follows. First, human rights as I understand them are minimal or modest standards.¹⁴ They set a floor below which persons should not be allowed to fall. As Henry Shue puts it, human rights concern the "lower limits on tolerable human conduct" rather than "great aspirations and exalted ideals."¹⁵ As minimal standards they leave substantial room for democratic decision making within states—it is to be expected that there will be a large degree of variation in the civic and legal rights among states who all respect human rights. Second, I also follow Shue in characterizing human rights as protections against "standard threats" to fundamental human interests. This standard threat analysis allows us to focus human rights on those interests, choices,

⁶ La Rue, Frank: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, 7.

⁷ Ghonim, Wael: Revolution 2.0: The Power of the People is Greater than the People in Power: A Memoir; La Rue, Frank: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression.

⁸ See e.g., MacKinnon, Rebecca: Flatter world and thicker walls? Blogs, censorship and civic discourse in China and Reporters without Borders: Internet Enemies Report 2012 for a discussion of government attempts to control information flow over the Internet.

⁹ La Rue, Frank: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression. 4

¹⁰ I will simply call this "Internet technology" (this should be understood to extend to any technology used to access the Internet, including mobile phones). To say that people have a right to Internet technology does not mean to all possible technology, but to a reasonable baseline—there is insufficient space to specify what would constitute a baseline here.

¹¹ I agree with Henry Shue that the positive/negative duties formulation is deeply problematic, since liberty rights place positive duties on states to protect and enforce those rights (Shue, Henry: Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and U.S. Foreign Policy, 51). For this reason, the tripartite typology of duties (respect, protect, fulfill) preferred by the U.N. (Eide, Asbjørn: The right to food as a human right) is a preferable approach. Nevertheless, I use the positive/negative distinction here in order to simplify the argument.

¹² In this I am following the approach of Charles Beitz, who argues that a philosophical conception of human rights should conform to the current international practice of human rights (Beitz, Charles R.: *The Idea of Human Rights*).

¹³ This is not to say that the U.N. has been infallible (either in terms of the rights included or the rights excluded) or that certain rights are not the subject of debate. My own view, for instance, is that rights of authors and inventors to make money off of their works (UDHR Article 23), while it may be a useful legal right, should not be in the list of human rights.

¹⁴ Nickel, James: Human Rights.

¹⁵ Shue, Henry: Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and U.S. Foreign Policy (cited in Nickel 2007).

and capabilities that we have reason to believe are vulnerable to coercion or neglect by the state and other powerful actors. In this way, human rights are seen as grounded in our current experience and shaped by the needs of persons now.

Deriving the Right to the Internet

Vinton Cerf, one of the “founders of the internet,” argues in a recent *New York Times* op-ed piece that there is no human right to the Internet. According to Cerf, human rights “are not necessarily bound to any particular technology at any particular time,” because “technology is an enabler of rights, not a right itself.”¹⁶ Cerf is a well-known and powerful voice on issues of technology. If his arguments are accepted, people will be less likely to accept the idea that access to the Internet is a human right. Thus, it is important that his claims be countered. In this section I argue that we have a liberty right to express ourselves and access information on the Internet; in the following section I argue that we have a welfare right to have access to Internet technology.

Cerf is surely right that access to the Internet is not a *primary*¹⁷ human right. But, not all human rights are primary rights. Some rights are derived. According to rights theorist Carl Wellman, “Derived rights may be either more specific forms of some generic right, as the right to freedom of the press is a special case of the right to free speech, or auxiliary rights that serve to protect some primary right, as the right to habeas corpus serves to prevent a violation of the individual’s right to liberty”¹⁸ These more “specific” rights may change over time and depending on context; as James Griffin puts it, derived rights follow from primary rights “with increasing attention to circumstances.”¹⁹

Derived Rights: An Example

Consider, for instance, Wellman’s example of the right to a free press; it is derived from the rights of freedom of expression and access to information.²⁰ In United States, for example, the right to free expression and freedom of the press seem inextricably linked. Indeed, the First Amendment of the United States Constitution has the two rights within the same phrase (“Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press;..”). While today the phrase “freedom of the press” is used to mean the freedom of journalists to report the news, the phrase originally meant what it literally says—people should be able to use the printing press to spread their views without state interference.²¹ Thus, people had a right to be free to use a particular form of technology to communicate their views and others had the right to receive those printed communications. These rights placed a negative duty on the state to not interfere with these communications except under carefully specified circumstances (e.g., defamation, invasions of privacy, obscenity).

The right to use the press to spread one’s ideas without interference is not a timeless or primary right. It arose at a specific time in response to the spread of a specific technology. Societies in the past had no presses; even once printing presses existed, without widespread literacy they would not have been an effective means of promoting freedom of expression.²² Nevertheless, a free press has been (and still is to a large extent) essential for ensuring rights of free expression and access to information; thus, there is a human right to freedom of the press. If a state had strict controls over all newspapers and book publishing, we would rightly say that it is violating human rights. Suppose the government of such a state were to assert that, “We respect freedom

¹⁶ Cerf, Vinton: Internet Access is Not a Human Right.

¹⁷ Also called “basic” or “fundamental” rights.

¹⁸ Wellman, Carl: The Proliferation of Rights: Moral Progress Or Empty Rhetoric?, 191; cf. Griffin, James: On Human Rights, 49-50.

¹⁹ Griffin, James: On Human Rights, 49

²⁰ Griffin also cites this as an example of a derived right (Griffin, James: On Human Rights, 50).

²¹ Volokh, Eugene: Freedom of the Press as an Industry Or for the Press as a Technology?—from the Framing to Today.

²² Stephens, Mitchell: A History of News.

of speech and access to information. People don't have a "human right" to print and read newspapers and books. Those are just particular technological means to enable those rights." In other words, "We respect human rights, but we forbid people to engage in the concrete activities of exercising those rights"—such a claim would rightly be dismissed as absurd.

From Freedom of the Press to Freedom of the Internet

The Internet now is akin to the printing press in the period when the freedom to publish and distribute printed works began to be seen as a right. There has been an acceleration of so-called "network effects" (Katz and Shaprio 1994); the more people use the Internet, the more valuable a communication tool it becomes. Increasingly, people in many countries can *only* find the information they need, or communicate with those they need to contact, via the Internet. There are fewer newspapers; fewer people write letters; more government functions are on-line; there are fewer print sources providing information that people need. If freedom of the press is a human right, then so is "freedom of the Internet"—meaning the right to post and access content on-line without government interference. This is not to say that it is only insofar as the Internet is replacing the press that there is a human right to it. The Internet enables a whole range of communicative activities that are protected under the human right to expression and to information (UDHR Article 19) as well as the right to assembly (UDHR Article 21) and the right to culture (UDHR Article 27(1)). These communicative activities include (but are not limited to) the use of the Internet for person-to-person communication (via e.g., email, chat, and VOIP) and collective communication (via e.g., social networking sites, mircoblogs).

Communication as a Linchpin Right

So far, I have argued that there is a human right to freely publish and access content on-line. This liberty right obligates states to not censor Internet content.²³ One might argue that is as far as the argument *can* go; the right to the Internet derives from the rights of free expression and access to information, which are classic *liberty* rights. However, as I argue below, communication is so central to our ability to exercise our human rights, that, given the increasing importance of the Internet as a means of communication, access to it must be protected by a positive duty on the part of states to see to it people have meaningful access to Internet technology.²⁴

The Right to Communicate Supports other Human Rights

Using James Nickel's analysis of the relations of support between human rights, it can be shown that the ability to exercise the rights of expression and access to information (collectively, referred to as the "right to communicate"²⁵ promotes the realization of all other human rights.²⁶ Nickel delineates four ways that, "[r]especting and implementing one right can promote the realization of another right"²⁷ (Nickel 2008, 988):

- **Protect:** A supporting right can protect the supported right against "standard threats" to that right (e.g., the right to private property protects the right to privacy from the standard threat of arbitrary

²³ I follow the United Nations declarations which hold that restrictions on speech are only acceptable when (a) it is provided by public law and (b) is the least restrictive means to (1) "protect the rights and reputations of others" or (2) "to protect national security or of public order, of health or morals" (La Rue, Frank: *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression*, 8). "Censorship" refers to restrictions that do not meet these criteria. The notion of "censorship" here is wider than that used in, for example, U.S. constitutional law (which is to be expected given that, as discussed above, the civil rights within particular countries will be more extensive than what is required by human rights).

²⁴ By "meaningful access" I mean both the physical ability to get to and operate the technology as well as the basic knowledge necessary for using the technology to communicate and access information.

²⁵ d'Arcy, Jean: *The Right to Communicate*; McIver Jr, William J., William F. Birdsall, and Merrilee Rasmussen: *The Internet and the Right to Communicate*, 3.

²⁶ A supporting right is similar to what Wellman calls an "auxiliary right" as described in the Wellman quote above.

²⁷ Nickel, James: *Rethinking Indivisibility: Towards a Theory of Supporting Relations between Human Rights*, 988.

searches).²⁸

- **Remedy:** A supporting right can provide a remedy or process for addressing violations of the supported right (e.g., the right to vote can be used to address violations of other rights by the government).
- **Preserve:** A supporting right can make "the institutions and procedures used to implement the supported right less vulnerable to corruption and abuse" (e.g., the right to a public trial makes the legal system less vulnerable to corruption)
- **Empower:** A supporting right can improve the right holder's ability to "use, benefit from, and protect" the supported right (e.g., the right to education improves the right holder's ability to use and benefit from the right to work).

Communication rights provide support for numerous human rights. The right to participate in government and to vote (UDHR Article 21), for instance, can only be genuinely exercised when citizens are empowered to make a choice. A genuine choice requires access to information about the positions and records of the candidates and the ability to discuss the issues with others.²⁹ The right to worship and to change religions (Art. 18) can only be exercised if it is protected from the standard threat of government suppression of religious speech. Consider also the right to freedom of movement (Art. 13); one is empowered to exercise this right only when one has access to information about the conditions in other places where one might live and work.³⁰ Obviously, the right to work itself (Art. 23) requires that persons be empowered with information about options for work and education that would allow them to have some range of choice in employment. And, access to information about the prevention and treatment of disease empowers health care workers and individuals to improve the health of all (Art. 25).

No Rights without the Right to Communicate

Furthermore, *all rights* are supported by the rights to express and access information about human rights. The right to communicate about human rights empowers persons to claim those rights, thus protecting the rights against the standard threat of manipulation or coercion. The right to communicate about the activities of states preserves human rights against the standard threat of covert violation. And, the right to communicate about violations and means for redress allows for remedying rights violations. Furthermore, in order for people to respect and protect the rights of others, they must be able to communicate with each other about human rights. As members of states we have an obligation to promote institutions that respect the rights of others. Since human rights violations may be carried out in the name of citizens, citizens must have the information necessary in order to ensure that their moral obligations (and those of their governments) are carried out. It was, for instance, important for US. citizens to know about the abuses at Abu Ghraib, because they had an obligation to influence their government to put a stop to such abuses.

Indeed, one could argue that, without the ability to communicate, we do not have rights at all. A right licenses a person to speak up for herself. As Stephen Darwall puts it, a right importantly gives persons the unique "authority to resist, complain, remonstrate...to gain compensation if the right is violated"³¹. One cannot claim a right if one does not know that one has the right and one cannot claim a right if one lacks the means to express oneself. The idea of claiming in relation to rights is so important that some philosophers have argued that only those who can make claims *can* be rights holders. While we might want to include such beings as animals and small children within the realm of rights holders, there is still something of special dignity to adult human rights holders who can take an active role in exercising their rights.

²⁸ The right that promotes the realization of another right is a "supporting" right. The right that is promoted is the "supported" right. Rights may be mutually supporting.

²⁹ Without access to such information, persons would be able to physically "cast a vote," but that vote would not in any sense express their preferences (since they would not be allowed to know what they are voting for). Thus, such votes would not actually be an exercise of the human right that ensures that "the will of the people" be "the basis for of the authority of the government" (Art. 21(3)).

³⁰ As with the right to vote, lack of information would not prohibit a person from wandering from one place to another. But, it would make it impossible for the person to make a free choice of where he wants to live, which is surely the true point of the right.

³¹ Darwall, Stephen L.: *The Second-Person Standpoint : Morality, Respect, and Accountability*, 18.

The Internet Facilitates the Right to Communicate

The above argument shows that the right to communicate is a "linchpin right;" without it, human rights cannot properly function. Information technologies, such as the earlier printing press and landline phone and the current Internet, provide people with greater capacities for communication, and, thus, improve their abilities to exercise their rights. And, as new technologies become the accepted means for spreading information and expressing ideas, anyone without access to such technologies is at a serious disadvantage as a rights holder. Thus, states' obligations to protect the human rights of their citizens places a duty on them to see to it that people have meaningful access to currently essential information technologies, such as the Internet.

The Right to the Internet in Developing Countries

It might be objected that in some developing nations—such as Ethiopia, where it is estimated that only 1.7% of the population uses the Internet³²—the Internet is not an important mechanism for communication and, therefore, the positive right to the technology cannot be derived from the right to communicate.³³ Even in such low usage countries, however, the potential of the Internet to enable the right to communicate is significant—statistics show that where the technology is available, people are adopting it at a rapid pace.³⁴ Indeed, according to Ambroise Pierrre from Reporters without Borders Africa, "More and more people in Ethiopia are turning to new technologies, and some are even able to bypass censorship, which explains why the government is trying to use effective methods to control Internet communications".³⁵ Attempts by the Ethiopian government to control access to the Internet show that it is already seen as threatening those in power. So, even the Ethiopian government recognizes the current potential of the Internet to enhance the right to communicate.

One might further defend the right to Internet access in developing countries by appealing to the "right to development."³⁶ As communication, education, and commerce increasingly take place via the Internet, countries where people lack access to the technology will be disadvantaged.³⁷ Finally, accepting the reasoning that those who don't have the Internet, don't need it, perpetuates limited access to Internet technology (which itself may be the result of intentional government action or negligence).

Satisfying the Right to Internet Technology

It should be noted that, the human right to Internet technology does not imply that where people do not currently have access to the Internet, the state is actively violating human rights. In recognition of the fact that some states may not have the resources to immediately fulfill rights to resources, the United Nations has said that states are only obligated "progressively to fulfill" these rights to the best of their ability. Furthermore, in progressively fulfilling rights to resources, states need to make decisions about priorities. Thus, the fact that there is a right to Internet technology does not mean that states must put that ahead of ensuring access to such things as basic medical care. Nonetheless, given the important role of the right to communicate as a support to all rights, the right to Internet access is higher on the priority list than one might have thought.

³² This is less than half of the average for Africa as a whole. However, 29% of the population in Ethiopia has a mobile phone, which are increasingly used as a means to access the Internet (Lange, Peter: Ethiopia: Telecoms, Mobile, Broadband and Forecasts).

³³ I am grateful to Laura Lenhart for pushing me on this point.

³⁴ International Telecommunications Union, Measuring the Information Society 2011.

³⁵ Quoted in Moskvitch, Katia: Ethiopia Clamps Down on Skype and Other Internet use on Tor.

³⁶ Unwin, Tim: *ICT4D : Information and Communication Technology for Development*. The Declaration on the Right to Development was adopted by the U.N. in 1986.

³⁷ United Nations Conference on Technology and Development: Information Economy Report 2007-2008.

Barriers to Internet Access

So, what do states need to do in order to satisfy the right to Internet technology? In some cases, especially in the developing world, basic infrastructure needs to be built and maintained.³⁸ In addition, bureaucratic barriers to access, such as onerous official requirements for obtaining an Internet connection, need to be removed. However, even where the infrastructure exists and bureaucratic barriers are removed, the cost of access is a significant impediment for many.³⁹ This is especially true in developing countries. For example, the price of broadband access in developing countries is 17% of average income, compared to 1.5% in industrialized countries. In nineteen of the least developed countries, broadband access costs more than 100% of the average income.⁴⁰

Multiple Solutions

One common misconception (expressed by Cerf in his op-ed) is that, in order to satisfy the right to Internet technology, governments would be obligated to supply every household with its own computer and Internet connection. This misconception is based on a misunderstanding of the sorts of obligations that human rights impose on states. Human rights place duties on states to ensure that institutional arrangements are in place that respect, protect, and fulfill the right; this does not mean that they are obligated to directly supply the goods to which persons have rights.

To illustrate this point, consider that there is a range of ways that the cost barrier may be addressed. For example, the market may in some cases go a long way toward making the Internet more affordable. And, indeed, in some cases the market appears to do a good job of increasing the affordability of information technology. Globally, the price of fixed broadband access has come down by 18% between 2006 and 2011. The increase in affordability is even more notable in developing countries with the cost shrinking by 50% over the same period (ITU 2011, 7).⁴¹ Notably, countries, such as Ethiopia, which have maintained monopolistic control over the telecom sector, have not seen the same reduction in costs of Internet access. Of course, there will likely be people for whom affordability and other factors will remain a barrier to getting access to Internet technology.⁴² There are many ways this might be addressed. For example, the state could provide subsidies so that poor people could get affordable access.⁴³ Or, states could create, encourage, or support technology centers or public libraries, with access to computers and the Internet available to all members of the community. These are simply examples of the range of institutional arrangements that might be effective in fulfilling the right to Internet access. Further research is needed to determine which arrangements may be most effective, and appropriate mechanisms will depend on numerous contextual factors—there is unlikely to be a “one size fits all” solution.

Human Rights Violations via the Internet

Up to this point, I have focused on the positive role of the Internet in enabling people to exercise their human rights. The picture is not quite so purely positive, however. The Internet can also be used to undermine or

³⁸ With the recent construction of undersea cables, bandwidth in Africa has markedly improved (International Telecommunications Union: *Measuring the Information Society 2011*, 100).

³⁹ International Telecommunications Union: *Measuring the Information Society 2011*, 114-15.

⁴⁰ International Telecommunications Union: *Measuring the Information Society 2011*, 7.

⁴¹ International Telecommunications Union: *Measuring the Information Society 2011*, 7.

⁴² Affordability may be an even larger factor for disabled persons, who need special equipment, but who also would be among the most benefitted by such technologies.

⁴³ Perhaps such subsidies could be modeled on the United States' Universal Service Fund (USF), which requires telephone companies to contribute to a fund that ensures access and reasonable rates for poor and rural users (as mandated by the Telecommunications act of 1996). While not currently used to subsidize Internet for individuals, the USF does fund the E-Rate program, which provides Internet subsidies to public and school libraries.

violate human rights and human rights rhetoric itself can be used as a tool of imperialism. Given this, one might be skeptical of the claim that states should ensure that people have access to the Internet.⁴⁴

Like other technologies, the Internet is multivalent, depending on how various applications are designed, what laws and policies are adopted, and how people choose to use the technology. Compare the technology of the radio—it has allowed many people to communicate and to gain access to information and entertainment, but it has also been used to spread propaganda and even to incite and coordinate genocide.⁴⁵ Human rights can be violated on-line and certain features of the Internet technologies make it easier for states and others to violate human rights. This is why it is essential that we engage in broader reflection on new threats to human rights as well as the new opportunities brought by ICTs.

Authoritarian Internet?

Early pronouncements about the role of Internet, and ICTs more generally, simply assumed that they would be agents for freedom.⁴⁶ The thought was that there is an inherent freedom in the very structure of ICT—as the saying goes, “information wants to be free.”⁴⁷ More recently, however, scholars have pointed out the ways in which authoritarian governments can control access and use of the Internet and even use the Internet to enhance their power.⁴⁸ As Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor Boas put it, some uses of the Internet “reinforce authoritarian rule, and many authoritarian regimes are proactively promoting the development of an Internet that serves state-defined interests rather than challenging them.”⁴⁹ Governments employ a number of techniques to make the Internet serve their interests; these include, posting propaganda, filtering and blocking websites, disallowing anonymous posting, requiring ISP and website hosting companies to remove material or face prosecution, surveilling on-line activity, paying individuals to post content that supports government positions (so called, “sockpuppets”), sponsoring hacking attacks, and restricting the populace to local intranets.⁵⁰

Some may argue that, given these concerns, we ought to rethink the claim that access to the Internet enables people to know, protect, and exercise their human rights. However, while it is true that, in the words of Evgeny Morozov, “a networked world is not inherently a more just world,”⁵¹ the Internet can support human rights when those involved in creating legal structures, designing systems, creating content, providing access are committed to human rights—and when those who fail to do so are exposed and sanctioned. Furthermore, human rights must be properly understood as basic principles, which can and must be realized through different institutions and structures responsive to local social, economic, and cultural context.

Not Less Internet, More Human Rights

Many of the techniques used by governments to shore up their power using the Internet are contrary to the human right to the Internet; thus, they are examples of why greater recognition of this right is needed. Such activities as filtering, blocking, forced removal of content, hacking attacks, and restrictions on Internet access are all forms of censorship of Internet content. This is contrary to the obligation of states to respect the human

⁴⁴ In the following I discuss the role of powerful national and international actors such as states and corporations. Admittedly, human rights may also be violated due to the actions of individuals (e.g., persons who post hate speech). However, since ultimately it is states and corporations which have the power to regulate Internet communication, it is reasonable to focus on their actions and responsibilities.

⁴⁵ Kellow, Christine L. and Leslie H. Steeves: *The Role of Radio in the Rwandan Genocide*.

⁴⁶ Kalathil, Shanthi and Taylor C. Boas: *Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact of the Internet on Authoritarian Rule*, 1-2.

⁴⁷ Brand, Stewart: *The Media Lab: Inventing the Future at MIT*.

⁴⁸ Bryant, Elizabeth: *The Iron Fist Vs. the Microchip*, 6; Kalathil, Shanthi and Taylor C. Boas: *Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact of the Internet on Authoritarian Rule*.

⁴⁹ Bryant, Elizabeth: *The Iron Fist Vs. the Microchip*, 3.

⁵⁰ Reporters without Borders: *Internet Enemies Report 2012*.

⁵¹ Morozov, Evgeny: *Think again: The Internet*.

right of persons to freely access Internet content. Other activities, such as surveillance of Internet activity and disallowing anonymous posting produce a “chilling effect” on on-line speech, and, thus, also violate the human right to freely communicate via the Internet. Furthermore, such invasions of privacy violate the human right to privacy listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 12). The creation of national “interanets,” which block citizens from accessing websites outside of the country is an obvious violation of the human right to seek and receive information “regardless of frontiers” (Art. 19).

Activities such as posting propaganda on the Internet and using “sockpuppets” to create an impression of greater popular support of the government than actually exists, are not, strictly speaking, violations of the human right to the Internet. Notice, however, that this is nothing new with the Internet—governments have used the press to spread propaganda and used fake names to place opinion pieces supporting the government in Newspapers. If there is a widespread means of communication, governments will use it to try to sway public opinion. But, this is hardly a reason not to support people’s access to means of communication. Rather, it gives us a reason to think about what the right to communicate requires from powerful actors in terms of transparency and providing quality information. Given the importance of the right to communicate as a linchpin right, the unlimited rights of states and other powerful international actors to speak and to withhold information at their will should be the subject of greater scrutiny.

Indivisibility

It is true that by itself the human right to the Internet cannot ensure that the Internet is a force for freedom and the promotion of human welfare. But, that should not be surprising. Human rights do not function taken singly. This is why the United Nations has emphasized that all human rights form a unified system that is indivisible and interdependent (UN 1993). Governments posting false or misleading information are failing to respect the human rights of citizens to have a say in their government (UDHR, Art 21). Without accurate information about government policies, it is impossible for citizens to exercise this right. Thus, while governments can use the Internet to engage in such activities, this is not something that would be licensed by an Internet truly governed by human rights norms. It is also a hopeful sign that Google, Yahoo, and Microsoft have agreed to the principles of the Global Network Initiative, which seeks to provide standards and hold corporations accountable for respecting human rights on-line.⁵² Nevertheless, these standards do nothing to address the issue of whether the information available via the Internet is relevant to or coming from people outside the developed world, nor whether information technologies are designed in ways responsive to the needs of those in the developing world.

Imperialistic Internet?

Even putting aside the ways in which governments may violate human rights on-line, the spread of the Internet may result in “media imperialism”⁵³—increasing the cultural, political, or economic hegemony of the west, most notably the United States. For instance, the majority of Internet content is in English and the many websites are commercial in nature. In a majority of countries Google and Facebook, both originating in United States, are the most popular websites.⁵⁴ And, it has been shown that there is a vast disparity between the number of websites originating in the most developed countries (e.g., the U.S., Great Britain) and the least developed countries.⁵⁵ Thus, it is less likely that members of the least developed countries will find information originating their own country or region. Even with regard to Facebook, where people are typically “friends” with people living in the same geographical region,⁵⁶ the ways in which Facebook is structured may impose

⁵² La Rue: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression; Global Network Initiative: Principles.

⁵³ Ritzer, George: Media Imperialism, 1354.

⁵⁴ Jacionis, Paul: World Map of Dominating Websites.

⁵⁵ Wresch, William: Progress on the Global Digital Divide: an Ethical Perspective Based on Amartya Sen’s Capabilities Model, 256-58.

⁵⁶ Scellato, Salvatore et al.: Distance Matters: Geo-social Metrics for Online Social Networks.

a particular (western?) conception of social connection.⁵⁷ Finally, both these Google and Facebook are funded by advertising, which in itself promotes a western consumer culture.

Furthermore, given that the majority of human rights organizations with a web presence originate in the west, the Internet has the potential to empower a "human rights imperialism" (Kachur 2008; cf. De Waal 2003). The particular understanding of human rights coming from the west may not always be responsive to the cultural context and needs of non-western countries.

Right to Culture

With regard to media and human rights imperialism, there are also various human rights that should be upheld to protect people from these threats. These include, the right to participate in the culture of the community (UDHR Art. 27(1)), the right to self-determination (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Art 1.), and the right to preserve culture (ICESCR, Art 15(2)). States and non-state actors, such as corporations and NGOs, can respect, protect, and fulfill these rights by making content available in local languages and encouraging locally created content. In this regard, the fact that Google and Facebook are two of the most popular websites is somewhat good news—though the websites originate in the west, they do not themselves provide content. Rather, they provide platforms that enable people to find information, including local information, and to communicate with friends and neighbors in the local language. It is reasonable to expect that, as more people in developing countries have access to the Internet, more content will be created locally, nationally, and regionally. On an International level, corporations involved in creating Internet applications and content should be held to human rights standards, as suggested in the recent "Messages from Berlin" that summarized the discussions of the 2012 conference on the Internet and Human Rights.⁵⁸

Conclusion

I have argued that La Rue is correct; "Given that the Internet has become an indispensable tool for realizing a range of human rights, combating inequality, and accelerating development and human progress, ensuring universal access to the Internet should be a priority for all States" (La Rue 2011, 22). While access to the Internet is not a "primary" right, it can be derived from the primary right to communicate. Furthermore, since the right to communicate is a linchpin right that empowers people to exercise their rights and fulfill their responsibilities, states have an obligation to see to it that people have access to Internet technology. Finally, the fact that the Internet may be used in ways that violate human rights and foster cultural imperialism, does not mean that there is no human right to the Internet. It means that the right to the Internet must be understood as part of a broader set of human rights, which includes the right to culture.

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⁵⁷ Papacharissi, Zizi: The Virtual Geographies of Social Networks: A Comparative Analysis of Facebook, LinkedIn and ASmallWorld.

⁵⁸ Conference on The Internet and Human Rights: Building a Free, Open, and Secure Internet: Messages from Berlin.

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Ulrik Franke:

Disconnecting digital networks: A moral appraisal

Abstract:

Governments who feel threatened are known to disconnect “their” digital networks from the rest of the world, attempting to limit communication by blocking domain names, by disabling telephone networks, and sometimes by trying to isolate an entire country from the Internet. Even though these censorship processes are far from transparent, previous research by Howard et al. 2011 has identified two major self-professed reasons why governments take such actions: (i) protecting political authority and (ii) preserving the public good. This article examines these reasons from the point of view of rights-based theories and utilitarianism to assess their normative force. Though exceptions exist, it is concluded that neither rights-based theories nor utilitarianism in general supports the disconnecting of digital networks to achieve these aims. This conclusion gains extra force as it is supported by two normally opposing normative theories.

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Introduction

President Mubarak's decision to "pull the plug" on the Egyptian Internet on the eve of his ousting attracted much attention and almost universal condemnation. However, Mubarak's action was just the tip of an iceberg. As shown by Howard et al 2011, recent years have seen at least 80 incidents annually where governments have "intervened" in a digital network by breaking or limiting connections between national sub-networks and global information networks. The cases range from the Egyptian attempt at an all-out blackout, through blocking all content on specific domains such as Facebook or YouTube to shutting down SMS services.

The Turkish blocking of YouTube and thousands of other websites is a case in point. The now infamous law No. 5651 was enacted in May 2007, in response to derogatory videos featuring Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish republic. Up until December 2009, about 3 700 websites were blocked under this law (Akdeniz, 2010). The YouTube block was lifted in November 2010 after the disputed videos were removed or made unavailable from Turkey. Nevertheless, throughout the blocking regime, YouTube remained the eighth most accessed site in Turkey, due to the popularity of circumvention techniques. As of February 2012, over 15 000 sites remained blocked in Turkey, a country deemed "partly free" with regard to Internet freedom by Freedom House (Kelly et al., 2012).

A more recent case is the August 2012 riots in India's Assam region, where text messages and websites allegedly were used to stir violence between ethnic groups, precipitating the deaths of some 80 people and the displacement of 400 000-500 000 others. Reportedly, images of victims from 2008 Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar were presented as bodies of Muslims killed in Assam. The Indian government claimed that many of the forged websites were based in Pakistan and asked for Pakistani help in shutting them down. When Pakistan failed to cooperate, India ordered more than 250 websites blocked, and asked telecom providers to restrict the number of text messages distributed. Despite this, the images went viral (The Economist, 2012). When the media reviewed the list of websites ordered blocked, it turned out that a mere fifth of them actually contained references to Assam (The Indian Express, 2012).

Based on an analysis of 566 such "incidents", Howard et al. 2011 identified two dominant reasons used by governments to motivate their disconnecting digital networks: (i) protecting political authority (e.g. the Atatürk case) and (ii) preserving the public good (e.g. the Assam region case). This article analyzes these reasons from the perspectives of two normative theories: moral rights and utilitarianism, in order to assess their normative force.

The methodological rationale for this approach is that if two competing theories, despite their differences on many issues, give similar verdicts on governments disconnecting digital networks, then this result merits particular attention. In this case, as we shall see, neither rights-based theories nor utilitarianism lends any particular support to the arguments used by governments to motivate shutting down digital networks. (Cf. Carens 1987 for an example of an article adopting a similar methodology.)

Utilitarianism finds no intrinsic value in existing political authority. Such institutions have only instrumental value, naturally subsumed into the *preserving the public good* case. Conversely, theories of moral rights are not concerned with public good, but with individual rights. The analysis therefore unfolds with an emphasis on one normative theory for each reason.

Rights-based theories

Negative rights

We start out from the perspective of *negative* moral rights in the tradition of Locke and Nozick, to analyze the case of *protecting political authority*. Here, the property rights of internet service providers, telecommunications companies, and website owners offer strong protection against state interference. Indeed, government activity is legitimate only when directed at preventing or rectifying rights violations. Therefore, when the police plan to arrest a thief or murderer, negative rights plausibly warrant temporarily disconnecting digital networks in order to prevent the felon from being warned. Similarly, in a just war a state may justifiably and temporarily disable digital networks in order to avoid their exploitation by the enemy (cf. e.g. the 2003 US *Information Operations Roadmap* and its now infamous recurring catch-phrase "fight the net"). However, there are crucial limitations. While the police may plausibly silence someone shouting a warning to a felon minutes before his apprehension, general rumors about police investigations, people too distant to warn the murderer, or criticism *ex post* may not be silenced. Such opinions and expressions are fully protected within the rights to free speech inherent in a negative rights conception.

Preventing the spread of "state secrets" is widely cited subcategory of the *protecting political authority* rationale. We have seen that protecting citizens against rights infringements does make moral room for "state secrets", e.g. the location of the police minutes before an apprehension, the location of military units in a just war, and plausibly also aspects of criminal investigation procedures and military intelligence. However, the legitimacy of these secrets is fully contingent upon the legitimacy of the activities they protect. State activities that do not protect negative rights cannot spawn legitimate state secrets. Therefore, states that engage in unjust wars of aggression have no right to stop anyone from revealing the locations of their military units, and police about to apprehend dissidents in repressive states have no right to silence warnings. Indeed negative rights theory, since John Locke, holds that a government does not hold any authority except for that which has been delegated by its citizens, and if that authority is abused there is a right to revolution. Subcategories of *protecting political authority* such as *eliminating propaganda* (the example of Howard et al. 2011 is Chinese crackdowns on democracy activists) and *election crisis* (the example of Howard et al. 2011 is the Iranian Twitter shut-down following the election result widely deemed fraudulent, cf. also Kelly & Cook 2011 and Deibert & Rohozinski 2010) therefore receive no support from theories of moral rights.

The subcategory of *protecting political leaders and state institutions* is more complicated. Individual negative rights can warrant temporary coercive action to protect individuals who are under a threat of imminent attack. Therefore, it is plausibly warranted to protect state officials (or indeed anyone) under imminent threat from remotely operated improvised explosive devices (IED) by shutting down a GSM network that could be used to detonate these devices (cf. Zorpette 2008 for more on the technical details). Nonetheless, such action must be temporary and in response to imminent threats – once the threat is gone, service must be restored, and compensation must be paid to network owners. However, in practice, the more frequent case concerns information that smears the *reputation* or *public image* of officials/institutions. The example given by Howard et al. 2011 is a 2007 Kazakh shutdown of opposition websites because of published transcripts related to a personal conflict between authoritarian president Nazarbayev and his son-in-law. Another example is the blocking of Google in China based on "Evil Jiang Zemin" being one of the top results when googling the former president (Segev 2008).

It is sometimes held that there is a right to one's reputation, e.g. as articulated in Article 12 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "No one shall be subjected to [...] attacks upon his honour and reputation". However, it is very doubtful that such rights are consistent with negative rights theory. The reason is simple: such rights would entail property rights in others' brains (to control reputation), or at least others' printing presses and internet connections (to control public image). More detailed accounts of reputation and slander under negative rights theory can be found in Rothbard 1998 (pp. 121-132) or Tännsjö 2010 (pp. 61-62). In short, under negative rights, free speech as embodied in property rights in equipment, distribution channels and bodies (brains) trumps any claimed rights against slander. In practice, *Reporters without borders* have voiced concern that "rights to be forgotten" (i.e. to have online content about oneself removed upon request)

"would be hard to reconcile with online freedom of expression and information", echoing the negative rights concern that other rights constrain the possibility to have a right to one's reputation. However, even if a right against attacks upon honor and reputation is granted, an ex post legal process seems like a far better method of reconciliation than an ex ante action of disconnecting digital networks. An important argument for this position is that disconnecting digital networks is likely to violate the rights of (innocent) third parties as well, something which is avoided in an ex post legal process.

Positive rights

Under a theory of *positive* moral rights, where moral rights are not only rights to non-interference, but claim-rights to material goods that others have to supply, there are some important differences. Most often, these rights are construed as welfare rights (such as basic sustenance and health care) that are to be supplied by others. However, it is also conceivable to claim positive rights to *immaterial* goods, such as a right to information. van den Hoven & Rooksby (2008) can be said to adopt such a view when arguing that access to information is a Rawlsian primary good (cf. Rawls 1999), and that opportunities to acquire information therefore should be afforded to each person under the Rawlsian opportunity principle:

"Now if, in a society, a substantial proportion of information relevant to citizens' life planning is only accessible via information media, then, in that society, a guarantee of equal liberty to seek information will not be sufficient in itself to ensure that all citizens have access to all relevant information. In such a society, access to (often expensive and complex) information media will also be necessary for citizens to access much of the information relevant to their rational life planning. To put the point in general terms, ensuring a just distribution of information requires not only a just distribution of information liberties for all citizens, but also mechanisms to ensure that people's opportunities to exercise their information liberties are roughly equal."

Prima facie, of course, such a positive right to access information gives no justification for disconnecting digital networks; rather, it offers justification for the opposite. However, it could be argued that in order to ensure citizens' (equal) access to information relevant to their life planning, a government could be justified in disconnecting digital networks used to spread misinformation or propaganda that in fact makes life planning more difficult. Indeed, such an argument could be made all the more poignant by an appeal to the Rawlsian concern with the least advantaged: perhaps most citizens are not harmed by the prevalence of misinformation, but if a minority of exceptionally gullible people are, then removing the propaganda might not make the majority substantially worse off, but could entail a significant improvement to the most gullible.

However, such censorship based on the difference principle is not coherent with Rawls' theory of justice, because freedom of speech is protected by the liberty principle (cf. Rawls, p. 197), which is lexically prior to the difference principle. In practice, of course, such idealistic censorship is all too often reversed by regimes that ban unwanted information in favor of their own propaganda (cf. e.g. Zhao 2009 on the Chinese de facto state monopoly on online news services, and Lagerkvist 2008 on the Chinese establishment of agenda-setting state news agencies). To conclude, the proper Rawlsian way to deal with inequalities in information access is not to remove it from the advantaged, but to give it to the disadvantaged.

Nevertheless, a Rawlsian positive right to information access does offer one subtle argument in the direction of justifying governments' disconnecting digital networks: if internet service providers are state owned, the argument against disconnections that arises from private property rights becomes void.

Utilitarianism

A strong utilitarian argument for protecting a status quo (such as existing political authority) is that the (almost certain) upheavals of protest or outright revolution do not outweigh the (far from certain) benefits of a new order. Classic accounts for this position include Burke, and Hobbes who famously defends the incumbent government by comparison with anarchy, where life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". However,

even if it is assumed that these arguments against revolution *as such* are valid, it does not follow that state disconnections of digital networks have to be embraced. There are at least two reasons for this:

First, there is the possibility that suppressing dissent does not *prevent* the violent upheavals of a revolution, but merely *postpones* the inevitable, and indeed makes the convulsions to come even worse. Taleb & Blyth (2011) recently argued for this position with reference to the Arab spring, claiming that the artificial suppression of volatility in the name of stability is a dangerous practice:

"Such environments eventually experience massive blowups, catching everyone off-guard and undoing years of stability or, in some cases, ending up far worse than they were in their initial volatile state. Indeed, the longer it takes for the blowup to occur, the worse the resulting harm in both economic and political systems."

If this line of reasoning is correct, it constitutes a major utilitarian reason for *not* suppressing opposition, and opposition communications e.g. by disconnecting digital networks, in the name of protecting political authority against opposition.

Taleb & Blyth do not dwell on particular causal mechanisms that support their thesis, but at least one such mechanism has to do with how free speech (or more generally: free flow of information) could make a society more *robust*, in the sense of being resistant to subversion or propaganda. In a society where the flow of information is tightly controlled and only select material is revealed to the public eye, the effects of suddenly revealing information, true or false, previously unheard of are unpredictable. For example, dropping leaflets or sending text messages about the personal conduct of political leadership can be disrupting in a society where such criticism has always been suppressed. In societies with (relatively) free flow of information, on the contrary, there is typically plenty of material available suggesting that the existing order should be overthrown and that the incumbent politicians are "crooks and thieves" (to borrow a phrase popularly used in Russia about the ruling United Russia party). Thus, the disruptive potential of spreading such statements is not particularly high, entailing the robustness. An everyday parallel is how accumulated experiences contribute to making adolescents increasingly skeptical towards information in advertising as they grow older (Bousch et al., 1994) – whereas someone who has never experienced advertising is more susceptible to it. In a way, this is reminiscent of Mill's argument for free speech that by allowing falsehoods to be uttered, a "clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error" is gained (Mill, 1859).¹

The second reason is that it could actually be *counterproductive* for a regime wishing to perpetuate itself to disconnect digital networks. The fall of the Mubarak regime is a case in point. It has been argued that "pulling the plug" on the internet actually provided an unintended rallying call to the opposition, accelerating the downfall of the regime (Hassanpour 2011). It has also been proposed, with reference to the situation in Russia, that allowing internet protests can be a way for a regime to allow citizens to "let off steam" in a controlled way, while being careful not to let online protests spill over into offline activity (Lipman & Petrov 2010).

If any of these analyses are correct, then a utilitarian wishing to uphold stability for utility's sake should refrain from disconnecting digital networks.

However, utilitarianism might also embrace state disconnections of digital networks for reasons other than maintaining stability. These cases cannot be assessed without context: for each case it is a *prima facie* open empirical question whether the act maximizes utility or not, corresponding to the normative question of whether it is right to perform the act according to utilitarianism (a good discussion of this difficulty in applying utilitarianism is found in Gren 2004). Nevertheless, it can be observed that the consequences of digital disconnects can be dire – not only in terms of stability as argued above – but also in economic terms. Howard et al. (2011) note that Mubarak's interruption of digital services cost Egypt's economy at least \$90 million, but also more subtle actions – including regulations that enable latent future disconnects – entail costs. Wallsten

¹ There are also other societal virtues that entail similar robustness: *Toleration* leads to *immunity against blackmail*. Spies such as the British civil servant John Vassall (1924-1996) could not have been blackmailed into espionage by the USSR for fear of having their homosexuality exposed in a more tolerant society where homosexuality was both perfectly legal and generally accepted.

(2005) finds that countries requiring formal regulatory approval for Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to operate have fewer Internet users and hosts than countries that do not require such approval. Shin et al. (2012) conclude that "The less rigorous the regulations, the higher Internet's contribution to economic growth". Ghose & Rajan (2006) show that many IT security regulations have unintended adverse consequences, such as decreasing competition and productivity. While such arguments cannot be conclusive without a complete specification of the intended good, they show that the utilitarian wishing to promote the public good by disconnecting digital networks takes on a heavy burden of proof in ascertaining that the pros indeed outweigh the cons.

Conclusion

As observed by Howard et al. 2011 democracies and authoritarian states alike disconnect digital networks, and recent years have shown an increasing frequency of such acts. Even though the exact practices of filtering and online censorship often remain obscure – Kelly & Cook note "the arbitrariness and opacity surrounding decisions to restrict particular content" in all countries – governments do offer (broad categories of) reasons for disconnecting digital networks. In this article, these reasons have been considered from the point of view of two different moral theories; moral rights theory and utilitarianism.

It is concluded that neither theories of moral rights nor utilitarianism generally support the reasons given by governments to disconnect digital networks, though exceptions exist. The fact that these theories, which are opposed to each other on many controversial issues, give similar results on the issue of disconnecting digital networks gives the result particular credibility. Of course, authoritarian regimes do not necessarily pay any attention to neither utility nor human rights. Instead, they might be more inclined towards theories like Carl Schmitt's political philosophy.

A natural course of future research would include assessing the issue from other perspectives, such as communitarianism or Hobbesian approaches. Equally important, however, is to counteract disconnections. The rights-inclined policy-maker might for instance pursue strengthened property rights for internet service providers whereas the utilitarian might promote free speech on-line in the interest of long-term utility even at the expense of short-term stability.

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Kenji Saito:

TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Disaster and Social Media: A Chronological Overview

Abstract:

This article is a chronological overview and discussion of the public's use of social media in Japan in response to the TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company) Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster that occurred on 11 March 2011. Reactions have included defiance aimed at protecting children and protests against the government's nuclear policies. A mass media decline is apparent during the course of the events. However, there seem to be multiple levels of divides that have been preventing people from progressing beyond criticism to achieve effective activism.

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⁶⁰ <http://grsj.jp/neo.pdf>

Introduction

"What makes this case different from Chernobyl is, first and foremost, the existence of the Internet. Everyone can gain access to information, and we can even read reports from overseas news media such as The New York Times. No longer can anyone keep information hidden. The other big difference is that NPOs have been more active since the Great Hanshin Earthquake. These two factors have turned the situations into something else, in which we find some hope."

– Mr Seiichi Nakate

This quote is an excerpt from my interview (Saito, 2011) with Mr Seiichi Nakate, the first chairman of the *Fukushima Network for Saving Children from Radiation*, on 1 June 2011 in Fukushima City, Japan.

The ongoing accident of TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company) Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, which immediately followed the Great East Japan Earthquake on 11 March 2011, is the first (and probably not the last) nuclear disaster since the rise of the Internet. Measures taken or not taken by TEPCO or the Japanese government have given rise to movements among Japanese citizens, especially among parents worried about the future of their children. These movements are often initiated and organized using social media such as Twitter, Facebook, blogs or mailing lists, urging people towards activities such as: 1) saving electricity to avoid rolling blackouts, 2) care for mental and/or physical health of Fukushima residents, especially of children, 3) care for lost communities in Fukushima Prefecture near the power plant, and 4) anti-nuclear protests.

This article is a chronological overview and discussion of the public's use of social media in Japan in response to the nuclear disaster. It is written from my viewpoint as a resident of Fujisawa (a city in East Japan 268km southwest of the power plant), a father of an infant, and an Internet researcher. The overview includes my personal experiences, as I thought it would be helpful to share these with the readers.

Chronological Overview

In this section, for the sake of clarity, the public's reactions are categorized into three approximate stages that, in reality, overlap. For a detailed and valid overview of *Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster*, readers are referred to the corresponding Wikipedia entry (Wikipedia contributors, as of 2013).

Stage I: Emergency Response

11 March 2011 (at 14:46 JST) – The Great East Japan Earthquake

All external power supplies were lost at TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, and the core of all three operating reactors (no.1~3) in the plant later went into meltdown.

Mr Noriyuki Shikata (@norishikata), then Deputy Cabinet Secretary for Public Affairs and Director of Global Communications, started using his own Twitter account to tweet about the accident; this has remained one of the most important sources of information about the accident in English.

12 March 2011 – Hydrogen explosion at reactor no. 1, at 15:36

Professor Ryugo Hayano (@hayano), a physicist at the University of Tokyo, started tweeting about the accident. The number of his followers went up to more than 20,000 by the end of the day (and to more than 130,000 as of September 2012). Later, on 21 June, TEPCO created a Twitter account @TEPCO_Nuclear to publish official announcements about the nuclear disaster. At around 54,000 as of January 2013, it has fewer

than half as many followers as Professor Hayano, suggesting that more people may have relied on information from an individual physicist rather than from the very organization that caused the accident.

13 March 2011 – *TEPCO announced rolling blackouts*

There has been controversy over whether the series of planned power outages was indeed necessary, or whether it was a diversion or propaganda planned by TEPCO.

Operation YASHIMA¹ was a movement on Twitter with the hash tag #84MA (pronounced *yashima*) that started around this date to promote citizens' efforts to reduce electricity consumption to avoid large-scale blackouts. This movement was initiated by a young artist named Mr Koh Nakagawa, who spread the idea via Skype discussions and Twitter.

This human-powered smart grid seemed effective, but cities like Fujisawa suffered seven power outages during the period until 28 March, resulting in distrust of TEPCO and the government that allowed the blackouts.

On this date, the Cabinet Public Relations Office created an official Twitter account @Kantei_Saigai to disseminate information about the disaster, and started to tweet officially about the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster. With more than 600,000 followers as of January 2013, this account has served as a reliable source of information with respect to all kinds of danger to the general public, including typhoons. However, although the account receives many reactions, especially to its announcements regarding the nuclear disaster, it never responds. The same is true of TEPCO's Twitter account. These accounts are not intended for two-way communication with the public.

14 March 2011 – *Hydrogen explosion at reactor no. 3, at 11:01*

15 March 2011 – *The first radioactive plume over Kanto area, far southwest of Fukushima*

Reactors no. 2 and 4 exploded in the early morning, at 06:00.

Friends of a Twitter account @dsHirano were warned at 08:17:32 as follows: "Let me advise you not to leave your children in schools or nurseries today." The account was that of Mr Tomoyasu Hirano, the founder of a software company called *Digital Stage*. He was reading tweets from people who had been analysing the limited information released by TEPCO, which gave rise to a rather fragmented view of the situations around the reactors; he somehow felt strongly that something was going especially wrong that day. I was unable to follow his advice that was retweeted 89 times, and my then two-year-old son went to the nursery, during which time the radioactive plume from the power plant crossed Kanto area including Tokyo and Fujisawa cities. No announcement was made from the government.

16 March 2011 – *U.S. Embassy advised Americans in Japan*

The advice for Americans was to leave areas within approximately 50 miles (80km) from the power plant.

On this date, Twitter account @savefukushimaa was created. The owner of the account is thought to be a housewife in Koriyama City, Fukushima, within the 80km range from the power plant. She called for actions to protect children in Fukushima. The account forwarded every tweet she mentioned, so that her followers could share information. I believe she was doing this manually. There were 11,476 tweets with 7,180 followers as of December 2011, but she seems to have stopped her activity in January 2012.

17 March 2011 – *Large-scale cooling efforts began*

¹ Named after an operation in "Evangelion", a popular Japanese animation, in which electricity from all Japan was collected for the deployment of an energy-intensive weapon.

I received a call from a friend (an ex-student of mine) at 4:00 in the morning, urging me to go west with my family before noon. He said that the government would announce the evacuation of the whole Kanto area, by which time the transportation system would have virtually ground to a standstill. I had some doubts, but thought it would be *polite* to follow his advice, and went with my family to Nagoya, 446km west of the power plant.

Nothing happened that day, but later we discovered that the government had concealed the worst-case scenario, in which evacuation should possibly be allowed for residents within 250km of the power plant (Kyodo, 2012).

21 March 2011 – Possibly the largest fallout in Kanto area with rain

This was the worst timing, but I returned with my family from Nagoya to the Kanto area on that date. This shows how helpless the general public was without information. Again, no announcement was made by the government.

On 24 March 2011, while rolling blackouts continued, I tweeted as follows at 19:23:35 in the darkness: "Group 1, Fujisawa City, under the rolling blackout. Tonight, Japan continues to fight against Godzilla²."

Stage II: Defiance to Protect Children

19 April 2011 – MEXT announced 20 mSv/y and 3.8 micro Sv/h standards

On this date, MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) announced that children could be exposed to a maximum of 20 millisieverts of radiation per year, the same level allowed for adults in emergency exposure situations. Furthermore, the limit in playgrounds was announced as 3.8 microsieverts per hour, which seemed to be a much higher level than that applicable to radiation-restricted areas in industry (0.6 micro Sv/h or 5 mSv/y by effective dose) (Figure 1).

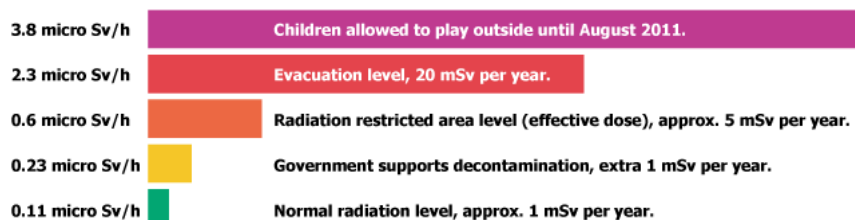


Figure 1. Radiation levels and standards approved by the government

This has changed the lives of many parents in Japan. Distrusting the policies of the government and schools, they have organized defiance as described in the following sections. I have heard many mothers and fathers saying that they had never imagined, before the nuclear disaster, that they would be involved in any kind of political movement.

Such changes have also been triggered by the way in which the government, industries and schools dealt with internal radiation exposure from water and foods. Some parents have had their children reject water and food provided by the schools. Some established radiation measurement facilities of their own, where neighbours can bring drinks, foods and/or soils. I have been involved³ in the operation of one of those facilities³.

² Godzilla (Wikipedia contributors, as of 2012) is a Japanese movie monster mutated as the result of a nuclear experiment. In the series of films, it physically destroys cities and contaminates them with radioactivity emitted from its mouth. Here it is used as a metaphor for the physical destruction caused by the earthquake and tsunami, and for the radiation contamination from the nuclear disaster.

³ <http://anshin-p.info>

30 April 2011 – *Start of organized defiance*

It seems that the earliest organized efforts started around this date.

On this day, I created a Facebook page entitled "Save Children of Fukushima"⁴. This page was originally intended as an archive of information gathered from the Twitter account @savefukushimaa. Since the information is an uncontrolled mixture, however, I subsequently tried to turn it into a more comprehensible collection of information. The page had 3,068 fans as of September 2012.

On the following day, the "Fukushima Network for Saving Children from Radiation"⁵ was formed in Fukushima, the largest known parental network for the protection of children from the nuclear disaster with more than 700 members as of September 2011.

Many other organizations emerged. We launched spontaneous campaigns to collect signatures for petitions against the 20 mSv/y standard, appealed to Diet members and promoted public awareness of the issue.

27 May 2011 – *MEXT announced the 1 mSv/y goal for Fukushima children*

However, schools were still allowed to stage outdoor activities in accordance with the 3.8 micro Sv/h standard.

Many of the organizations to protect children planned and conducted time-off programmes further away from the power plant during the summer vacation for children of Fukushima; this would have been difficult to promote without the Internet and social media. I am also a founding member of the "Academy Camp" (Saito et.al., 2012); it involved academic and athletic workshops that brought more than 100 children from Fukushima to the foot of Mt. Fuji that summer. Academy Camp continued in the winter and summer of 2012, and we experimented with the use of social media to share ongoing activities in the camp with parents in Fukushima and with the general public⁶.

26 August 2011 – *MEXT abolished the 3.8 micro Sv/h standard*

This resolved the contradictory situation in schools whereby children were allowed to play outside even when the level of radiation was higher than the prescribed level for evacuation.

Nonetheless, issues have remained with respect to protecting children from radiation. On 11 September 2011, Professor Shirabe of the Tokyo Institute of Technology and I formed the "Scientists' Network for Protecting Children from Radiation Hazards", which was intended as an advisory body for individuals and organizations.

This network of scientists and scientifically-minded people has been operated entirely on Facebook, using a Facebook page⁷ for public relations and a private Facebook group for discussion and coordination. We have published recommendations, comments and leaflets that often argued against the government's policies.

Stage III : Protests against Nuclear Policies**16 December 2011** – *Government announced the cold shutdown of the nuclear power plant*

Meanwhile, efforts continued to gain control of the reactors and spent nuclear fuels. This has resulted in inadequate support for workers at the power plant because they have had to work according to normal rather than emergency standards.

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/SaveChildrenOfFukushima>

⁵ http://kodomofukushima.net/index.php?page_id=257

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/academy.camp>

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/ScientistsForChildren>

5 May 2012 – All 54 (or 50⁸) reactors in nuclear power plants in Japan shut down

This shutdown was achieved passively in the sense that the government did not allow shut-down reactors to restart after periodical inspection.

While officially announcing that the country aims to eventually stop depending on nuclear power, however, the government had been working towards restarting the Oi reactors in Fukui Prefecture to mitigate the electricity shortage predicted for that summer in the Kansai area, including Osaka City.

Opposing this policy, people stepped up the weekly protests that had started in March 2012 – these took place every Friday evening in front of Kantei, the prime minister's official residence. This campaign was promoted using Twitter and USTREAM, and more and more people joined the protest every week.

15 June 2012 – Protest by more than 11,000 people in front of Kantei

Since the previous week, the number of people has more than doubled, presumably in response to Prime Minister Noda's speech about the need to restart the Oi reactors, given while the protest was ongoing.

A week later, the number went up to 45,000 people (Figure 2).

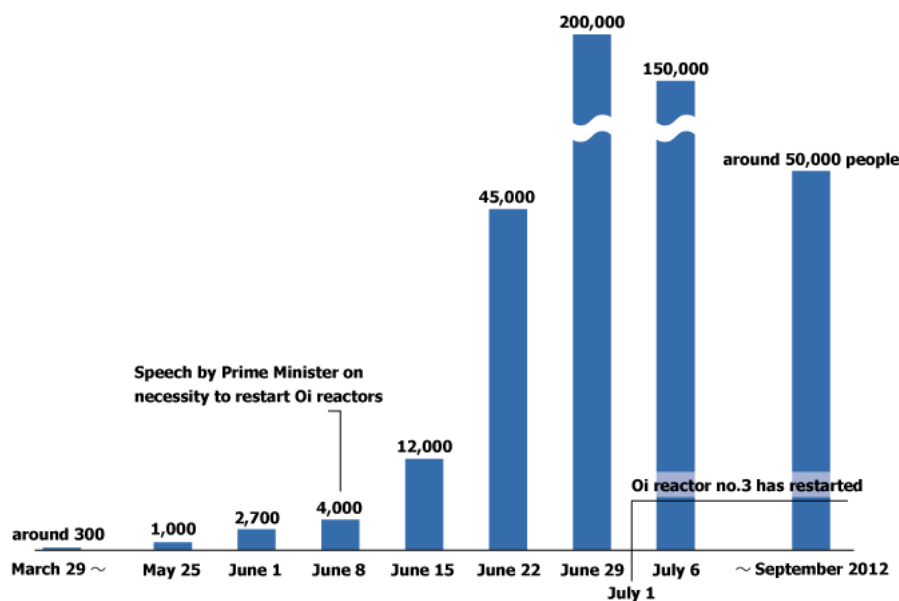


Figure 2. Number of protestors in front of Kantei on Friday evenings, according to the organizers⁹

21 June 2012 – Diet passed a law to support nuclear refugees, victims and children

29 June 2012 - The number of protestors went up to 150,000 ~200,000

Somehow, the series of protests received only little attention in the mass media. The NHK (the public broadcasting organization of Japan) in particular seems to have completely ignored the movement. Frustrated volunteers called for donations on several social media to charter a helicopter on their own to fly over Kantei

⁸ Depending on whether you include the four reactors in TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi power plant in the accident; these have now been officially excluded as nuclear reactors in Japan.

⁹ http://coalitionagainstnukes.jp/?page_id=28

while the protest was ongoing. The video is publicly available on USTREAM¹⁰, and photographs have been published¹¹ on the Web under Creative Commons CC BY-NC-ND 2.1 license.

1 July 2012 – Oi reactor no. 3 restarted

A protest took place throughout the night at Oi power plant and was broadcast on USTREAM.

On 6 July it rained in Tokyo, and 150,000 protestors were reported to be in front of Kantei.

12 August 2012 – Extended deadline for public comments on nuclear policy in 2030

The government requested comments from the public to help it choose between three alternative scenarios for the ratio of nuclear power to total national electricity demand in 2030: 0%, 15% and 20~25%. This request for comments was hardly promoted at all in the mass media, but was heavily promoted in social media and on the government's own web site. In the end, 88,280 comments were submitted from the general public.

The result (Figure 3) shows that, despite the government's observed intention to induce people to choose the 15% scenario, 87% of the submitted comments supported the zero nuclear power scenario (Tokyo Newspaper, 2012a).

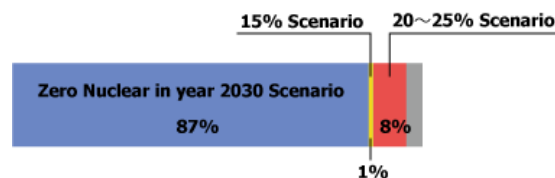


Figure 3. Composition of the submitted public comments

6 September 2012 – Democratic Party of Japan proposes targeting a "Zero Nuclear Society"

7 September 2012 – Governor of Osaka admits that restarting the Oi reactors was not necessary

14 September 2012 – Government announces targeted a Zero Nuclear Society in 2030s

This decision (Japan Times, 2012) contains contradictions and reservations, however. The government does not intend to stop recycling nuclear fuel, something that would not be necessary if we did not use such fuels. Reactors that are confirmed *safe* will be restarted, but who will determine which reactors are safe and how? The government says that the policy itself will be subjected to continuing reviews because there might be unforeseen changes in the energy situation, implying that the government could shift back to promoting nuclear energy.

The public protests are bound to continue.

Discussion

The people of Japan seem to have succeeded in introducing certain changes to Japan's policies, but we have failed to achieve fundamental shifts, and this far from constitutes a triumph of the people. In this section, I attempt to discuss why.

¹⁰ <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/23644422> (part 1), <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/23645808> (part 2)

¹¹ <http://fotgazet.com/news/000226.html>

Reasons for Uprising

The scale of public protests against nuclear policies is something we have not seen in Japan for more than 40~50 years, since the protests against the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty in the 1960s. Obviously, the earthquake and tsunami also destroyed a long-held mindset of the people of Japan. I argue that the distrust in the authorities, which was the main trigger of the movement, arose as a result of the authorities and general public seeing different realities.

It is apparent that the distrust arose in part from the insufficient information disclosed by the government and its failure to listen to the public, especially at the early stage of the nuclear accident. In addition, it is my opinion that people did not understand why the authorities could state uncertain things with such certainty. The authorities claimed that the reactors would never explode. They did. The authorities claimed that heavy plutonium particles would never fly far. We found the particles. The authorities claimed that radioactive caesium particles are stuck to the ground and would not easily float. We found that there was a sudden increase in radioactive fallout last winter that was caused by the refloating of radioactive caesium. People quickly learned that the authorities are hardly any more reliable than themselves.

Even for the brightest mind, it is much easier to reflect upon what has already happened than to predict what might happen next, because we think using abstractions that exclude things we do not regard as important or things we are unaware of. Indeed, Kimura (2012) depicted how the scientist who first denied the possibility of the reactors exploding, having been informed that one actually had, was quickly able to explain the mechanism of the explosion.

Yet the authorities always seem to be so certain. It seems as if those people have become overly used to the controlled environment in which they do not have to deal with uncertainty and in which their abstractions in thinking always work. If that is true, their methods of communicating risks will inevitably fail, because risks are about uncertainty.

Decline of Mass Media

It has become apparent that the mass media have become just one of the players in the dissemination of news and the formation of public opinion, at least in the eyes of social media users. Newspaper articles and TV programmes still play important roles, but they are often introduced to people through (re)tweets and sharing on social media. Discussions on the news have already taken place on social media to an extent and level we would not usually expect from mass media.

The role of mass media must be to collect, interpret, edit and propagate information. Today, social media users can assume such a role themselves, and even do a better job. One important aspect is that mass media and social media users can now access the same primary information from the government and other parties concerned. Another important aspect is that social media users are better motivated to pursue what they consider to be the truth, while mass media need to sustain themselves in the economy controlled by the government and large organizations including electric power companies.

As reported by Kanehira (2012), most mass media failed to report on the protests against the government's nuclear policies, one obvious reason being that such media seem to place themselves on the side of the authorities rather than on the side of the general public. Both Kanehira and Kimura, as journalists, bemoan the tendency of today's news media in Japan to neglect the importance of collecting information themselves, of contacting protestors and government officials and conducting interviews.

If that is really the case, the problem once again is one of experiencing different realities.

Multiple Levels of Divides

Experiencing different realities is not only a problem of the authorities and media.

There have been multiple levels of divides among people in Japan with respect to the use of social media, as a result of which we have been seeing different realities that may pose an obstacle to solutions.

The first level of divide is between users and non-users of the Internet. For example, the large-scale protests in front of Kantei every Friday evening were seldom reported in the mass media, and were thus unknown to non-Internet users until late June. The people of Fukushima admit that there are fewer Internet users there as compared to other prefectures, and information about time-off programmes for children, for example, has been difficult to disseminate to those who need it.

The second level of divide is between clusters of social media users. Such users often choose to avoid reading the opinions put forward by opposing clusters by blocking users and separating themselves from other people's realities. For example, there are users who take an optimistic view of the effects of radiation and users who take a different view. They call each other *anzen-chu* and *kiken-chu*, respectively, meaning people with the mentality of a lower secondary school student who unquestioningly believes in safety/danger. If conversations between them take place, they rarely lead to constructive discussions.

Criticism or Activism?

Although no problems are solved simply by blaming someone for something, online arguments tend to go that way. Sadly, the above-mentioned divide between clusters of social media users has caused situations exactly like this, and debates rarely seem connected to actions.

Let me therefore state once again that the situation is far from a triumph of the citizens.

(The first draft of this article was written in September 2012. In December, the Liberal Democratic Party won the election, supported by the smallest number of total voters since World War II (Tokyo Newspaper 2012b). The new Prime Minister Abe has announced his intention to reconsider the zero nuclear policy set by the former cabinet.)

Conclusions

The ongoing accident of TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant is the first nuclear disaster since the rise of the Internet.

It goes without saying that the disaster itself is a tragedy. However, as Mr Nakate said in the quoted interview, we may find some hope in the fact that people have been sharing information and getting involved in joint actions or efforts through social media on the Internet.

In order for such hopes to be fulfilled, however, we have to address the multiple levels of divides that may obstruct our path to solutions: 1) the divide between users and non-users of the Internet, and 2) the divide between different clusters of social media users. We would also have to take our use of social media for participation in politics to the next stage, that is to say beyond criticism and towards effective activism.

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¹⁵ http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=232952586719280

¹⁶ <http://blog.safecast.org/2011/06/visiting-fukushima-city-june-1-2011/>

¹⁷ <http://www.tokyo-np.co.jp/article/feature/nucerror/list/CK2012082802100003.html>

¹⁸ <http://www.tokyo-np.co.jp/article/politics/news/CK2012121802000130.html>

¹⁹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Godzilla_\(1954_film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Godzilla_(1954_film))

²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fukushima_Daiichi_nuclear_disaster

Dong Hyun Song: Unintended Cyber Activism through Online Daily Practice in Korea

Abstract:

This article examines the cultural and political anxieties caused by the embeddedness of ICTs and the internet in Korean society. These anxieties emerged in the aftermath of the 2008 Candlelight protest and reflect a struggle between the Korean government, Korean web portals and Korean internet users, reflecting the wider evolution of cyberspace in Korean society. This argument will be substantiated through the analysis of policy, interviews, and online participant observation.

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 - Song D.H. (2011): 'Power struggles in Korean cyberspace and Korean cyber asylum seekers', Cultural Policy, Criticism and Management Research 5: 47-71.

Introduction

"In Korea, collective power separated from the state apparatus is transformed into a spectacle such as people filling the street with candles."¹

Anti-government protests, known as the Candlelight protests, broke out across South Korea in 2008, reflecting growing tensions between civil power and that of the state. The demonstrations began in protest against the new Korea-US Free Trade Agreement which allowed US beef imports from cattle over 30 months old without health inspections by Korean customs and despite the high risk of mad cow disease.² The most striking feature of Candlelight 2008 was the interweaving of online and offline culture as well as typically non-participating groups' active engagement with public events. For example, Suhong Chae and Soojin Kim (2010) argue that women participants' active engagement with the protest both online and offline, the Baby Stroller Brigades in particular, was a result of their awareness of 'the various social and political problems surrounding them', which led to their 'subjectivity formation.'³ In the same vein, Chul-Kyoo Kim et al. (2010) and Yun Seongy et al. (2011) point out that youth participation in the protest through online activities and offline participation led to their 'political awakening'.⁴ In the same vein, as Do-Hyun Han (2010), Ho-Young Lee (2008) and Kyung Jae Song (2008) also argue, ordinary Korean citizens became active participants by transforming online communities and forums, previously utilised for daily trivia, into places where internet users gained and shared information relating to the protest, including the organisation of meetings on the ground. Such online practice rooted in everydayness had enabled ordinary people, regardless of sex and age, to participate the protest. That is, the momentum of the protest could be maintained by ordinary people traversing online, sharing information and linking online communities into one network to be against the Lee administration's international political decision as briefly described above.

As a result of 100 days of protest, online activism, and despite the Lee administration's 'human rights violations' intended to stop the protests,⁵ the protesters succeeded in making their voices heard in the political arena, leading to the President to apologies for his administration's decision.⁶ Overall, Candlelight 2008 made the public aware of the importance of internet politics.⁷

However, straight after the protests ceased, the Lee administration began to silence these public voices in Korean cyberspace by deleting anti-government postings as well as arresting netizens who had participated in the protests.⁸ It is important to note, as Chaibong Hahm does, that South Korean democracy has not been well established and has also become diluted as 'an imperial presidency, oligarchic parties, divisive regionalism and political corruption' has continued to wield influence over the political process.⁹ In the same vein, internet control as part of state control over the media in contemporary Korean society, as Kwang-Yeong Shin argues,¹⁰ can be identified in this instance. It must also be borne in mind that the internet practices that the participants during Candlelight 2008 deployed profoundly shaped the Lee administration's attitude to cyberspace. Ever since the emergence of the internet in Korean society in 1998, successive governments have viewed it as a

1 Ranciere in Chul-Kyoo Kim et al.: Teenage Participants of the 2008 Candlelight Vigil. 16

2 Song, Dong Hyun: Power struggles in Korean cyberspace and Korean cyber asylum seekers

3 Suhong Chae and Soojin Kim: The Candlelight Protest and the Politics of the Baby Stroller Brigades. 96

4 Chul-Kyoo Kim and Hea-Jin Lee: Teenage Participants of the 2008 Candlelight Vigil. 247

5 Amnesty International 2008: Policing the Candlelight Protest in South Korea

6 Song, Dong Hyun 2011: Power struggles in Korean cyberspace and Korean cyber asylum seekers

7 Kim, Ho-Ki et al. 2008: The Candle Demonstration and Korean Democracy

8 Amnesty International: Policing the Candlelight Protest in South Korea

9 Hahm, Chaibong 2008: South Korea's miraculous democracy. 130

10 Shin, Kwang-Yeong 2012: The Dilemmas of Korea's New Democracy in an Age of Neoliberal Globalisation. 305

business rather than as a medium for social and political communication. Policies on internet commerce concentrated on manufacturing enterprises, such as network build up.¹¹ This was confirmed by officials at KCC:

"The fast development of the Internet enabled Korea to have the best infrastructure and hardware, and it become a strong IT power as a consequence ... However, there were no thoughts about the development of content, i.e. how it could be used."¹²

Indeed, the virtue of increasing economic development via IT infrastructure, as promoted by the state, resulted in a policy gap in terms of intervening in cyberspace with the intention to support freedom of expression. The efficacy of the legislation on the internet was unbalanced as the state had not conceived of cyberspace as a significant place to be drawn under legislative and legal authority until the 2008 protest occurred.

While the measures on the internet exerted by the Lee government demonstrated its capacity to silence Korean cyberspace as 'Reporters Without Borders' noted,¹³ Korean web portals merely followed the central authority's requests, thus making its cyber control efforts exceedingly effective. Such submissiveness resulted from the attitude of Korean internet institutions to the state. Korean internet culture is centred on web portals, and the market is largely dominated by Naver.com, Daum.net and Nate.com. As a spokesperson for the web industry stated:

"When Korean web portals started to launch their businesses, there were few Korean-language websites. In fact, there was no Korean content. There was content such as blogs and online cafe services that users had created with tools offered by web portals. Another content category is one that web portals created themselves, which did not involve users contributing to the database."¹⁴

When Korean web portals began to set up their systems, they lacked any substantial Korean content as most of it was in English. Thus, each web portal needed to create its own content and maximise the number of users uploading posts. As a consequence, they became 'closed systems' in the sense that they did not share content with each other, because content is their capital regardless of whether this it is created by the web portal or by its users. As a result, Korean web portals tended to become the final destination of users rather than guiding and directing them to an appropriate website. Rather than guiding them to other websites with a link system ('out-bounding') as a result of their queries, the web portals try to make users stay on their site by displaying content in their own communities, blogs and through Q&As.¹⁵

Considering this Korean cyber morphology, this article analyses the struggles that emerged in the aftermath of Candlelight 2008. These struggles took place between the tripartite network that frames Korean cyberspace, i.e. the Korean government, Korean web portals and Korean internet users. I have adopted three methodological approaches to data collection, namely policy analysis, interviews and online participant observation, as these multiple data-collection methods serve to uncover new appreciations of how and why these three actors relate to each other and how they reacted to the aftermath of Candlelight 2008.

Anxieties in Korean Cyberspace after Candlelight 2008

Marianne Franklin's (2010) term "cyberscape", which is adapted from Appadurai's (1996) term '-scape', urges us to re-think the concept of cyberspace. As she argues, "cyberscape" is 'particular to the sort of "imagined

11 All interviews were conducted anonymously. Interview, 13 Aug 2010

12 Interview, 22 July 2010

13 Reporters Without Borders 2012: For Freedom of Information, South Korea

14 Interview, 8 Aug. 2010

15 Kim, Yong Ju 2008: Portal Business, the Outcome and Future

words" now constituted by, experienced as, and circulated through cyberspatial practices'.¹⁶ The public, through the power of the powerless, experiences how online territories are interwoven with society. Her theoretical position is that online is no longer a virtual space for users to reflect on their daily lives offline. Rather, online is an actual space in terms of producing and reproducing political, social and cultural issues. In the same vein, David Morley (2001) asserts that the discussion on cyberspace should focus on 'material practices and settings of everyday life' rather than dichotomisation of online vs. offline. Miyase Christensen et al also argue that 'new types of social territories' have come into shape, which resulted from 'online connectivity and sociability'.¹⁷ Candlelight 2008 and its aftermath should be understood in this context. The protest was the moment when "cyberscape" became separated from mediascape within the political arena. At the same time, the state's oppressive intervention and consequential conflict between non-state actors and internet users resulted from increasing anxieties about the new place of ICTs in Korean society.

Korean cyberspace, which was previously deemed to be a predominantly economic and cultural place, generated political power during Candlelight 2008. The political materiality of Korean cyberspace became actualised during the protest and this resulted in the reconfiguration of "cyberscape" in a political manner, which was ultimately driven by state power. Candlelight 2008 unveiled a moment when cyberspace transformed into a space separate from the mediascape, thereby making a unique contribution to the formation of Korean culture and politics.

Tripartite Approach

"The VIP [referring to the President] did not know about the internet, well he doesn't have any political philosophy on this ... He did not know the power of the internet, so there was no preparation for communicating with the public via the internet at the beginning of the Lee administration ... That is, the 2008 Candlelight demonstrations were the result of miscommunication ... he did not know how to handle the issue of the internet politically."¹⁸

The interview quoted above suggests that Lee had failed to understand the nature of Candlelight 2008 fully, as well as the sincerity of online public voices. The power holders (i.e. the government) were paranoid during Candlelight 2008 because their leader did not understand Korean cyberspace. It can be inferred that the series of policies announced after the protests followed from the anxieties of these political groups.¹⁹ My research shows that until Candlelight 2008, cyberspace in Korea was not considered to be an important space in a power-political sense. As one interviewee in the internet industry stated, 'no legislation or laws exist in order to promote the software of IT' because the Korean government paid too much attention to 'investing more funds to develop the infrastructure device industry and network enhancement'.²⁰ That is, it is not because cyberspace was not politically influential, but the state did not pay attention to the significance of people's activities in cyberspace until Candlelight 2008.

The State's Oppressive Cyber Intervention and Korean Web Portals' Submissiveness

The Lee administration politicised the internet in response to Candlelight 2008. As Eriksson et al. state, internet control can be understood in three ways, which are to control '(1) access to the internet, (2) functionality of

16 Franklin, Marianne 2010: Digital Dilemmas: Transnational Politics in the 21st Century. 79

17 Christensen, Miyase et al. 2009: Introduction: Globalization, Mediated Practice and Social Space. 5

18 Interview, 22 July 2010

19 The President's mindset is the most influential factor in the establishment of regulations because the heads of government bodies like Korean internet agencies are appointed by the President and they belong to the ruling party.

20 Interview, 13 Aug 2010.

the internet, and (3) activity on the internet'.²¹ The Lee administration's cyber control falls under the third category, as it prosecuted users as well as deploying the police to silence online voices. The Lee administration's cyber control during and after Candlelight 2008 was intended to block postings against the government, to trace internet users' IP addresses and to shape the political discourse by identifying malicious content online which needed to be controlled by the state. The examples from my research cited below demonstrate that they arrested famous anti-government netizens and accused them of disseminating false information in 2009.

In March 2009, the chief prosecutor arrested a producer of a television programme, *P.D. note*, which had broadcasted a news item on the dangers of diseased US beef, and it was alleged that the programme had distorted the truth. In April 2009, the entire staff of *P.D. note* was arrested. The prosecutor scrutinised the programme's lead writer's email account and publicised its contents as evidence that they had intentionally distorted the danger of US beef.²² There are many other cases in which Candlelight 2008 protestors were legally prosecuted by the government, as the Lee administration placed internet users who posted anti-government messages under surveillance and the Korean web portals deleted anti-government postings at the government's request. As Goldsmith and Wu (2006) assert, the idea of control over the internet through government regulation applies to the Lee regime, which attempted to regulate Korean cyberspace. However, the Lee administration's cyber control would not have been possible without the submissiveness of Korean web portals. For example, the Korean web portal Daum.net handed over personal information of people working for the *P.D. note* programme. The attitude of the web portals certainly had a direct impact on domestic email services. Daum Communications' yearbook 'Sustainable Growth Report' (2010) found that customer dissatisfaction with Daum.net's email service had increased between 2009 and 2010: 'Very Unsatisfied' ratings rose from 8.7% to 14%, 'Dissatisfaction' grew from 5.2 % to 8%.

*"Business enterprises merely went along with this [law], but the laws were normally applied to the public via our service platform. That is, if a person's basic human rights are infringed while he/she uses our service, they blame us."*²³

The web portals found themselves in the unfortunate position of being blamed for the Lee administration's sins. Based on interviews with web portal representatives, I conclude that adopting a political or non-political position was not their choice, as they had no political interest outside of their commercial priorities. However, the submissive tendencies in their pursuit of non-political goals were, in itself, a political act.

Cyber Asylum Seekers

*"People established a consensus that they were merely actively communicating in cyberspace. Then the government started to intervene online. People suddenly realised that this was also a reality and they thought they needed to come up with something quickly ... I do not feel secure about using Korean email services."*²⁴

While the Lee administration successfully intervened cyberspace by acting against anti-government internet users, accusing them of disseminating false information, internet users began to migrate some of their activities from Korean-based online platforms to global ones, a phenomenon known as Cyber Asylum Seeking. This epithet came into being when it became known that the Korean government had also requested that Google Korea provided individuals' personal information, but it failed to acquire this information. An official at Google stated that:

21 Ericksson, Johan: Who Controls What, and Under What Conditions? 206

22 Kim, Jong Wha 18 June 2009: Dispute relating to PD Note

23 Interview, 13 Aug. 2010

24 Interview, 8 Sept. 2010

"The Korean government requested personal information approximately 10 times last year. Government bodies still requested from us that we hand over the IDs of our customers, because they think we record the resident registration numbers of our customers. We open our members' email information only if a case meets the remit of international law and US law simultaneously. The case must be defined as criminal by anyone's standard. If the case does not fulfil these requirements, we do not make our customers' information available."²⁵

Gmail, which does not need to comply with Korean law, denied the Lee administration's request to hand over Korean internet users' personal information. As a consequence, the Korean press reported that Gmail's average weekly PV [Page per View] amounted to 1,300,000 in April 2009. After the incident of the *P.D. note* scriptwriter, it increased by 20% by June 2009, to 1,600,000.²⁶ Many interviewees thought that this was a direct result of the Lee administration's cyber intervention, which only applied to Korean internet service providers. For example, the Korean internet industry defined itself as a victim of Candlelight 2008. An official at Daum.net states that:

"We are also a victim of Cyber Asylum Seeking. Last year Gmail was No.1 [in the Korean market] in terms of time duration. What this signifies is that people who use email, actively moved [away] from our company to Gmail. After the email account of the writer of the TV programme P.D. Note was scrutinized by the government, our email service usage rate dropped significantly. It is worrying ... If people leave, because the quality of our service is bad, then we should be able to attract them back again by upgrading our service. If not, something is wrong."²⁷

The statements above displayed the anxiety of domestic web portal enterprises when faced with competition from global internet service enterprises, as well as testifying to their desire to maintain a relative monopoly within a closed system. It is important to note that during this same period Google followed the Chinese government's rules and censorship, which contradicts its stance in Korea.²⁸ It would be more appropriate to say that their actions amounted to strategic maneuvering in Korean cyberspace. They did not follow the Korean government's request to delete the postings as well as to hand over details relating to their users' emails as stated above. This may have resulted from the fact that Korean internet market is not as significant as that of China. However, paradoxically, their non-submissiveness to the Korean government's requests resulted in their further penetration into the Korean internet market and subsequent profits.

The Expansion of Korean 'cyberscape'

Hamoud Salhi argues that the state controls the throne of the internet, which results from the state's 'ownership of the legitimate use of force and the authority to regulate cyberspace within its territory'.²⁹ This state-driven internet control discourse positions internet service providers as inferior to the state, whether they are global corporations or local businesses. However, the veracity of this theoretical position has to be modified in the Korean context, at least when considering internet user activities.

The Significance of the Cyber Asylum Seekers Phenomenon

I argue that the label 'cyber asylum seekers' was a transient phenomenon rather than a unified movement with an explicit strategy to seek freedom of speech. The anxieties of Korean internet users due to their distrust

²⁵ INews24 28 June 2009: 'Cyber Asylum' Spread to Emails

²⁶ Seoul Newspaper 24 July 2008: I cannot stand regulations; netizens' cyber asylum seeking

²⁷ Interview, 3 Sept. 2010, also cited in Song, Dong Hyun: Power struggles in Korean cyberspace and Korean cyber asylum seekers.

²⁸ BBC 23 Mar. 2012: China and Net Censorship

²⁹ Salhi Hamoud 2009: The State Still Governs. 211

of the state as well as the Korean internet service providers resulted in their leaving their usual online places where their memories – including contacts and stories with friends and family – were stored. They left to maintain their everyday activities online without suffering any anxieties about being watched by the government rather than as an explicit challenge to government power. However, this individual cyber migration turned into political activism when users moved away from Korean-based email service providers to Gmail, thereby transforming power relations. Thus, ordinary Koreans' cyber practice in their everyday lives broke the government's cyber control mechanisms.

The Impact of the Regulation of Cyberspace

The majority of the internet users that were arrested and fined, including staff of *PD Note*, were eventually acquitted after mid-2009.³⁰ While the government's tactical use of its administrative jurisdiction to silence anti-government voices was successful to some extent, it caused the Lee administration to lose its authority in cyberspace due to the failure of its cyber governance. This failure led to plans to abolish internet regulatory bodies such as the Korean Communication Standard Commission.³¹ As the state put cyberspace under pressure and web portals followed state rule, internet users agonised, and some of them left Korean cyberspace and moved into global cyberspace. Subsequently, global web service providers entered the Korean internet market as an alternative locus of power to the state and the web portals. The web portals lost some of their established markets, namely the streaming service and SNS sectors, due to the new players that had entered the market from 2009. Korean web portals are driven by profit motives and can operate alongside the state as long as political values do not hinder their market performance. The web portals' abysmal performance at making their voices heard within the regulatory framework was based on this motivation. The launch of the Korean Internet Self-Regulation Organization (KISO) should be understood in this context. The web portal industry launched KISO in 2009 in an attempt to redefine the relationship between the government and Korean internet enterprises. KISO (2009) publishes its own guidelines for the regulation of web portal activities, thus signalling the industry's ability to self-regulate. It is also expected to build a system of cooperation between public regulation and commercial self-regulation in order to foster public trust in the running of Korean cyberspace.

Conclusion

In the course of the most recent evolution of "cyberscape" in Korean society, the state's explicit cyber control and the Korean web portals' submissiveness can be identified as key driving forces. The Korean internet users' distrust of the power holders and their traversal to global providers had a great impact on the reconfiguration and expansion of Korean cyberspace, resulting in global web service providers' successful establishment in several sectors of the Korean market. The Korean web portals then changed their attitude from submissiveness to the state to that of champion of their users' freedom of speech. Simply put, they sensed that their customers were leaving and experienced a fall in profits. The Lee administration's changed its regulatory framework due to its inability to control global web service providers and as a result of complaints from local corporations about neutrality. To understand the Cyber Asylum Seekers phenomenon within the larger context of these struggles, we should question whether the move to global service providers resulted in a significant destabilisation of dominant power relations in Korean cyberspace. Alternatively, we could argue that Korean internet users who began to use global web services in their online practices seamlessly integrated global web service into the Korean cyberspace constellation.

30 Associated Press 20 April 2009: South Korean blogger cleared of spreading false information.

The Korea Herald 2 Sept. 2012: Supreme Court clears 'PD Notebook' directors and program.

31 Interview, 18 Jan. 2012

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Interviews

- 22 July 2010: Interview with an official at an internet-related government body, at a café in Seoul.
- 8 August 2010: Interview with an official at internet industry, at a cafe in Seoul.
- 13 August 2010: Interview with an official at internet industry, at the interviewee's office in Seoul.
- 8 September 2010: Interview with member of online café 'Agora Justice Forum', at a café in Seoul.
- 18 January 2012: Interview with an official at an internet-related government body, at a café in London.

Emad Khazraee, Kristene Unsworth:

Social media: The new opiate of the masses?

Abstract:

This study argues that the relationship between new information and communication technologies (ICT) and social movements should be done from a socio-technical perspective. In the present study, we broaden this perspective and use Actor-Network Theory (ANT) to better understand the relationship between social media (as a new ICT) and social movements. From the perspective of ANT, one cannot define unidirectional causal relationships between the social and the technical. New technical developments create opportunities to change the social order and in the meantime technologies are transformed and are adapted differently by humans. Preliminary findings examining the use of Facebook among Iranians, applying the aforementioned relational sociology perspective based on ANT, suggest that the role new ICTs play in social movements and social change is not linear and constant through time. The impact of new ICTs might be different considering different stages in a social movement timeline. In fact, there may be a stage where ICTs actually function as a sort of pressure-release valve, allowing individuals to remain content within the status quo rather than choosing to pursue more radical goals. We propose the utilization of the two concepts of "durability" and "mobility", from ANT literature, to better understand the potential of online social networking technologies for social change. We suggest three different time stages as short (emergence of movements), mid (development or decline of movements), and late stage (the movement's continuation, survival or disappearance through time) to be considered in the study of relationship between social media and social change.

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 - Unsworth, K. (under review). Citizen participation in the global surveillance society: An obligation to inform? *Surveillance & Society*.

Introduction

Some studies have scrutinized the relationship between new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)s and social movements¹. We argue that in order to gain a more complete understanding of the issues such studies should be done from a socio-technical perspective. Analyzing the role of social media from either reductionist pole (technological determinism or human reductionism) does not provide a precise picture of the relationships between social media, social change and social movements. From a socio-technical perspective, unidirectional causal relationships between the social and the technical are not defined nor is it possible to consider them as separate entities². Therefore, one cannot argue that the recent social movements are direct results of technological developments (emergence of social media) rather that they are the result of a complex network of social and technical entities³. It is important to consider that social and technical phenomena constantly shape and form each other. New technical developments create opportunities to change the social order and in the meantime technologies are transformed and are adapted differently by humans. This relationship is not merely an interactional relationship but rather it is an entanglement situation⁴. The present study reports on preliminary findings examining the use of Facebook among Iranians, applying the aforementioned relational sociology perspective based on Actor-Network Theory (ANT).

Following ANT, we consider social order as the effect of a translation process of a complex heterogeneous socio-technical network (including both humans and non-humans). We propose the utilization of the two concepts of "durability" and "mobility" developed by ANT writers to better understand the potential of online social networking technologies for social change. Based on early findings of our study we suggest that there is a temporal aspect to the degree of effect based on social media use. We propose three different stages as early (emergence of movements), mid (development or decline of movements), and late stage (the movement's continuation, survival or disappearance through time) to be considered in the study of relationship between social media and social change. In each of the stages there is the opportunity for multiple forces to interact. The fact that social media is being used by individuals engaged in certain social movements does not preclude that the government or those in power aren't using the same technologies to maintain the status quo. Similar to the manner in which Marx invoked religion as an opiate for the people, or as a means to placate the masses by allowing them some sense of freewill, social media technologies appear to be used in our study as a pressure-release valve. The government is certainly aware of the existence of Facebook pages that transgress religious law. Social media or Facebook in particular, appears to be serving a similar purpose to the public's gravitation to religion as discussed by Marx⁵.

Background

Attempts have been made to study the relationship between ICTs and new media⁶. These studies have utilized social movement theory to understand the role new ICTs play in social movements' emergence, development and outcome. An effort to integrate multiple perspectives in the field of social movements is presented in the *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* by McAdam, McCarthy and Zald⁷. The framework defines three

¹ van de Donk et al., *Cyberprotest*; Garrett, "Protest in an Information Society"; Meier, "Do 'liberation Technologies' Change the Balance of Power Between Repressive States and Civil Society?"

² Latour, *Reassembling the Social*; Law, "Notes on the Theory of the Actor Network: Ordering, Strategy and Heterogeneity."

³ Law, "Notes on the Theory of the Actor Network: Ordering, Strategy and Heterogeneity."

⁴ Orlikowski, "Sociomaterial Practices."

⁵ Marx, *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy Of Right."*

⁶ van de Donk et al., *Cyberprotest*; Garrett, "Protest in an Information Society"; Meier, "Do 'liberation Technologies' Change the Balance of Power Between Repressive States and Civil Society?"

⁷ McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*.

aspects for social movements as: mobilizing structures (mechanisms that facilitate collective action), opportunity structures (societal conditions in which social movements develop), and framing processes (collective strategic attempts to construct shared meanings and understandings that help to legitimize and to propagate movement narratives and form collective identities)⁸.

Although technologies and technological artifacts form an important part of social systems, they should not be considered merely as tools and means that are directed by social interests, but as integral parts of the system interwoven with the social fabric⁹. In the present study, we broaden this perspective and use ANT to better understand the relationship between social media (as a new ICT) and social movements.

From the perspective of ANT, social order is an achievement and the result of a translation process that transforms a set of interests and actors (human and non-human) into a complex heterogeneous network¹⁰. Therefore, any social movement can be seen as the formation of such actor-networks that challenges the existing social order. Callon¹¹ describes four steps of translation process as: problematization (the process to become indispensable), interessement¹² (the process whereby the associations between actors who support a network are locked into the place and their identities are stabilized in the network), enrollment (the process to define and coordinate the roles), and mobilization (mobilization of allies to achieve the goal). We suggest considering these four steps to better understand the role of new ICTs in social movements.

The success of actor-networks depends on multiple factors. ANT writers argue that networks consist of different materials (i.e. technological artifacts) and "some materials are more durable than others and so maintain their relational patterns for longer ... [t]hus a good ordering strategy is to embody a set of relations in durable materials"¹³. Therefore, more resistant networks consist of and are performed by durable materials. This concept can be used to study to what extent we can consider social media as a durable material to form an actor-network in favor of social change.

The concept of durability refers to the way the materiality or technologies of an Actor-Network can maintain their ordering effects in the network through time and resist against the other competing networks and strategies. Whereas mobility is concerned with the spread of ordering effects of networks through space, in particular, how networks can extend their effects to spatial and geographically distant areas¹⁴. Evidence suggests that social media technologies are very mobile and effective tools to use to coordinate critical masses of people to engage in events¹⁵. Garret and Meier¹⁶ discuss in detail how new ICTs contribute to the mobilization structures in social movements. Social media enables citizens to instantaneously broadcast their words to geographically distant regions. This mobility has the potential to contribute to the effect of the messages.. For example, social media can be used to mobilize public opinion promptly through widespread diffusion of the news and provide evidence about a social movement. However, it is necessary to ask whether new ICTs in general and social media in particular are durable materials for social change. In other words, whether they can overcome resistance from existing power, or if networks formed around social media technologies will become impoverished under constant repression. One should note that it is still very early for social media

⁸ Snow et al., "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation"; Benford and Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements."

⁹ Law, "On the Methods of Long-distance Control: Vessels, Navigation and the Portuguese Route to India."

¹⁰ Law, "Notes on the Theory of the Actor Network: Ordering, Strategy and Heterogeneity."

¹¹ Callon, "Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation: Domestication of the Scallops and the Fishermen of St Brieuc Bay."

¹² We used the same terms that Callon used for conceptualizing translation process (e.g. interessement).

¹³ Law, "Notes on the Theory of the Actor Network: Ordering, Strategy and Heterogeneity," 6.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Myers, "Communication Technology and Social Movements"; Bennett and Segerberg, "Digital Media and the Personalization of Collective Action"; Bennett, "The Personalization of Politics Political Identity, Social Media, and Changing Patterns of Participation."

¹⁶ Garrett, "Protest in an Information Society"; Meier, "Do 'liberation Technologies' Change the Balance of Power Between Repressive States and Civil Society?."

technologies to be assessed in this regard. In the last decade, we have seen the rise and fall of many different social networking technologies (e.g. Orkut, Yahoo 360 and MySpace to some extent). In addition, it is important to study whether social networking sites can keep the public engaged in discussions about social change or if their impact on public opinion mobilization will be diminished shortly after the start of uprisings and the emergence of a social movements; therefore, before considering any strong claim about the role of social media in social change, it behooves us to consider the durability of such technologies.

Empirical Study

This exploratory study was performed to better understand the adaptation of Facebook in Iran as representative of a cultural setting different from that of Facebook's design and creation. The study was done in two phases. In the first, qualitative interviews were utilized to understand how Iranians use Facebook. In the second, content analysis was done on the status updates and posts of eight users in Facebook over a 20 days period to understand the major topics and patterns of use among a sample of users.

Sampling Strategy and Data collection

Collecting data about online social networking practices on Facebook is not easy for two reasons: First, an important aspect of such social practice is considered private and cannot be observed publicly. Second, companies such as Facebook are reluctant to share data. As a result, in this study we followed a stratified quota sampling strategy which is a common practice in qualitative research especially when looking at a small number of subjects¹⁷.

A recent major study on General Media Use (GMU) in Iran¹⁸ portrays the landscape of media consumption in the country. The statistics and demographics derived from this data set were used to stratify the sample for the present study. Our aim was to include participants who reflected a similar socio-demographic population to the online social network users identified in the GMU study (Table 1). This stratification strategy was applied to both phases of the study.

In the first phase, eight users were interviewed to learn how Iranians use Facebook. Interviewees were selected from a list compiled through a snowball sampling strategy. The interviews followed a semi-structured model (one face-to-face and seven phone interviews). Each interview lasted for about an hour. Following the GMU survey, we picked our participants from major urban areas (five major cities) in Iran and one participant outside Iran, who has recently left the country, as a comparative case which can reveal the differences between inside and outside Iran. The sample consists of four female and four male participants. Regarding educational achievement three participants held a high school degree, four held an undergraduate degree and one with a graduate degree. The interviews were transcribed and imported into Atlas.ti software for qualitative data analysis.

In the second phase of the study, a research collaborator who had 1560 Facebook friends stratified her friend list based on our sampling strategy and then picked random subjects from each group (in total 8 subjects). In this phase our sample consisted of four female and four male subjects. Three subjects held a high school degree, four an undergraduate degree and one with graduate degree. The research collaborator was asked to monitor the subjects' status updates and posts for a period of 20 days. Then, any private personal information was removed and the data set was anonymized by the collaborator. The purpose of this phase was to better understand the patterns and frequencies of Facebook use among subjects and to recognize the type and subject of contents mostly shared by the users (N=247 for status updates and posts).

¹⁷ Lindlof and Taylor, *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*; Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*.

¹⁸ Wojcieszak, Smith, and Enayat, *Finding a Way: How Iranians Reach for News and Information. The Iran Media Program's 2011-2012 Report on Media Consumption in Iran*.

Utilizing ANT as a conceptual lens, in both phases of the study we looked to understand: 1) how the participants shape and are shaped by the use of Facebook. And 2) whether Facebook can serve as a durable platform for instigating social change.

Table 1: Statistics of social networks users in Iran from General Media Use (GMU) survey¹⁹

Total percent of social networks users among internet users	18.5%
Percent of Social network users by age group	
Between 18-40 yrs.	92%
Between 18-30 yrs.	72%
Between 18-25 yrs.	54%
Percent of Social network users by education level	
Graduate degree	9%
Undergraduate degree	51%
	35%
Below high school	4%

(Survey Period: 12 January - 29 February 2012; N=1022)

Discussion

Participants in this study spend a considerable amount of time on Facebook despite the existence of obstacles in Iran which limit Facebook use such as low speed Internet connections and filtering. One reason, emphasized by all participants, is that Facebook creates an extension to their existing social life. In this arena, they can participate in a different form of social life that is free from the official restrictions imposed by the government or the dominant discourse in society; thereby effectively, forming a separate social sphere. Moreover, this extension to their social life allows them a space where they can address some of the restrictions on social freedom regardless of their geographical location, gender or other barriers enforced through social norms. In a sense, this makes it possible to maintain two parallel realities which represent two discourses. One follows the official discourse in society encouraged by government, and the other follows the unofficial discourse practiced by many people privately. For example, in Iran, officially it is mandatory for females to practice Hijab²⁰, whereas in many families and certain parts of society it is not an enforced value; therefore, in more private spaces females may not follow this rule. This is what we consider unofficial discourse. Online social networking environments such as Facebook create more possibilities to practice the unofficial discourse.

Among the participants of the interviews two groups can be distinguished, those with minimal interest in the use of the Facebook environment for political causes and those who consider Facebook as an environment that may contribute to social change. The latter group mentioned some frustration related to their initial assumption about the use of Facebook as a means to social change. They mentioned that political issues were a dominant trend on Facebook for just a short period of time after the 2009 uprisings in Iran and now mostly issues of everyday life dominate the Facebook environment.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ The Oxford English Dictionary defines Hijab as: "The practice observed by some Muslim women of wearing concealing clothing (esp. Headgear)."

This issue was confirmed by the findings of the GMU survey²¹ which indicate that political topics are not the top agenda item of discussions on social media for tech savvy Iranian youth, but stand at the fourth place behind personal topics, new technologies and work-related affairs. Results of the second phase of our study also suggested similar findings. Just one user among the eight was primarily posting content with political subjects, which made up for half of political posts in the entire sample. The share of posts with topics related to social change was 27% of total posts (N=427) while the share of posts about daily life and personal impressions was 62%. These findings, to some extent, confirm the concern of those participants of the study who support social change; that social media may have a counter-effect in the mid-stage of social movement development. As mentioned above, social networks can provide an extension to the reality of physical social life. This extension, in some cases, satisfies some of the needs that cannot be fulfilled in the physical world. This in turn might work as a safety valve which actually undermines the potential for social activism in two ways.

First, presence in online social networks replaces the physical world and the actions that may occur to initiate social change in the repressive environments. For example, activists may assume that their activities in the online space suffice, thus they would not participate in contentious physical world activities. This has been considered as an impediment among those participants of the study who formerly were expecting Facebook as a means to support social change and were actively attempting to use it for such a purpose. Moreover, the decrease in the amount of activism in the physical world might decrease the durability of the networks of social change forces.

Second, in many societies, one of the causes that motivate people to object to the status quo is the lack of social space and interaction, especially among people in younger generations. Facebook provides such spaces for Iranian youth to represent themselves in the way they like (e.g. a personal image of a female not wearing the mandatory hijab) or socialize more cordially and freely with friends, especially of the opposite sex. This function of online social networks as an extension of physical social life provides a level of satisfaction that may ultimately vent some of the dissatisfaction felt by the youth, or as first referenced by Marx in relation to religion, as an opiate that relieves their anger to protest in the material social sphere. Social media, rather than being a tool used by individuals to express their independence, has the danger of being something that can be coopted by the state. From the perspective of the two parallel realities mentioned above, it explains that unofficial reality can be represented in the online social networks to reduce the conflict between the two realities. In this light the technology may in fact reduce the will to social change.

Lack of Dialogue

One of the complaints of the participants, who were looking to use Facebook as a platform in favor of social change, was that these technologies do not support dialogue. Only short interactions can be formed on Facebook which are only good for specific ends. In some cases, activists need a space for dialogue to negotiate strategies and achieve consensus. They argue that Facebook better serves mundane causes than social change. One may conclude that this means that technologies such as Facebook cannot form durable networks that support social change effectively.

Considering a social movement process as a translation process from an ANT perspective, social movements require an enrollment process in which different actors negotiate their roles and actions. This means if participants intend to go further than ad-hoc arrangements in a short period of time the enrollment process will require a negotiation and dialogue environment. Particularly, actors should be able to align their interests and coordinate their roles. One can argue the lack of proper negotiation capabilities will reduce the durability of social networking technologies for the mid-stage and the late-stage of a social movement.

²¹ Wojcieszak, Smith, and Enayat, *Finding a Way: How Iranians Reach for News and Information. The Iran Media Program's 2011-2012 Report on Media Consumption in Iran*, 33.

Practicing New Social Values

The findings of the study suggest that the younger generation, especially those from more conservative families, start adapting and practicing new social values in the extended reality environment. These values conform more closely with the unofficial discourse, or their interactions on Facebook. This may have the potential to lead to internalizing these values in the long-term.

Challenging power requires cognitive liberation²². Cognitive liberation in one sense requires questioning existing value systems and the dominant discourse as well as overcoming fear. Our actions are rooted in our value systems²³; therefore, internalizing more relaxed social values may contribute to the social change in favor of the unofficial discourse in the long-term in Iran. It is important to note that unofficial discourse is not merely a cognitive phenomenon but embodied and practiced. Considering the social movement framework²⁴, mainstream discussions on routine life issues might not directly contribute to the "cognitive liberation" process and to questioning the existing socio-political situation in the early-stage of a social movement, however, practicing new norms and values might help the framing processes in the long-term to legitimize unofficial discourse. Facebook provides a platform for such unofficial discourse to be practiced and embodied. This suggests that in studying the role of new ICTs in social movement we have to consider different stages. New ICTs might have very different functions in the early-stage, in the mid-stage and in the late-stage of a social movement.

All of the participants in the study use circumvention tools to access the Facebook (which is considered as an illegal action in Iran). Also, all participants mentioned that they have personally heard stories from friends and acquaintances about the security threats that they have faced because of the use of Facebook. In spite of all of these threats they are still using Facebook. Gamson²⁵ argues that even when the legitimacy of oppressive regimes is questioned people should still overcome their fear to form a social movement. Using illegal circumvention tools, banned media resources, and online social networking environments in the mid-stage of a social movement may release some steam, but in the long-term may help overcome the fear of repressive forces. Understanding this aspect requires longitudinal studies on a larger scale.

Transitory Collective Identities vs. Durable Collective Identities

"Mediating between opportunity, organization, and action are shared meaning and definitions that people bring to their situation"²⁶. Political process models emphasize that shared and socially constructed ideas and collective identities are necessary for collective action. New ICTs have the ability to accelerate and geographically broaden the diffusion of information²⁷. In the case of Iranian Facebook users, we have witnessed cases that some events initiated formation of transitory collective identities (e.g. the case of Majid Tavakoli's arrest²⁸), but none of the cases lasted for a long time. One might argue that social online networking technologies can contribute to quickly spreading the word to a vast geographical area (very mobile technologies) but their effect lasts only for a short time (not durable technologies). Thus, one can suggest that such technologies can contribute to formation of transitory collective identities, but not durable collective identities required for social movement development. Returning back to the Actor-Network Theory framework it is important to question

²² McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*.

²³ Ganz, "Public Narrative, Collective Action, and Power."

²⁴ McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*.

²⁵ Gamson, "Arab Spring, Israeli Summer, and the Process of Cognitive Liberation."

²⁶ McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*, 5.

²⁷ Myers, "Communication Technology and Social Movements."

²⁸ Majid Tavakoli is a student leader and human rights activist. He was arrested in 2009 during protests in Tehran and state media showed images of him in a headscarf to discredit him by insinuating that he was trying to escape disguised as a woman. In matter of hours, social media stormed with photos of thousands of men wearing hijab to show their solidarity with Majid Tavakoli and questioning gender issues ("Iranian Men Don Hijabs in Protest."). This was an example of the formation of a transitory collective identity that initiated quickly and expanded very fast, although did not last for a long time.

whether such mobile but non-durable technologies can challenge the existing networks of power in the long-term.

The Political Use of Technology

Early assertions relating to the use of social media throughout the Arab Spring uprisings claimed that use of the tools allowed organizers to reach a larger number of individuals more quickly than earlier forms of communication. By doing so, the people were able to organize and raise their voices against the power status quo. While elements of this may be true there is another side of social media and technology use that needs to be considered. As discussed earlier in this article, technologies operate within a socio-technical framework. If we were to analyze one aspect of their implementation without mention of the other we would only be providing part of the story.

Social media tools also provide tools for government engagement. In the case of Iran, there is little chance of widespread use of a social media tool that can't be monitored by the government. While people are oppressed under strict rules, lack of social freedom and a repressive environment, they can still find refuge in their social online niches. With this in mind we have asked if Marx's critique of religion can be applied to social media use. *"Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people"*²⁹. It is important to note that religion in itself is not the target of Marx's condemnation but is considered an outlet for suffering. In this way one could consider social media, specifically Facebook, as both the safety valve that relieves the pressure of social restriction and as one of the tools that helps ensure that social unrest is allowed just enough freedom to keep it suppressed.

Conclusion

The present study suggests that to better understand the relationship between social media and social change, we have to use a relational sociology perspective such as Actor-Network Theory (ANT). From this theoretical stance social order is considered as the effect of a heterogeneous network of social and technical phenomena. We suggested utilizing the concepts of "durability" and "mobility" in studying social media borrowed from ANT vocabulary. The evidence from literature suggests that social media technologies are very mobile; however, we believe that mobility of such technologies shadowed the importance of inquiries about the durability social media technologies. The preliminary findings of this exploratory study of Iranian Facebook users suggests that online social networking technologies and social media created very complex relationships within the social context that might not be well understood. We have discussed that time is an important factor to evaluate the durability of such technologies in favor of social change. However, in the mid-stage of a social movement development, we have noticed that social media might have counter-effects by working as a pressure valve to relieve some of the frustration built up through various societally imposed disappointments and to vent the steam that may drive social change. These issues need more in depth study to better understand the efficacy of social media for revolutionary change in the future.

Due to the complex nature of the relationship between social and technical phenomena, this study suggests that the role new ICTs play in social movements and social change is not linear and constant through time. The impact of new ICTs might be different considering different stages in a social movement timeline. Therefore, we encourage a framing of studies which contemplate the relationship between new ICTs and social change in three different stages of a social movement timeline as early stage (emergence of movements), mid-stage (development or decline of movements), and late-stage (the movement's continuation, survival or disappearance through time). It is important to critically analyze the use of social media, particularly in contemporary instances such as the Arab Spring, flash mob activity, and rioting. There is more to the situation

²⁹ Marx, *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy Of Right,"* 131.

than the technical capability afforded through use of technology. It is still important to consider the political and historical contexts of the action.

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Melanie Radue:

The Internet's role in the Bersih movement in Malaysia – A Case Study

Abstract:

Everywhere in the media, people talk about the so-called "Twitter and Facebook revolution" in regard to the Green Revolution in Iran or other new social movements which demand democratization in their countries and use the Internet for communication and mobilization. Libertarian advocates of the Internet state that the Internet has democratizing effects because of its reputed egalitarian, open and free technological structure for communication processes. Especially in countries in which the media is under strict control by the government, these characteristics are emphasized as stimulation for political liberalization and democratization processes. This essay critically examines the alleged democratizing effect of the use of the Internet on the Malaysian society exemplified on the social movement Bersih. The Bersih movement demands free and fair elections in Malaysia, often described as an ethnocratic and "electoral authoritarian regime".¹⁴¹ The objective of this study is to demonstrate the dependency of such possible effects on context.

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¹⁴¹ See Wong, C. H., Chin, J. & Othman, N. (2010). Malaysia - Towards a Topology of an Electoral One-Party State. 920-949.

Analytical approach – contextualization of the variables

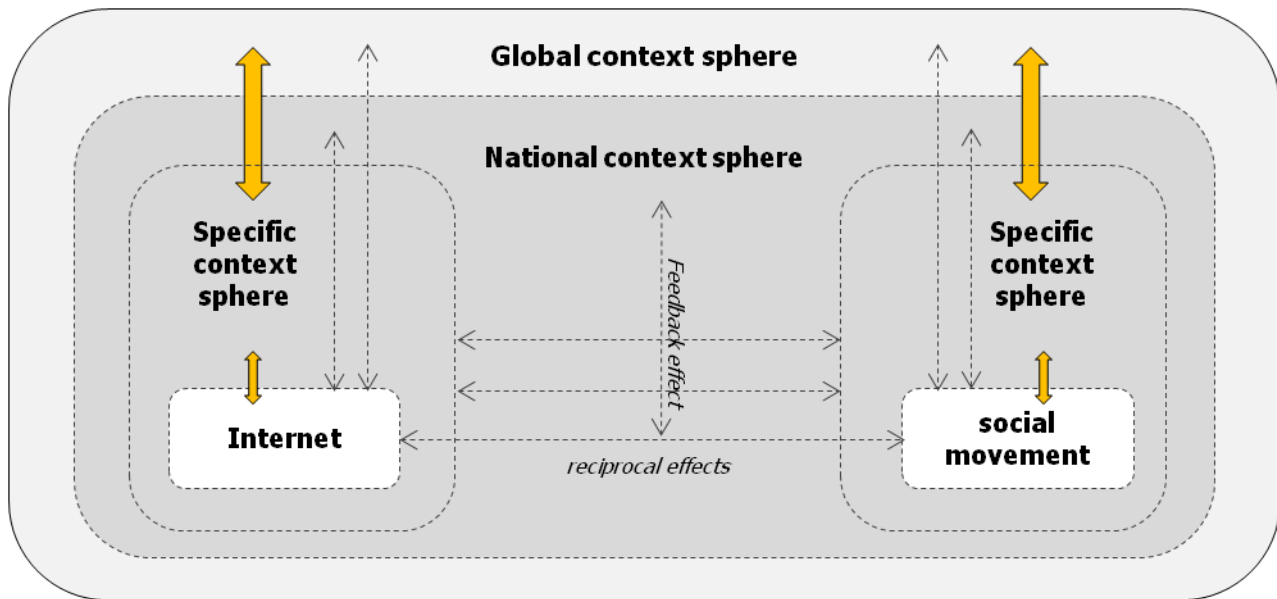
The Internet in its variety of structures, uses and effects has multiple characteristics and faces; it developed in diverse ways in different settings, histories, and societies. Not everyone is included in the development of a digital modernity and of course not all in the same manner. These developments greatly depend on the specific context. Therefore, the objective of this essay is not the identification of general characteristics of the effect of the use of the Internet in social movements on socio-political change, especially democratization processes. It is about identifying and analyzing the specific context and the reciprocal effects of the relevant variables in their context.

The analysis is conducted in an explorative manner which emphasises the contextualization of the variables.¹ That means that the relevant variables are predominantly analyzed in their direct specific context spheres which interact reciprocal and with the national context sphere to a great extent. Likewise, global context spheres are considered to the extent they affect the interdependence of the use of the Internet in the social movement and society. Additionally, critical incidents which affect the different context spheres, their interactions and reciprocal effects are considered in the analysis. This obtains an inclusion of both, internal and external factors.²

The figure illustrates the different specific context spheres in which the relevant variables operate and interact. The open analytical approach encourages the enhancement of the perception of the Internet's role in social movements. For this purpose, these two variables are analyzed in their specific contexts as independent variables to derive a possible causation on a more abstract level.

¹ Razak, A. (2000). Role of the Media Promoting Democracy. 78-96.

² Hudson, W. (2003). Problematizing European Theories of Civil Society. 9-20.



Context spheres in which the considered variables operate³

Based on Touraine's predication that social movements are a general representation of (civil) society, this article considers social movements as an extension of civil society. Furthermore, Touraine advocates the analysis of social dynamics in general instead of analyzing social movements themselves.⁴ To create an open analytical approach without theoretical limitation for the analysis in the Malaysian context, this article considers the role of the Internet in a social movement within the framework of the concept of civil society as a dynamic concept, as a "project in progress".⁵ For this reason, the analysis does not refer to theoretical models which were developed in Western contexts but rather analyzes the variables in an explorative, contextualizing manner.

These contexts, the mobilization and action of the social movement itself as well as other critical incidents ("tipping points") influence whether the Internet can have an impact on democratization processes or not. Here, these processes are understood as a "metaprocess of social change" as defined by Krotz.⁶ This metaprocess is neither in its causes and effects nor in its processes clearly distinguishable from other processes.⁷ Before democratization processes can evolve, there first has to be a disruption in the political system. Only then can a medium like the Internet provide a platform for the demands and the organization of social movements.⁸

The Internet is often proclaimed a space in which democratic learning processes evolve. The experience of a relatively free flow of alternative information and consequently the possibility to access alternative information, particularly democratic values, from a transnational public sphere indicates the assumption of these learning processes.⁹ Kedzie explained these processes in his research into the "dictator's dilemma", as:

³ The Feedback Effects are not analyzed in this essay. They are interesting for further research (cp. 2. Conclusion and further research)

⁴ Touraine, A. (1995). Beyond Social Movements? 371-397.

⁵ Schak, D.C. & Hudson, W. (2003). Civil Society in Asia. 1.

⁶ Krotz, F. (2007). Mediatisierung: Fallstudien zum Wandel von Kommunikation.

⁷ Ibid. 12.

⁸ Castells, M. (2007). Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society. 238-266.

⁹ cp. Castells, M. (2001, 2007); Howard, P. N. (2010)

"New communication technologies enable citizens of prospective democracies to learn more about how other societies operate. [...] they are inclined to seek more freedom and democracy for themselves. [...] this is precisely the reason that non-democratic regimes, from the Soviet Union to Singapore, deem it necessary to attempt to control communication and information. There is a prophylactic measure against the infectious nature of freedom."¹⁰

Therefore, the Internet is often considered a change agent within and for democratization processes.¹¹ For example Nisbet, Stoycheff & Pierce state that a country as Malaysia is more likely "to experience political change as citizen Internet use deepens and expands" because of the "high level of Internet penetration, a moderate amount of demand for democracy, and some freedoms".¹² Castells also emphasizes the potential of the Internet, particularly of the network society, to create social transformation processes.¹³ He proposes a drift of vertical powers (hegemony) to horizontal "counter-powers".¹⁴ Referring to social movements as representation of civil society, the Internet is especially in authoritarian contexts a good means of countering power and hegemony.¹⁵

Although there is a lot of research conducted into the interdependence of the use of the Internet and social movements, which gives evidence and postulates general democratizing effects of the Internet diffusion, most scholars agree about a certain dependency on context.¹⁶ For instance, Best & Wade "found evidence that this Internet-democracy relationship is not absolute; for instance, consider the variability among regional results".¹⁷

Morozov condemns an implied "cyber-utopianism" and also emphasizes the context-dependency of the potential of the Internet for democratization processes.¹⁸ Abbott declares in the Malaysian context that "the loud-speaker will always be more intrusive than the Internet will ever be".¹⁹

In fact, one of the main points which influences whether a medium has a democratizing effect is the way it is used and not the way the technology is structured.²⁰ This is supported by Castells: "Naturally, social movements are not originated by technology, they use technology."²¹ Therefore, this article hypothesizes that it is not solely the medium itself which can effect democratization. The Internet itself is not a democratic medium only because of its technological structure. It depends fundamentally on its social, political and economic context and especially on how it is used by the actors involved.²² The social actor who uses a medium in a specific context can use it either in a democratic or in a non-democratic manner. As Best & Wade maintain that "the Internet can be used both as a tool for democratization as well as an instrument for authoritarianism".²³ Consequently, one could say that no medium is inherently democratic, neither traditional media nor

¹⁰ Kedzie, C. R. (1997). *Communication and Democracy: Coincident Revolutions and the Emergent Dictator's Dilemma*.

¹¹ e.g. Kedzie, C. R. (1997); Howard, P. N. (2010); Somchai, P. (2006); George, C. (2006)

¹² Nisbet, E., Stoycheff, E. & Pierce, K. (2012). *Internet Use and Democratic Demands: A Multinational, Multilevel Model of Internet Use and Citizen Attitudes About Democracy*. 262.

¹³ Castells, M. (2001, 2004)

¹⁴ Castells, M. (2004, 2007)

¹⁵ E.g.: Kedzie, C. R. (1997); Howard, P. N. (2010); Castells, M. (2001, 2004)

¹⁶ e.g. Abbott, J. P. (2001); Bennet, W. L. (2003); Best, M. L. & Wade K. D. (2009); Howard, P. N. (2010); Howard, P.N. & Parks, M. R. (2012); Nisbet, E., Stoycheff, E. & Pierce, K. (2012)

¹⁷ Best, M. L. & Wade K. D. (2009). *The Internet and Democracy: Global Catalyst or Democratic Dud?*. 270.

¹⁸ Morozov, E. (2011a). *The Net Delusion. The Dark Side of Internet Freedom*.

¹⁹ Abbott, J. P. (2001). *Democracy@internet.asia? The Challenges to the emancipatory potential of the net: lessons from China and Malaysia*. 111.

²⁰ Morozov, E. (2011b). *Technologies Role in Revolution: Internet Freedom and Political Oppression*.

²¹ Castells, M. (2007). *Communication, Power and Counter-Power in the Network Society*. 249.

²² Abbott, J. P. (2001, 2004); Best, M. L. & Wade K. D. (2009); Morozov, E. (2011);

²³ Best, M. L. & Wade K. D. (2009). *The Internet and Democracy: Global Catalyst or Democratic Dud?*. 255.

the concept of the so-called new social media. It is a tool which can be utilized for socialization, identity construction and mobilization but also for propaganda, surveillance and repression. Additionally, especially the so-called new or social media require a specific competence to use them.²⁴ Consequently, the concept of social media inherently encouraging democratic processes is not tenable; there are only social and unsocial, democratic and undemocratic actions of people evoked by the use of media.

The following analysis of a possible effect of the Internet, exemplified on the Malaysian case study, will be contextualized to avoid a Eurocentric perspective by applying a western media or communication theory concept. For this purpose, the Internet and the social movement have to be analyzed as dependent variables of political, economic, historical and social structures in Malaysia. Then, these two variables are analyzed as independent variables in order to derive a possible causation.

The Bersih movement – from elite to grassroots

Bersih means "clear" in Bahasa Melayu. The Bersih movement, also called "the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections", is "a group of 84 non-governmental organisations whose sole aim till this day is to comprehensively revise Malaysia's electoral system".²⁵

According to Touraine's prediction that the role of social movements is considered a general representation of civil society in democratization processes,²⁶ I will proceed to delineate and analyze the accomplishments and contexts which influence the correlation between the use of the Internet and this social movement instead of expatiating on the claims and the institution of the Bersih movement. Because of its special role in the development of the movement, the emphasis of the analysis is on the Bersih 2.0 rally on 9 July 2011.²⁷

As stated in Wong's illustration of the history of the Bersih movement, it can be understood as an extension of and tied in with the Reformasi movement which prospered after the imprisonment of the popular former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim in 1999. In the beginning, Bersih was an elite, party driven movement which developed into a non-partisan NGO and more of a grassroots movement.²⁸

While in the first Bersih rally in 2007, the parties drew the people to the street and mobilized them, in 2011 when the police cracked down the Bersih 2.0 rally, the situation was a different one. In 2007, only just under 10% were non-partisan activists whose opinion leaders were a small number of bloggers. For this reason, in 2007, Bersih did not enter into the public consciousness. In the 2011 Bersih 2.0 rally participants were 50-60% non-partisan and multiethnic and the opinion leaders were thousands of Facebook and Twitter activists. Because of the different composition of participants and the behavior of the police, the people on the street experienced the rally in a different manner. The coercive police was a common enemy, hence a feeling of unity emerged through the common multiethnic experience and the success of the rally raising public attention.²⁹ Actually, in 2011 the rally became a topic of general interest for Malaysians.³⁰

The behaviour of the government, which did not want to go along with the demands of the movement and the planned rally, was essential for the public attention of the Bersih 2.0 rally in 2011. Furthermore, the aggressive misconduct of the police during the rally itself provoked some unintended consequences. Without

²⁴ Krotz, F. (2003). *Zivilisationsprozess und Mediatisierung: Zum Zusammenhang von Medien- und Gesellschaftswandel*. 15–39.

²⁵ cp.: <http://www.globalbersih.org/about-us/>

²⁶ Touraine, A. (1995). *Beyond Social Movements?* 371–397.

²⁷ The basis for various information for the analysis is an interview with Dr. Wong Chin Huat, a Malaysian political scientist and leading political activist in the Bersih movement.

²⁸ Weiss, M. L. (2012). *Politics in Cyberspace: New Media in Malaysia*. 36.; Wong, C. H. (2012, 23. January).

²⁹ Welsh, B. (2011, 10. August). *People Power in Malaysia: Bersih Rally and Its Aftermath.*; Weiss, M. (2012). *Politics in Cyberspace: New Media in Malaysia*.

³⁰ Wong, C. H. (2012, 23. January).

the numerous arrests, often only for wearing a yellow t-shirt (the symbolic color of the movement) and the brutality of the police the rally would not have gained so much public attention.³¹

The development of the movement from an elite, party driven movement to a more or less grassroots movement is reflected in the organization and the form of communication of the activists. Thus, the Bersih movement can be considered as both a cause for and an effect of the Malaysian democratization process.³² Bersih contributed a new form of input to the democratization process because in Bersih 2.0 "the extent and the intensity of the mobilization was unmatched in [Malaysian] history".³³

Wong highlights the role of the Internet as "amplifying the entire development" of the movement.³⁴ However, before the rally on 9 July 2011, the Internet played a more important role for the mobilization and organization than in the aftermath. After the rally, the Internet was used to disseminate news and to share experiences. Videos, photos and statements of participants were immediately spread all over the world. Consequently, we may state that the media can mirror such events, but ultimately they take place on the streets and are created in reality and by the actors themselves, not by the media.³⁵

The Internet in Malaysia – Between Draconian Laws and Flourishing Industry

"The opposition parties, and those with a different view from the government, went into this new technology as ducks to water, adopted it and spread their messages across cyberspace."³⁶

Though the Internet provides a platform for communication, information, mobilization and coordination to those who are already interested in politics, it does not necessarily facilitate political participation.³⁷ Nevertheless, liberal advocates of the Internet state that the Internet contributes to democratization in many places, to support the demand of human rights, and to identify deficiencies more quickly.³⁸

In Malaysia, the Internet operates in a very restricted media system.³⁹ The media coverage in the so-called mainstream media in Malaysia works in favor of the interests of the government and is strongly biased.⁴⁰ The public sphere in Malaysia is regulated by the ruling elite.⁴¹ This constrains the public sphere to a free discourse. To legitimate this biased news coverage, the government frequently refers to the ethnic riots in 1969 and to the stability needed on these grounds to prevent further riots. The ethnic riots in 1969, in which hundreds of people died, evolved because the Chinese diaspora had the economic power in Malaysia while Malaysians remained largely excluded from economic development. For a long time the government spread fear that new riots could erupt as a strategy to legitimate their policy and their exercise of draconian laws against opposition members and dissidents,⁴² especially to curtail the freedom of speech.

³¹ Ibid., Welsh, B. (2011, 10. August). People Power in Malaysia: Bersih Rally and Its Aftermath.

³² Wong, C. H. (2012, 23. January).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Cp.: Weiss, M. L. (2012). Politics in Cyberspace: New Media in Malaysia.

³⁶ Pillai, M.G.G. (2001). The Internet Tail Wags The Media Dog In Malaysia.

³⁷ Feick, J. (2007). Demokratische Partizipation im Zeitalter des Internet. 221-239.

³⁸ Bettermann, E. (2010). Einschränkung der Medienfreiheit weltweit. 33.

³⁹ E.g.: Zaharom, N. (2002b). The Structure of The Media Industry: Implications for Democracy.111-137.; Anuar, M.K. (2002). Defining Democratic Discourses: The Mainstream Press. 138-164.; Weiss, M. (2012). Politics in Cyberspace: New Media in Malaysia.

⁴⁰ Cherian, G. (2005). The Internet's Political Impact and the Penetration/Participation Paradox in Malaysia and Singapore. 903-920.

⁴¹ Zaharom, N. (2002b). The Structure of The Media Industry: Implications for Democracy.111-137.

⁴² Zaharom, N. (2002a). The Media and Malaysia's Reformasi Movement. 119-138.

Opinions that are published criticizing the government are not directly suppressed by curtailing the freedom of expression guaranteed in Article 10 of the constitution, but through indirect exercise of power constituted by a variety of laws, such as the Printing Presses and Publications Act (PPPA)⁴³, Internal Security Act⁴⁴, Sedition Act and Official Secret Act.⁴⁵ Due to these often in an arbitrary fashion used draconian laws, journalists fear detentions and heavy fines hence they practice self-censorship and complaisant reporting.⁴⁶ Subsequently, the mainstream media do not criticize the government or social and political grievances to preserve "law and order" in the interest of the government.⁴⁷ In consequence, the mainstream media do not fulfill the tasks of critical journalism.

In this restrictive media system, the Internet plays a special role in Malaysia.⁴⁸ Since the launch of *Vision 2020*, which focuses on the development of the Malaysian society into an information society, various information and communication technology projects have been pushed forward to encourage foreign investments in Malaysia. Until the goal to implement a "Malaysian Silicon Valley" to construct a Malaysian knowledge society was pursued, there were hardly possibilities to disseminate and receive critical information in public. The mainstream media are almost invariably loyal to the government or even owned and controlled by government-related organizations and companies.⁴⁹ With the aim to implement the "Multimedia Super Corridor", former Prime Minister Mahathir promised a no-censorship-policy on the Internet. In order to not deter foreign investors, a "Bill of Guarantee" ensures the renunciation of censorship on the Internet for economic reasons.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, only the PPPA, which regulates the licensing of all publications in Malaysia and enables the Prime Minister to arbitrarily disbar Publications, does not apply to the content on the Internet. All the other draconian laws are still in effect and also applied on the Internet.

Regardless, the Internet developed into a convenient and popular medium to publish alternative opinions and information especially for dissidents and opposition members due to its possibility for horizontal communication, lower publication costs, and the omission of licensing.⁵¹ The possibility to access alternative information on the Internet counters the bias of the mainstream media and changes power structures by creating a "counter-power".⁵² Thus, the Internet in Malaysia has established itself as a kind of counter-public to the biased information of the mainstream media. One reason for this development was the enormous increase of interest for political topics and alternative information due to the imprisonment of the former vice Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim under Mahathir in 1999 for alleged corruption and sodomy.⁵³ For many Malaysians at this galvanizing moment, the mainstream media were no longer a trusted source of information due to their strong bias. Thus,

⁴³ SUARAM (2012, 28. August). 2011 Human Rights Report says: "The requirement of annual renewal of permit has been removed. The irony is, the Home Minister retains the final say to suspend or revoke a newspaper's license."

⁴⁴ Amnesty International (2012, 12 April) states that "A draconian act first introduced in 1960, the ISA was used to imprison critics of the government and opposition politicians as well as suspected militants." Further "The ISA was replaced by the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act which (...) will allow police to detain suspects incommunicado for 48 hours, increasing the risk of torture. The law also permits detention for up to 28 or 29 days without charge or access to the courts. "This new Act merely replaces one oppressive regime with another," said Donna Guest, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific Programme."

⁴⁵ Weiss, M. (2012). Politics in Cyberspace: New Media in Malaysia.

⁴⁶ Abbott, J. P. (2004). The internet, Reformasi and democratization in Malaysia. 81.; Zaharom, N. (2002b). The Structure of The Media Industry: Implications for Democracy.111-137.

⁴⁷ Zaharom, N. (2002a). The Media and Malaysia's Reformasi Movement. 119-138.; Zaharom, N. (2002b). The Structure of The Media Industry: Implications for Democracy.111-137.

⁴⁸ Weiss, M. (2012). Politics in Cyberspace: New Media in Malaysia.

⁴⁹Zaharom, N. (2002a). The Media and Malaysia's Reformasi Movement. 119-138.; Weiss, M. (2012). Politics in Cyberspace: New Media in Malaysia.

⁵⁰ Abbott, J. P. (2004). The Internet, Reformasi and democratization in Malaysia. 82-83.

⁵¹ Pillai, M.G.G. (2001). The Internet Tail Wags The Media Dog In Malaysia.

⁵² C.p.: Castells, M. (2004, 2007)

⁵³ Anuar, M. K. (2005). Politics and the Media in Malaysia. 44.; Abbott, J.P. (2001). Democracy@Internet.asia? The Challenges to the emancipatory potential of the net: lessons from China and Malaysia. 101.

they used the Internet as alternative medium.⁵⁴ The alternative media on the Internet were not the sole beneficiaries of this development: The Reformasi movement also sprung up after these events. This progress exemplifies that at that time the Internet was a means of alternative information source but not the cause for political change and democratization process.

Nevertheless, some authors describe the structure and the communication that comprises the Internet itself as a social movement.⁵⁵ Derichs speaks of a virtual social movement that uses the Internet to connect the interests of different groups in the virtual space; hence not only activists and organizations can be reached but also like-minded supporters. This aspect has relevance also for the Bersih movement. Due to the Internet's flat communication structure everyone could become a leader as well it provides a channel for the different oppositional groups to connect.⁵⁶ Consequently, the Internet as an information platform makes a significant contribution to building political awareness and discussion of political issues.⁵⁷ Derichs conceives the Internet in the Malaysian context as a promoter for new "political opportunity structures".⁵⁸ Some authors demonstrate in their analyses about Malaysia that the Internet is an instrument to communicate demands and goals and to organize and mobilize, but it does not directly change political structures and developments.⁵⁹ Although these technical characteristics promote an easier political participation, transparency and a free discourse in a restricted media system, the Internet itself has no direct democratizing effects because it is a goal-attaining instrument for the social movement but not a sole impulse for a democratization process.⁶⁰

Conclusion and further research

Considering the development of the role of the Internet in Malaysia and the fact that the Bersih 2.0 rally drew public attention more through unintended incidents than the rally and the demands themselves, I argue that the Internet does not solely and directly provoke a democratization process. Without the numerous arrests and police brutality, Bersih 2.0 would probably not have attracted so much public attention.⁶¹ The main role of the Internet was to organize and to communicate, and especially to spread the information about these incidents all around the world. This strongly demonstrates that context matters.

Though the Internet is an important means of organizing a social movement, in the end, the movement takes place outside on the street and not just within media like Facebook or Twitter. Castells also states that "social movements do not exist only in the Internet."⁶² Therefore, as I stated above in my analysis, the action of people can effect sociopolitical changes and democratizing effects but not solely the use of the Internet. Weiss highlights this: "The freer flow of information [in the Internet] subverts authoritarianism, but only by informing, not transforming, the regime's subjects."⁶³

It was not the Internet that caused the success of the Bersih 2.0 rally and the evolving consciousness for democratic values; it was a long history of different developments and political changes, the collective action of people as well as unintended incidents and consequences.

⁵⁴ Abbott, J. P. (2004). *The Internet, Reformasi and Democratization in Malaysia*. 85.

⁵⁵ cp. Cherian, G. (2006), Derichs, C. (2002a), Castells, M. (2007).

⁵⁶ Wong, C. H. (2012, 23. January).

⁵⁷ Derichs, C. (2002a). *Internet als subversives Medium?*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 122.

⁵⁹ E.g.: Abbott, J. P. (2004); Derichs, C. (2002a); Derichs, C. (2002b); Weiss, M. (2012)

⁶⁰ Abbott, J. P. (2004). *The Internet, Reformasi and Democratization in Malaysia*. 96.; Weiss, M. (2012). *Politics in Cyberspace: New Media in Malaysia*.

⁶¹ Welsh, B. (2011, 10. August). *People Power in Malaysia: Bersih Rally and Its Aftermath*.

⁶² Castells, M. (2007). *Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society*. 250.

⁶³ Weiss, M. (2012). *Politics in Cyberspace: New Media in Malaysia*. 46.

In conclusion, it is difficult to make a positivistic proposition about the impact of the Internet on social movements. It is indisputable that the Internet plays a specific and important role in political processes in Malaysia as alternative information medium. In the end, the process of democratization highly depends on the political and social context in which it evolves. For this reason, a generalizing assumption about the democratizing effect of the use of the Internet in social movements is not tenable. As stated at the beginning, it is not the medium itself which impacts democratization or social change processes but rather their circumstances and actions of all involved.

Beyond this analysis, further research should investigate the interaction between the communication on the Internet and the information in the mainstream media regarding the Bersih movement. Feedback effects between the discourse on the Internet and the reporting in the largely controlled mainstream media could reveal another manner of impact of the Internet on social movements. Possible positive reactions of the government towards deviant opinions on the Internet could indicate a liberalizing impact of the Internet towards a culture of debate in terms of speech and objection, and vice versa. Also, empirical studies based on qualitative interviews with participants and experts would help determine more about the correlation.

I agree with Howards & Parks' demand for a broader dialogue and cooperation between disciplines and the connection of methodical approaches (both qualitative and quantitative) to improve the investigation of such complex developments and events.⁶⁴ Therefore, I propose further conducted research should connect qualitative analyses with quantitative data.

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⁶⁴ Howard, P. N. & Parks, M. R. (2012). *Social Media and Political Change: Capacity, Constraint, and Consequence*. 362.

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Manaf Bashir:

Framing an Online Social Movement: How Do the Leadership and Participants of the Egyptian 6th of April Youth Movement Frame their *Facebook* Activism?

Abstract:

The talks about the horizontality of Internet activism and the advent of social media applications have drawn great attention recently where leadership, organization and coordination are no longer tasks of a movement's leadership, but also the general participants. This content analysis research attempts to show how the Egyptian 6th of April Youth Movement framed its own activism and what this multiplicity of actors-based framing meant to social movement discourse. The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to the understanding of diverse frames by leaders and participants, with the latter rapidly emerging as new agents of social movements. The findings show that the leadership and participants used similar cause, motivational and consequence frames (the three social movement framing tasks), but the leadership used these frames more frequently than the participants and had a larger influence than the participants in the overall framing of the 6th of April Youth Movement.

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Framing an Online Social Movement: How Do the Leadership and Participants of the Egyptian 6th of April Youth Movement Frame their Facebook Activism?

Introduction

The advent of social movements powered by communication technologies is giving birth to new agents of information diffusion, participation and decision making in contentious politics. A growing interest in how individual participants contribute to social movements and the talks about the horizontality of Internet activism have surfaced in many academic circles, especially with the arrival of recent Internet applications such as *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Youtube*.

Using the *Facebook* page of the 6th of April Youth Movement during the Egyptian revolution early in 2011 as case study, this content analysis-based study attempts to show how an online social movement with multiple types of actors frames its own activism and what this multiplicity of actors-based framing means to social movement discourse. From the 6th of April Youth Movement's *Facebook* page, this research seeks to identify (a) the three core social movement framing tasks which the *Facebook* activists used and (b) whether there was a framing influence between the leadership and participants in these framing tasks. The study employs time-series analyses of cross-correlations to answer the research questions.

While previous empirical studies have analyzed the political uses of new communication technologies when they are adopted by a number of movements' leaders, more research is needed to determine how individual citizens are utilizing these technologies in participating in social movements, and relating such research to theory, such as framing. The literature focuses predominantly on technology as a tool for movement elites but fails to address how participants use technology and how they can impact social movements' frames and influence (Benford and Snow 2000; Buechler 2011).

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to an understanding of diverse frames by leaders and participants, with the latter rapidly emerging as new agents of social movements who also changed the nature of activism into a horizontal activism (Chadwick 2007; Buechler 2011; Hara and Huang 2011). Particularly, this study provides empirical evidence of a framing influence between the leadership and participants of the 6th of April Youth Movement's *Facebook* page. Looking at the *Facebook* posts of the leadership and participants and investigating their potential framing influence would either support or reject the debate in the literature that general participants are becoming as important as the leadership. While a case study cannot generalize beyond its context in time and place, the 6th of April Youth Movement offers encouraging lessons in understanding the complex framing dynamics between the leaders of social movements and their participants, especially when they are utilizing social networking websites.

Social Movement Framing

Social movements face crucial 'framing tasks' (Cooper 2002). As indicated by McAdam et al. (1996), social movement framing is a strategic effort by a group of people to fashion shared understanding of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action. Movements, therefore, must link their interpretive orientations with the targeted audiences with what Snow and Benford (1988) call "the three core tasks of social movement framing." According to Snow and Benford (1988), successful social movement framing depends on the application of the cause, solution/consequence and motivational framing. Social movements seek to identify the issue in which a cause or problem is extracted from, the diagnostic and first core framing task (Benford and Snow 2000). The second task involves the articulation of a consequent phase or solution, the prognostic frame (Benford and Snow 2000). The final task, and usually neglected in the social movement framing literature according to Benford and Snow (2000), is the motivational framing.

Currently in the literature, social movement framing often assumes that leading activists invent frames to recruit passive followers who have little to say about the process (Buechler 2011). The emphasis is “from the organization to the individual, not the other way around”¹ However, as indicated previously by Hara (2008), Hara and Huang (2011), Bennett (2003) and Melucci (2000), the general or individual participants of social movements are becoming as significant as the leading activists in contributing to movements’ organization and leadership, especially with the help of the Internet. This shift and transformation in the role of individuals have decisive implications for contemporary forms of conflict and movement (McDonald 2006). Numerous studies have indicated that with the help of the Internet that has made individuals part of social movement discourse, social movement activism has become horizontal, where coordination and leadership are no longer limited to elite activists, but also to the general participants. Therefore, while it is true that general participants are contributing to social movements, do they, as a result, influence a movement’s framing?

This research study aims to demonstrate how the 6th of April Youth Movement with its multiple types of actors frames its activism and whether or not these actors influence the framing of one another:

RQ1. What frames does the 6th of April Youth Movement employ as its three core social movement framing tasks (cause, motivational, consequence)?

RQ2. In their three core frames, do the frames of the leadership influence the frames of the participants? Or do the frames of the participants influence the frames of the leadership?

Both the leadership and individual participant posts in the 6th of April Youth Movement were retrieved and analyzed. By “leadership” this study refers to the posts written by the administrators of 6th of April Youth Movement and labeled under the page’s name “6th of April Youth Movement.” By “individual participants” the study refers to the posts written by the general public on the wall of the group’s page. All posts from January 6th, 2011, to July 31st, 2011 of the 6th of April Youth Movement were retrieved directly from Facebook’s Application Programming Interface (API). The total number of posts is 95,858. Since events in Egypt in this period of time differed on issues: starting from the build-up toward the January 25th revolution up until the prosecution of ousted President Hosni Mubarak and his cabinet, this study narrowed the period of study to January 15th, 2011 - February 21st, 2011. The rationale for adding 10 days before the revolution and 10 days after Mubarak’s resignation stemmed from the fact that the construction of the three core frames (in addition to framing influence) would evolve rather than be established at once. The total sample size resulted in 772 participants’ posts and 263 leadership posts. The unit of analysis was the post in its textual form.

First, in order to examine the visibility of the cause, motivational, and consequence frames in the posts, this study followed the methods used by Gamson (1992), Benford (1993), Maher (1995), Kensicki (2004), and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) in identifying the three core frames in social movements².

Then, after identifying the three core frames of the leadership and participants in the first research question, the study’s second question investigated whether a framing influence between the two groups took place during the period of the study. This was conducted by using time series statistical analyses of cross-correlations.

1 Aguirre, 1994, p. 268 as cited in Buechler, 2011.

2 In the identification of frames, the author also followed Pan & Kosicki’s (1993) approach that frames are not subjects, and Oliver & Johnston’s (2005) approach that frames are not ideologies. Subjects are topics of discussions and speech (Pan & Kosicki, 1993) while ideologies are whole systems of beliefs (Oliver and Johnston 2005). A frame, in its several definitions, is an organizing idea that is shared and persistent over time, that works symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world (Reese 2001). Further measures of how to identify and validate frames are indicated by Snow and Benford (1988) and Cappella and Jamieson (1997).

Findings

The study makes several substantive and methodological contributions in the study of social movement framing, particularly in identifying the three framing tasks and determining a framing influence between a movement's leadership and participants.

Three Core Social Movement Framing Tasks

The Cause frame is the event or condition that is characterized as the cause and is necessary for amelioration (Hunt 1994). Starting with this frame first, the findings indicate the presence of multiple cause frames in the posts for both the leadership and participants (see Table 1).

Table 1: Cause Frames by Leadership and Participants (in %)*

Cause Frames	Leadership	Participants	Total
Information sharing & diffusion	13.3 (35)	11.8 (91)	12.2 (126)
(Demand for) Regime change	23.2 (61)	8.2 (63)	12 (124)
Injustice	14.4 (38)	4 (31)	6.7 (69)
Movement/Revolution sustainability & success	5.7 (15)	12.2 (94)	10.5 (109)
Idealized society/Utopia	3 (8)	1.7 (13)	2 (21)
Ousted regime counter-revolution	0.4 (1)	2.2 (17)	1.7 (18)
Post-revolution planning	0 (0)	2.1 (16)	1.5 (16)
Need for information	0 (0)	1 (8)	0.8 (8)
Cannot determine cause	9.1 (24)	20.6 (159)	17.7 (183)
Other ³	27.5 (72)	19.7 (153)	21.8 (225)
No cause indicated	3.4 (9)	16.5 (127)	13.1 (136)
Total	100 (263)	100 (772)	100 (1,035)

* Numbers in parentheses refer to the number of cases

The leadership and participants used the same frames, with few frames pertaining to one group over another. As Table 1 shows, for example, the participants employed the "need for information" and "post-revolution planning" frames while the leadership did not have any mentions of these frames. Also, "ousted regime counter-revolution" frame was almost entirely employed by the participants.

The motivational frame means "a call to arms for engaging in ameliorative or corrective action"⁴, where vocabularies of motive emerge in the course of interaction among movement activists (Benford and Snow 2000, 617). Motivations for participation in social movements must be created (Gerhards and Rucht 1992). Table 2 shows the motivational frames of the 6th of April Youth Movement. Neither the leadership nor the participants cited multiple motivations that would be expected in a time of revolution.

3 'Other' as a category includes cause frames that are low in occurrences (less than 10). Some of these frames are 'commemorating the martyrs,' 'hegemony,' and 'pursuit of freedom.' 'Need for information' is in the table as an exception. Although it was only mentioned eight times, it only pertained to the participants and demonstrates their pursuit of information from the leadership.

4 Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 199.

Table 2: Motivational Frames of Posts by Leadership and Participants (in %)*

Motivational Frame	Leadership	Participants	Total
Efficacy	12.9 (34)	2.5 (19)	5.1 (53)
Solidarity	1.5 (4)	5.1 (39)	4.2 (43)
(Personal) Relevance	8.4 (22)	1.9 (15)	3.6 (37)
Other ⁵	25.1 (66)	15.2 (117)	17.6 (184)
Cannot determine motivation	12.9 (34)	14.6 (113)	14.2 (147)
No motivation indicated	39.2 (103)	60.8 (469)	55.3 (572)
Total	100 (263)	100 (772)	100 (1,035)

* Numbers in parentheses refer to the number of cases

Although the leadership and participants shared similar motivational frames, their emphasis was different. For example, "efficacy" was more emphasized by the leadership than the participants, while "solidarity" was more emphasized by the participants than the leadership. Generally, however, the leadership's posts emphasized more motivational frames than the participants. This was due to the fact that two-thirds of the participants' posts did not mention or specify a motivational frame (75.4%), compared to half of the leadership's posts that did not specify a motivational frame (52.1%).

The reversal of the cause frame is what constitutes the consequence frame (Gerhards and Rucht 1992). It emphasizes a consequence or solution to a proposed problem (Snow and Benford 2000). The findings indicate a generally low emphasis on identifying consequence frames by the movement. As Table 3 shows, the consequence frames were similar between the two groups but their emphasis was different.

Table 3: Consequence Frames of Posts by Leadership and Participants (in %)*

Consequence Frame	Leadership	Participants	Total
Regime change	9.9 (26)	3.9 (30)	5.4 (56)
Urgency	4.2 (11)	2.1 (16)	2.6 (27)
Idealized society/Utopian	2.3 (6)	1.3 (10)	1.5 (16)
Failure of revolution	0.4 (1)	1.4 (11)	1.2 (12)
Economic consequences	0 (0)	0.6 (5)	0.5 (5)
Other ⁶	6.5 (17)	1.1 (9)	3.2 (33)
Cannot determine consequence	1.9 (5)	1.6 (12)	1.6 (17)
No consequence indicated	74.9 (197)	87 (672)	84 (869)
Total	100 (263)	100 (772)	100 (1,035)

* Numbers in parentheses refer to the number of cases

5 'Other' included motivations that are low in occurrences (mostly less than five). Among these motivations were 'sacrifice,' 'glory,' 'fear,' 'revenge,' 'love,' 'peace,' 'suffrage,' 'freedom' and 'faith.'

6 'Other' includes consequences that are low in occurrences. Examples included in this category are 'liberating Libya,' 'sectarianism,' and 'commemorating the martyrs.'

Table 3 also indicates that the leadership had higher frequencies than the participants in all of the consequence frames except “failure of the revolution” frame, which was the only consequence frame the leadership did not share with the participants (the “economic consequences” frame). This frame involved discussions about the economic consequences of events toward the individual citizen, institutions and the country at large, similar to the frame used previously in Graber (1993) and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000).

Leadership Framing vs. Participants Framing – Determining Influence

This section focuses on finding a causal framing influence in the posts between the leadership and participants and shows the cross-correlations for each frame.

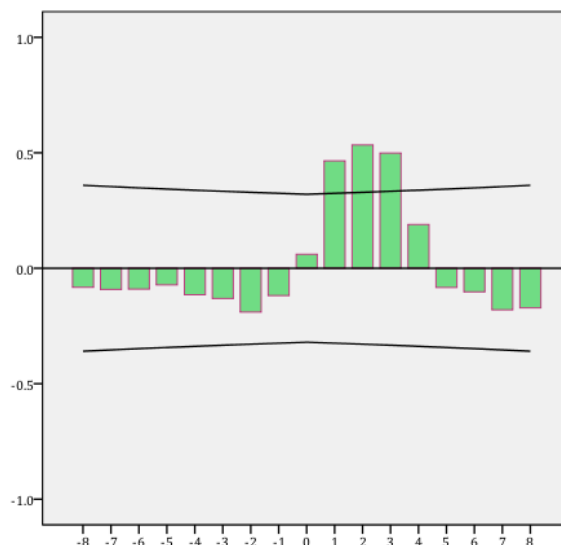
Table 4: Frames included in Cross-Correlations

Cause Frames	Motivational Frames	Consequence Frame
Information diffusion (126)*	Efficacy (53)	Regime change (56)
Regime change (124)	Solidarity (43)	
Injustice (69)	Relevance (37)	
Sustainability (62)		
Success (47)		

* Number of cases

Starting with the “information sharing & diffusion” frame, Figure 1 indicates that the participant frame was strongly correlated with the leadership’s on the first day and up until the third day.

Figure 1. Leadership and Participants Information Sharing & Diffusion Frame

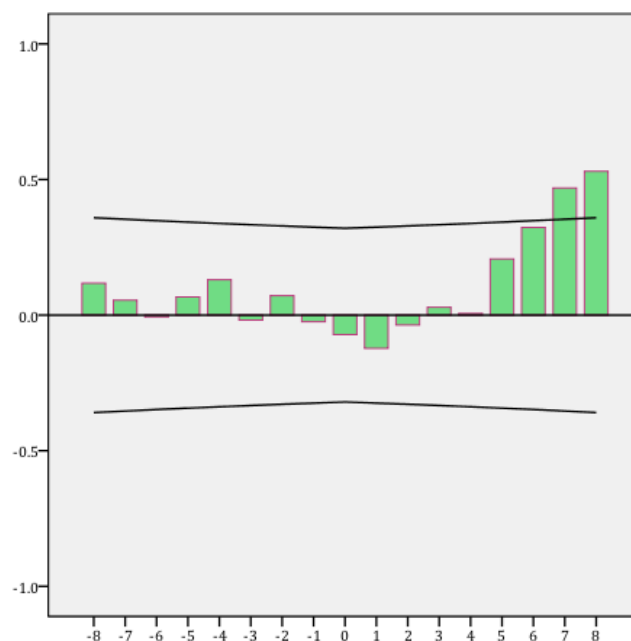


The correlations became weak and negative from the fourth day onward indicating no influence between the two groups’ frames. The findings imply that the participants’ discussions, which constituted the “information

sharing & diffusion" frame, were influenced by the leadership's discussions about the same frame one day after the leadership used this frame and up until the third day. Therefore, a conclusion can be made that the leadership influenced the participants to use the "information sharing & diffusion" frame.

As Figure 2 shows, the participants' frame "regime change" was not correlated with the leadership's frame during the first four days. The findings from the correlations indicate that there was no framing influence between the two groups from the first day to the fifth but show the leadership's influence toward the participants from the sixth day to the eighth. This finding means that discussions on regime change by the participants took place five to six days after the leadership discussed regime change. It can be concluded that the leadership influenced the participants in this frame.

Figure 2. Leadership and Participants (Demand for) Regime Change Frame



According to Figure 3, most of the cross-correlations between the two groups for the "injustice" frame are negative. The positive cross-correlations on the second, seventh and eighth days are too weak to indicate any influence. Therefore, neither the leadership nor the participants influenced each other's use of the "injustice" frame.

Figure 3. Leadership and Participants Injustice Frame

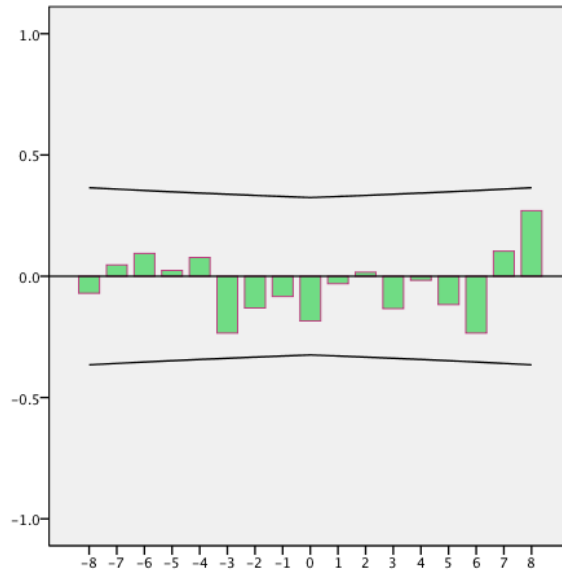
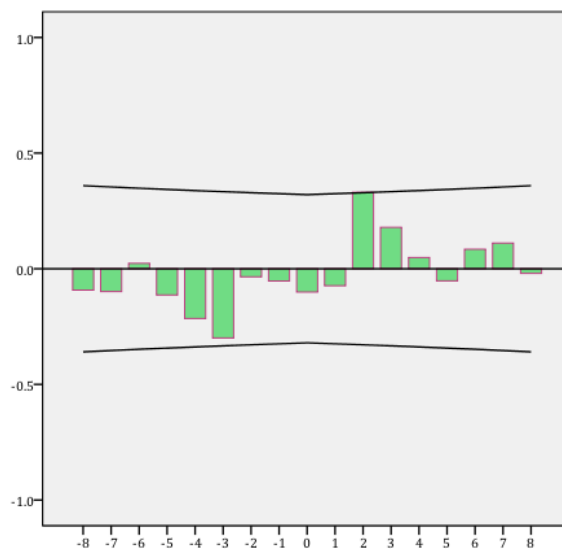


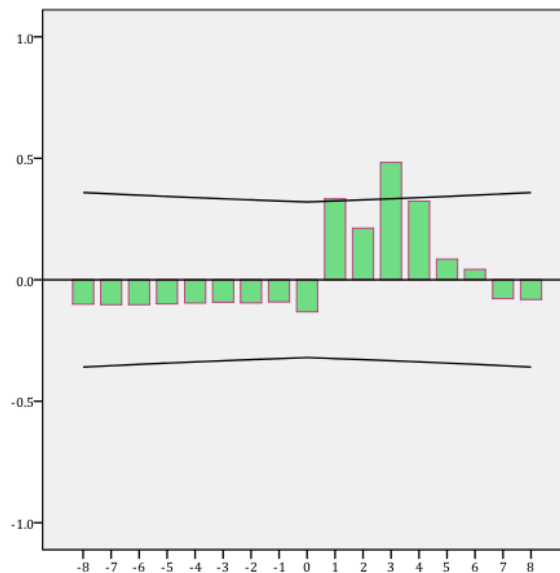
Figure 4 indicates that the only strong correlation was on the second day where the participants' "movement sustainability" frame was strongly correlated to the leadership's. Therefore, the leadership influenced the participants to use the "sustainability" frame. The findings imply that the leadership's discussions about the sustainability of the movement influenced the participants to also discuss it two days after the leadership had the discussion.

Figure 4. Leadership and Participants Movement Sustainability Frame



As Figure 5 shows, the participants' "success" frame was highly correlated with the leadership's frame on the first, third, and fourth day. Therefore, the findings imply that the participants' discussions about the success of the movement were influenced by the leadership's discussions after one day and up until the fourth day.

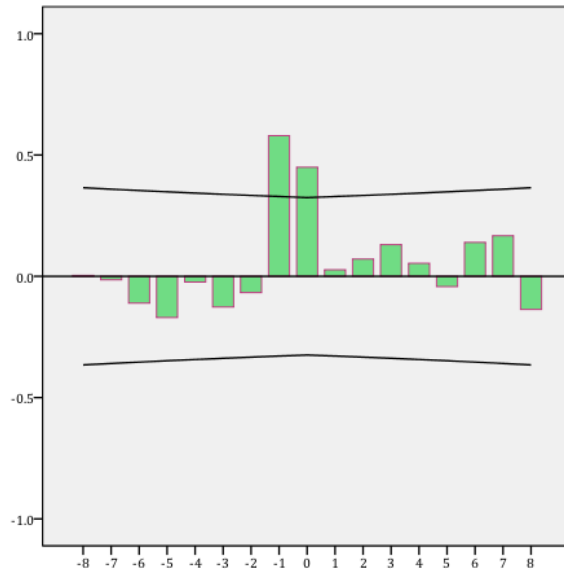
Figure 5. Leadership and Participants Movement Success Frame



Overall, the findings for the five **cause frames** that were included in the cross-correlations indicate that the leadership's posts influenced those of the participants in the use of four frames: the "information sharing & diffusion," "regime change," "sustainability," and "success" frames. The findings also show no framing influence between the two groups in the "injustice" frame. Generally, the influence on the participants was taking place between the first and third days after the leadership used the frames. Approximately after the fourth day, the two groups did not show any framing influence, which was indicated by insignificant correlations. The only exception is the "regime change" frame where the leadership influenced the participants after six days.

As for the motivational frames, the results indicated that the two groups' discussions had different types of framing influence. As Figure 6 indicates, the participants' "efficacy" frame was unrelated to the leadership's "efficacy" frame, indicated by insignificant cross-correlations. However, the significant cross-correlations are on the left side of the figure, indicating the participants' influence on the leadership. This influence was taking place within the same day and in the following day with significant cross-correlations.

Figure 6. Leadership and Participants Efficacy Frame



According to Figure 7, the participants' "solidarity" frame was only correlated with the leadership's on the second day. The rest of the positive correlations were weak and insignificant to infer influence.

Figure 7. Leadership and Participants Solidarity Frame

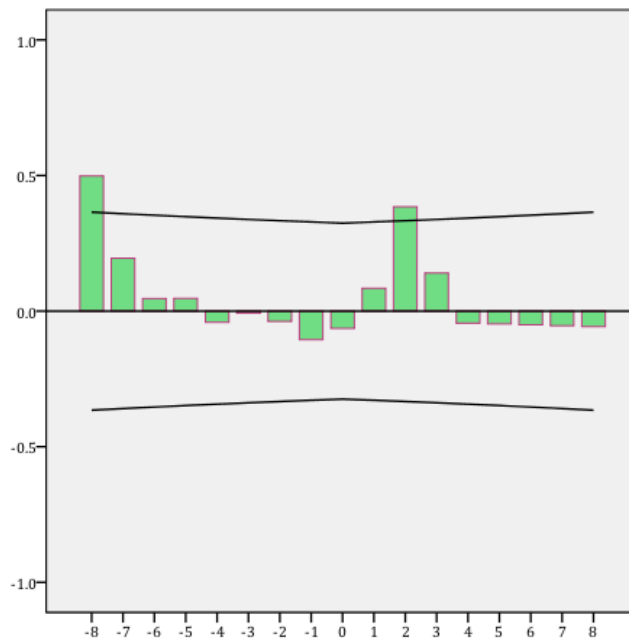
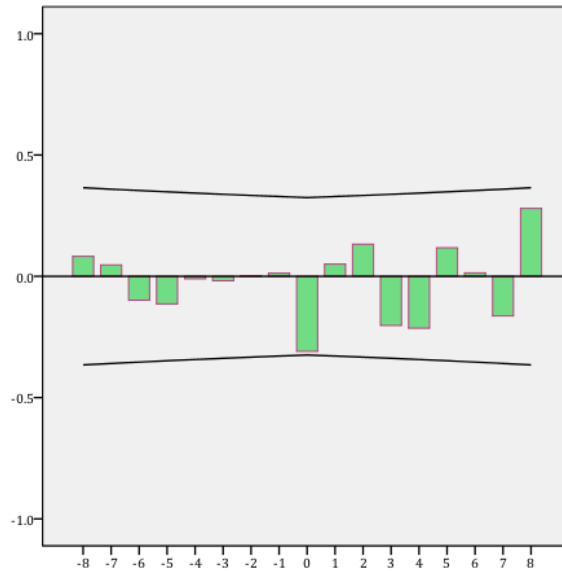


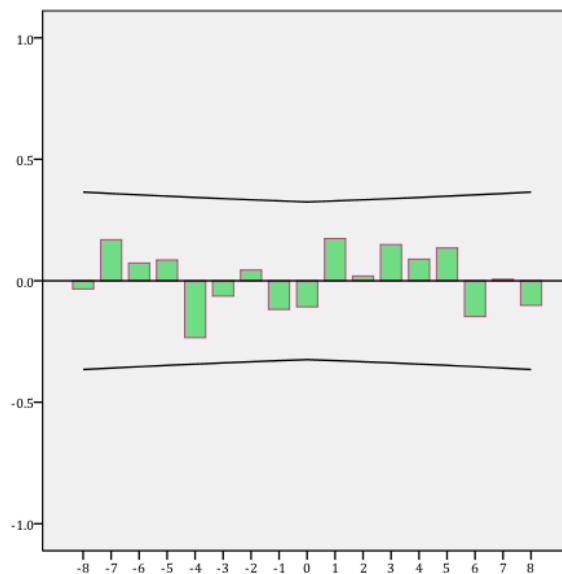
Figure 8 indicates insignificant correlations in the "relevance" frame. Therefore, neither the leadership nor the participants influenced each other's framing in the "relevance" frame.

Figure 8. Leadership and Participants Relevance Frame



Overall, the leadership’s posts influenced the participants’ posts to use the “solidarity” frame after two days while the participants’ posts influenced the leadership’s posts to use the “efficacy” frame within the same day and the following day. There was no influence between the leadership and participants in the “relevance” frame. The findings imply that the participants’ discussions on efficacy influenced the leadership’s posts to also talk about efficacy. This influence took place within the same day of the discussions and one day after.

Figure 9. Leadership and Participants Regime Change Frame



The leadership and participants' "regime change" frame is the only **consequence frame** that has more than 30 cases and qualified for the cross-correlations. There was no influence between the two groups in this frame.

The overall patterns of the cross-correlation analyses provided evidence to indicate that (a) with varying support in the Pearson correlation coefficients, many of the posts published by the leadership appeared to be leading indicators of posts published by the participants; (b) the leadership's posts, hence frames, had greater influence on the participants to use the frames than vice versa, and (c) among the nine frames, only five showed significant values in the cross-correlations. Also, the cross-correlations showed a fairly consistent influence from the leadership to the participants in four frames: information sharing, sustainability, success, and solidarity. In only one frame, "efficacy," the participants influenced the leadership.

Conclusions

The findings show that the leadership and participants of the 6th of April Youth Movement used similar cause, motivational and consequence frames (the three social movement framing tasks). However, the emphasis within these frames was different between the two groups, where the leadership was more frequent in their deployment of the frames than the participants. The findings also indicate that the leadership's posts had a greater framing influence on the participants' posts than vice versa. The time-series analyses revealed either a one-sided framing influence from the leadership to the participants in some frames, or no influence between the two groups in other frames. Therefore, the leadership had a larger influence than the participants in the overall framing of the 6th of April Youth Movement.

Despite the growing influence of general participants in social movements, the *Facebook* posts of the leadership showed a better deployment of the three framing tasks and framing influence than those of the participants. These findings argue against recent communication research that has described today's activism as horizontal and spontaneous due to the opportunities new communication technologies provide to their users. The findings suggest that while some social movement dynamics have changed due to the use of new communication technologies and what they offer to the general participants, social movement activism, in terms of framing, remains mainly a function of its leadership.

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Luis Fernando Baron:

More than a Facebook revolution: Social Movements and Social Media in the Egyptian Arab Spring

Abstract:

Public opinion leaders and activists characterized the Egyptian “Arab Spring” of January 2011 as a “Facebook Revolution”. They highlight the intrinsic power of social media as an influencing factor for social change. Undeniably, social media played important roles in that revolution process. However, these roles cannot be disconnected from the socio-political contexts. This paper discusses the use of social media, particularly of Facebook, by the April 6th Youth Movement (A6YM), a decisive actor of the Egyptian protests. It is based on the analysis of two Egyptian newspapers and one American newspaper, between 2008 and 2011. We propose that a) social media provided alternative mechanisms for political expression and organization, b) social media contributed to the genesis and consolidation of the A6YM and to the establishment of youth political identities, and c) the combination of “bits and streets” amplified not just the movement’s mobilization but the degree of opposition experienced by the Egyptian regime.

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 - Baron, L. F., & Gomez, R. (2012). El Sentido de Conexidad y el Acceso Público a TIC. *Disertaciones*, 5(1), 23.
 - Baron, L. F., & Valdes, M. (2011). Public Access ICT in Colombia. In R. Gomez (Ed.), *Libraries, Telecentres, Cybercafes and Public Access to ICT: International Comparisons* (pp. 169-183): IGI Global.
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Introduction

Journalists, Egyptian activists, and even scholars have often characterized the protests which started in Egypt on January 25, 2011, as a "Facebook revolution". This label highlights the intrinsic power of social media¹ and the potentiality of Web access for democratization and social change.² The use of ICTs (including social media) played a key role before, during, and after the events that took place in Tahrir Square in January and February 2011. However, the roles of social media should not be disconnected from regional and international sociopolitical contexts. One must also consider the history of social protests and social movements in Egypt, as well as the role of youth networks and organizations.

The role of social media should not be studied without acknowledging the multi-decade effort by Muslim organizations in building a social movement or the increasing dynamics of workers' mobilization – which involved over 2 million workers in approximately 3,300 collective actions from 1998 to 2009. Nor can the emergence of new forms of political expression – which have their roots in solidarity committees that spread throughout Egypt following the start of the Second Intifada in Palestine in October 2000 – be ignored. Social media should be considered within the context of regional dynamics such as the revolutions in Iran (2009) and Tunisia (2010), as well as the human rights campaigns launched by local and international organizations in Middle East North Africa (MENA), and the international pressure for political reforms that Mubarak's regime experienced coming from the United States and several European Union countries. This paper will examine the relationships between social media and social movements, considering some of these circumstances so as to construct a more nuanced perspective of the Egyptian "Arab Spring". In particular, this work aims to shed light on how the access to and interactions with and through ICTs shaped the formation, development, and sociopolitical performance of A6YM.

We utilized alternative approaches to Social Movement Theories (SMT) (e.g. Bayat, 2010; Earl & Kimport, 2011; Escobar, 2008; Melucci, 1994) that challenge institutional perspectives such as Collective Action, Resource Mobilization and Political Opportunity Structures. These approaches help us to interpret the results of a content analysis of a sample of news on social media use as reported by two Egyptian, English-Language newspapers (*Al-Ahram* and *The Daily News Egypt*) and one American newspaper (*The New York Times*), from April 2008 to April 2011. In using these theoretical frameworks and research methods, five analytical stages of the A6YM were identified. The drafted trajectory suggests the use of ICTs was not only significant to the creation and consolidation of this social movement, but that it also played a key role in reporting, framing, and discussing sociopolitical mobilization in Egypt. ICTs were also vital in the call to action, organization, and operation of the protests, and they provided daily life venues for youth identification and political engagement. ICTs materialize alternative arenas of political debate and action, and this has shown to both threaten Hosni Mubarak's regime and shape its political and military responses.

Social Movement's theories and ICTs

Particularities of Social Movements in Middle East North Africa

Bayat (2010) has shown that current SMT cannot effectively explain the intricate dynamics of the resistance and upheavals of the MENA. Beinín & Vairel (2011) also point out that SMT have studied social movements in

1 Borrowing from Kaplan & Haenlein, Social Media are understood here as the group of Internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. These authors categorize social media in six groups: collaborative projects (e.g. wikis); blogs and microblogs (e.g. Twitter); content communities (e.g. YouTube); social-networking sites (e.g. Facebook); virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft), and virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life). Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Bus. Horiz. Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.

2 For example: [HTTP://WWW.TECHNOLOGYREVIEW.COM/BLOG/EDITORS/26718/](http://WWW.TECHNOLOGYREVIEW.COM/BLOG/EDITORS/26718/); http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/02/11/egypt-facebook-revolution-wael-ghonim_n_822078.html; <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2044142,00.html>

MENA with an exceptionalist approach, which does not adequately explain the intricacies of persisting authoritarianisms that subject social movements to varying degrees of coercion and offer them few openings for mobilization. Bayat underlines the importance of 'non-movements' as collective actions of non-collective actors and explains how urban public spaces, particularly streets, continue to serve as a key theater of contentions. He also underlined the importance of the relative spaces of freedom in contexts such as Egypt (Bayat, 2010).

Social movements networks

In the early 1990's, Melucci (1994) demonstrated how movements are media that speak through action; their primary message is that they exist and act. The action of movements can be seen as symbolic and as communication. Social movements are intricate networks of individual and collective agents (humans and non-humans) that constitute a wave of confrontational social engagements at many levels that encompass different forms of performances and associations marked by their oppositional but proactive character (Escobar, 2008; Melucci, 1994). Following Latour we could say that they are not the foundations but rather the results of the same networks' associations (Latour, 2007).

ICTs and Social Movements

Earl & Kimport (2011) provide evidence of the ways ICTs have impacted the creation and development of collective actions. They point out three key aspects: 1) the coexistence in time and space of collective participation; 2) the ephemeral, sporadic, episodic, or enduring characteristics of contention; and 3) the evidence of the existence of challenges and challengers without movements. Those changes not only have challenged social movements' scholars to create or modify existing theoretical lenses for understanding what collective action is, but they also have stimulated different approaches to understanding how ICTs are affecting social movements, political practices, and power processes (e.g. Bennett, Breunig, & Givens, 2008; B. Bimber, Flanagan, & Stohl, 2005; B. A. Bimber, 2003; Howard, 2010).

Research Methods

This paper is part of a larger study on the changing roles of social media in pro-democracy movements in Egypt by the Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA) at the University of Washington's iSchool.³ The larger study includes content analysis of blogs and Facebook pages in Arabic and English, regional news media (*Al Jazeera*), and interviews with key actors in Egypt. This paper is based on the analysis of a sample of more than 250 articles on protests and social mobilization of three English-language newspapers (*The Daily News Egypt*, *Al-Ahram*, and *The New York Times*) from April 2008 (the genesis of A6YM), to April 2011 (the Tahrir Square protests which produced Mubarak's resignation). The newspapers were selected based on the following criteria: a) covers local and international news; b) includes state and independent approaches; c) offers accessibility through the Internet; and d) provides access to English-language sources. *The Daily News Egypt (DNE)* is an independent, privately owned newspaper which was affiliated with the *International Herald Tribune (IHT)*. The *Al-Ahram* is a weekly, English-language newspaper run by the Al-Ahram Organization in which the Egyptian government owns a controlling share of the stocks of the paper. *The New York Times* is a global, multimedia news and information company which includes *The New York Times*, the *International Herald Tribune* and *The Boston Globe*, to mention only a few of its related properties. For selecting articles as well as coding and analyzing them, we used and adapted a framework suggested by Garrido (2006). Thus, we used these categories: a) actors and networks, b) strategies and tactics, c) local and international contexts, and d) uses of social media.

³ Under the coordination of Professor Maria Garrido, the project team includes Luis Fernando Baron, Volodymyr Lysenko, Marwa Maziad and Norah Abokhodair. The research was supported through a grant by Microsoft Community Affairs.

Findings

The newspapers' analysis allowed us to define the following five phases of the April 6 Youth Movement (A6YM). These phases are marked by key events which implied different, but not exclusive, uses of social media, which must be considered in relation to socio-political contexts and their interactions with other communication forms and media.

Phase 1: Launching a public presence (Jan-Jun 2008)

During the Spring of 2008, Egyptian workers and other opposition groups and movements⁴ called for a national strike on April 6th at Ghazl Al-Mahalla textile factory. This call sprung out of municipal elections and the increasing social protests marked by the "bread crisis" (the price upsurges in essential foodstuffs) (El-Fiqi, 2008), and demonstration for raising wages. In March 2008, Israa Abdel-Fattah and Ahmed Maher set up the "April 6th Strike Group" on Facebook, inviting friends to support the workers strike and calling for a nationwide campaign of civil disobedience. The outcome was unexpected: roughly 77,000 people joined the group and committed to either express themselves or stay away from work on April 6th. (Sarah Carr, 2008b; Singer, 2008). The protests of April 6th became a hallmark of social mobilization (Sarah Carr, 2008a) and an expression of the resurgence of the labour movement (Sara Carr, 2008).

In this phase, Facebook and text messages via mobile phones served as tools to extend messages of solidarity and promote a continued commitment to protests of other social movements (mainly of factory workers). They were also used to encourage individual expression of ideas and to create spaces for political debate, especially among young people. Even though participants appear to have been mainly from privileged sectors of Egyptian society, protesters also used other media (such as leaflets, banners and word of mouth) in order to get other social sectors involved

Phase 2: Building a movement (Jul 2008-Jul 2009)

"We are debating ways to best use Facebook to organize activities." Interview of A. Maher (El-Sayed, 2008)

Despite growing repression measures and constant threats against opposition groups and "Facebook activists" the youth collective was determined to transform their Facebook group into a political movement (El-Sayed, 2008) and to involve more young people and organizations through symbolic expressions of social discontent in key places and moments. Both Israa Abdel-Fattah and Ahmed Maher were imprisoned and tortured by security forces as a result of their "April 6th Strike Group" initiative, which exemplified an increasing awareness of the state institutions on the power of Internet-based technologies -- especially Facebook and blogs -- for mobilization..

At this stage social media, particularly blogs and Web sites, were used to report and discuss on the current events and on social-mobilization activities. Facebook played an important role not only in the call to action and organization of the protests, but it also served to create a space of political conversation. Moreover, it was a key reference platform that helped to identify the nascent social movement, and it became one of the hallmarks of A6YM. Twitter came into the local spotlight on 2008 when journalist James Buck used it to report his arrest after the April 6th protests in Mahalla. (Abdoun, 2009)

4 Some reports mentioned the participation of the Labor Party, the Karama Party and Kefaya. They also mentioned that the Muslim Brotherhood did not officially support the strike. See an example in: Carr, S. (2008). State security mobilizes ahead of April 6 general strike, says activist. The Daily News Egypt, p. 1. Retrieved from <http://www.masress.com/en/dailynews/102028>

Phase 3: Strengthening the nascent movement (Aug 2009 - May 2010)

The protests and social discontent with the regime grew during this time (Sarah Carr, 2008a; Reem 2008), and A6YM won an important spot within the Egyptian socio-political scenarios. The movement not only became an important bridge between different social organizations but was also the target of pressure and persecution by the state institutions (Singer & Samaan, 2008).

"What started out as a forum for people to catch up with old friends, upload and share photos, exchange messages and videos and kill many hours of boredom... took a new turn in 2008, particularly on Sunday April 6... The users of Facebook have turned the popular entertainment website into a platform for political activism and promoting social change on different levels." (Abdoun, 2008)

In this phase, Facebook were transformed into an important subject/object of the political disputes, in a context of increasing normative controls and restrictions by the regime. Social media were mainly used for the dissemination and adoption of these technological tools between oppositional social organizations. Social media were acknowledged by activists as tools for expression and action that have the power to threaten the regime. The events in Iran in July 2009 also brought international notice to the role of social media in a region where citizens were often unable to express their opinions freely (Abdoun, 2009).

Phase 4: A common grievance: the police brutality (Jun 2010-Dec 2010)

At this stage the narratives of media reflect a general state of frustration with the results of protests and mobilizations in Egypt (Al Malky, 2009). Society, in general, and youth population, in particular, did not expect social or political changes in Egypt (El-Bey, 2010)⁵. However, the torture and later death of Khaled Saeed by the hands of Egyptian policemen catalyzed a new momentum for social protests and greater public concern of Egypt's political situation. After Saeed's assassination, two Facebook pages, created by activists, gathered an estimated 200,000 supporters in a couple of weeks.⁶ The case not only provided a new impetus to the youth movements (Elyan, 2010), it also triggered new claims of human-rights violations from organizations such as Amnesty International and new calls from the U.S. government and the European Union urging democratic reforms in Egypt. Facebook was very important in building a common narrative about police brutality, but it also became a venue of convergence for multiple political-opposition organizations. Twitter had a significant role in the dissemination of news and organization details of protests, and oppositional blogs continued confronting the regime's versions of the socio-political situation.

Phase 5: Occupying Tahrir Square(s) (Jan-Apr 2011)

"We will take to the streets to demand the right to life, liberty and dignity and we call on everyone to take to the streets" (...)"The barriers of fear must be broken." (Shehab, 2011)

Three events triggered the protests in Egypt in January 2011: the increasing discontent among the population generated by the results of the second round of Parliamentary Elections on 5 December 2010; the continuing police brutality, epitomized by police repression of the protests following a car bombing during a New Year's Eve service at the al-Qiddissin Church; and the Tunisian revolution as a result of a wave of social and political unrest and civil disobedience. Around these three issues, social organizations and non-collective actors led by a group of youth organizations, including A6YM, framed their messages and called for a national protest on Police Day that culminated in the occupation of Tahrir Square and Mubarak's resignation.

⁵ This article is based on the Egypt Human Development Report (EHDR) that pointed out that the majority of youth saw political activities as useless and incapable of making a difference to their most immediate problems.

⁶ This was the data provided within two articles of the Daily News Egypt on June 20, 2010.

If Tahrir Square could represent the symbolic epicentre of the physical protests during the Egyptian unrest, Facebook could represent the vertebral spine of the network of places created by civil society (majoritarian youth people) for expressing, communicating, informing, networking, and mobilizing against the Mubarak regime. Social media -- in particular, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and text messages -- were central to initiating the protests, for reporting on the events and coordinating the protests and for building bridges which favoured the interaction between protesters and other social sectors of the Egyptian society and the international community as well as mass media. They were also central tools in the process of framing the public messages that emphasized a) the ability and opportunity for the Egyptians to produce social change, b) the importance of mobilization and taking to the streets, c) the protests as legitimate ways to obtain political reforms, and d) young Egyptians as leading that historical process.

Discussion and Conclusions

After following the journey of A6YM through the lens of these newspapers, three major findings emerge. Social media did not just provide alternative mechanisms to spread messages and join people in a repressive climate; they also increased the size, speed, and reach of activism (local and internationally). Second, social media not only had an impressive impact on the creation, development, and consolidation of A6YM, but they also became a symbol of the A6YM process of building its own identity. The use of social media also became a sign of identification for youth movements and organizations in Egypt; the combination of 'bits and streets' (online and offline activities, online and offline communications forms), supersized not just the mobilizations but also the size of the threats that Mubarak's regime experienced during the revolutionary dynamic.

One of the most remarkable features of A6YM was its ability to frame and communicate messages that appeal not only to younger people but also other social movements, political parties, and the general public. They also achieved good support from international networks, especially from Internet activists and human-rights organizations. The A6YM movement did an amazing job taking individual and sectorial grievances and transforming them into collective grievances. And social media's speed as well as the narratives their platforms allowed to create had a strong impact on the way the movement framed those collective grievances. The movement was not only good with words, but it also showed great creativity in the planning of the demonstrations. The selection of venues and clothing worn had great symbolic value and were understandable for most of the Egyptian society and well received internationally. Social media was also decisive in the process of building not only a network of individuals and organizations but also a network of socio-political ideas and common strategies to confront the status quo.

A6YM members not only used social media during its socio-political trajectory, they also demonstrated that this media were determinant in shaping the organization and the social interactions the movement had with other social movements and social sectors as well as with the Mubarak regime. Social media also provided different alternatives for people to express and to participate both within the movement and during protests, offering both active and passive levels of engagement.

The aspects mentioned above cast a series of questions and academic challenges. It is necessary to delve into the social spaces created by Internet-based technologies for new social expression and mobilizations of collective and non-collective actors. It is also important to inquire about the ways this and other new movements are framing their collective grievances and how they have been received by other social organizations and different sectors of Egyptian society and the international community. It is worth taking a closer look at the effect social media had in the organization of the movement and its way of dealing with different social situations and the effects social media had on the State's response to the growing phenomenon of social mobilization and use of Internet-based technologies.

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Christina Schachtner:

Transnationale Netzöffentlichkeiten als neue politische Öffentlichkeiten – Das kritische Potential digitaler Medien am Beispiel arabischer Online-Plattformen

Abstract:

Even in the first few weeks of the so-called "Arab Spring" in January 2011, digital media were identified as being essential instruments for organizing the political protests in the Middle East and North Africa. Yet digital media had already started to play a political role as arenas of discourse in which topics such as democracy, minority rights, gender and religion could be debated at least two to three years earlier. A critical online public sphere arose which had a transregional and global focus right from the start, as reflected in the self-image of one network actor when he explained: "In real life I'm a Saudi guy living in Saudi Arabia. But online I'm multinational, I'm multigeographical". This article presents the results of a study entitled "Communicative publics in cyberspace" investigating digital platforms which had been initiated in the Arab world, which is also where most of the contributions come from; this analysis is backed up by interviews with network actors and bloggers from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Following the concept of Nancy Fraser's transnational public spheres (2007). I analysed the normative legitimacy and the efficiency of the communicative authority of digital arenas of discourse in the Middle East, identifying which political practices led to social movements in the digital sphere and which characteristics of digital media contributed to helping digital arenas of discourse turn into places where political resistance can develop.

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Einleitung

Transnationale Flows wie Kapital-, Rohstoff-, Migrations-, Informationsströme erfahren zunehmende wissenschaftliche Aufmerksamkeit, seit über die Entwicklung von Gesellschaften und Kulturen im Kontext von Globalisierung nachgedacht wird (Hannerz 1997, 2; Schachtner 2009). In das Spektrum der transnationalen Flows gehört auch die Mobilisierung der öffentlichen Meinung, die nur noch selten an den Grenzen des Territorialstaats endet (Fraser 2007, 236) und die im Mittelpunkt dieses Beitrags steht. Ich verstehe den Begriff transnational im Sinne von Ulrich Beck als „Verkoppelung mindestens zweier nationaler Erfahrungs- und Bezugsräume“ (Beck 2006, 6), in denen kulturelle Differenzen erhalten bleiben oder miteinander verschmelzen und einen dritten Handlungsraum eröffnen (Beck 2004, 14; Beck 2006, 6). Transnationalität so verstanden, enthält Transkulturalität als die andere Seite der Medaille. Während Transnationalität die territoriale Dimension betont, fokussiert Transkulturalität die Sinn- und Bedeutungsdimension ein und desselben Prozesses.

Die Idee der Transnationalität wird in diesem Beitrag auf Öffentlichkeit bezogen, wie sie Nancy Fraser in Anlehnung an Jürgen Habermas definiert, nämlich als „Ort der Produktion und Zirkulation von Diskursen, die dem Staat prinzipiell kritisch gegenüberstehen“ (Fraser 1996, 152). Öffentlichkeit beschreibt nicht nur Kommunikationsflüsse, sie ist als kritische Kraft konzipiert, die den Willen der BürgerInnen gegenüber den Regierenden zur Geltung bringt (Habermas 1990; Fraser 2007, 225). Während jedoch Öffentlichkeit im klassischen Verständnis auf ein nationales Territorium bezogen ist – Fraser spricht von einem „nationalen Subtext“ (Fraser 2007, 232) – sprengt die transnationale Perspektive die nationale Rahmung.

Gegenstand meiner Analyse ist die in arabischen Online-Netzwerken und Blogs hergestellte politische Öffentlichkeit, die im Rahmen der Studie ‚Subjektkonstruktionen und digitale Kultur‘¹ im Vorfeld und parallel zum Arabischen Frühling untersucht wurde. Die empirische Basis bilden Analysen der Online-Plattform Mideast Youth, die mit Facebook, Twitter und lokalen arabischen Netzwerken verlinkt ist sowie Interviews mit NetzkollegInnen und BloggerInnen aus Bahrain, Saudi Arabien, den Vereinigten Emiraten und dem Jemen.

Die Frage, der ich in diesem Beitrag nachgehe, lautet: Inwiefern zeigt sich in den analysierten virtuellen Räumen eine transnationale Öffentlichkeit, die eine geteilte politische Meinung wirksam zur Geltung bringt und welche Rolle spielen dabei die digitalen Medien?

Die Zahlen zur Internetnutzung belegen, dass die digitalen Medien in den arabischen Ländern und in Nordafrika in den letzten Jahren zu einem beliebten Kommunikations- und Informationsinstrument geworden sind. Während die Internetnutzung weltweit von 2000 bis 2011 um 528,1% zugenommen hat, hat sie im Mittleren Osten um 2.244,8 % zugenommen (Quelle: www.internetworldstats.com, Zugriff am 12.06.2012). In den Vereinigten Arabischen Emiraten nutzten im Dezember 2011 69% der Bevölkerung das Internet, in Katar 66,5%, in Bahrain 57,1%, allerdings im Jemen nur 10,8% (Quelle: <http://www.internetworldstats.com>, Zugriff am 12.06.2012). Keine der von uns untersuchten Online-Plattformen und Blogs waren nur national orientiert; diskursive Bezugspunkte waren in der Regel primär die Länder Nordafrikas und des Mittleren Ostens sowie darüber hinaus die Weltöffentlichkeit. Im Selbstverständnis der Plattform Mideast Youth wird als Ziel formuliert, einen Dialog unter den Jugendlichen der gesamten Region des Mittleren Ostens zu initiieren (www.mideastyouth.com). Eine 26jährige Netzaktivistin aus dem Jemen beschreibt in ihrem Blog nicht nur die aktuellen politischen Ereignisse im Jemen, sie richtet ihren Blick auch, wie sie uns im Interview mitteilte, auf die Ereignisse in Tunesien, in Ägypten, in Syrien, in Bahrain und Marokko und stellt als das verbindende Ziel der Bevölkerung in den verschiedenen Ländern fest: „People now are fighting for their democracy“. Ein ebenfalls 26jähriger Netzaktivist aus Saudi Arabien sieht das Internet vor allem als eine Möglichkeit, „where interaction between Saudi Arabians and international community started to happen“. In den arabischen Online-Arenen dominieren Themen wie Meinungs- und Pressefreiheit, Rechte für Minderheiten, Frauenrechte, Chancengleichheit, Demokratiemodelle. Wir beobachteten die Auseinandersetzung mit diesen Themen teilweise Jahre vor Ausbruch der Arabischen Revolution.

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Die genannten Themen repräsentieren verbindende Problem- und Bewusstseinslagen, die Wolfgang Welsch generell als mächtige transnationale Wirkfaktoren quer durch die Kulturen bezeichnet (Welsch 2001, 265).

Politische Netzöffentlichkeiten im arabischen Raum im Kontext des Ansatzes von Nancy Fraser

In Beantwortung meiner Frage nach der Wirksamkeit des politischen Potentials der Online-Öffentlichkeit orientiere ich mich an Nancy Fraser, die hierfür zwei Bedingungen nennt: (1) Normative Legitimität und (2) Effizienz der kommunikativen Macht (Fraser 2007, 226).

Inwiefern repräsentieren die im Mittleren Osten initiierten virtuellen Diskursarenen normative Legitimität? Nancy Fraser bezieht die normative Legitimität transnationaler Öffentlichkeiten auf Inklusivität und Betroffenheit.

Teilhabechancen an kritischen Öffentlichkeiten online

Nancy Fraser fordert, dass öffentliche Diskursarenen allen offenstehen müssen, für die etwas auf dem Spiel steht und alle die gleichen Chancen haben müssen, ihre Sichtweisen zu äußern und Fragen auf die Agenda zu setzen (Fraser 2007, 247). Das Fraser'sche Ideal von Inklusivität wird wohl selten erreicht werden, aber die politische Legitimität ist umso größer, je näher die Realität dem Ideal kommt.

Die von uns untersuchten arabischen Online-Plattformen stehen zwar allen offen, aber ihre Nutzung der Partizipationschancen erfordert ökonomische Ressourcen, Sprach- und Kommunikationskompetenz. Wir beobachteten auf den arabischen Plattformen vor allem junge Erwachsene im Alter zwischen 20 und 30 Jahren aus bildungsnahen Mittelschichten. Die Netzöffentlichkeit ist folglich von einer privilegierten Schicht geprägt, die allerdings einer Altersgruppe entstammt, die in den arabischen Ländern die Mehrheit der Bevölkerung bildet (Durchschnittsalter ca. 26 Jahre). Das Risiko, dass bestimmte Gruppen aus der kritischen Netzöffentlichkeit ausgeschlossen sind, wird unseren Ergebnissen zufolge von den NetzakteurInnen gesehen und zu kompensieren versucht. Dies illustriert die Aussage der Gründerin von Mideast Youth Esra'a Al Shafei: „There were so many people in the region they are not represented. The minorities for example – atheists in the Middle East, Kurds, Bahais, members of other religions. So I wanted to do Mideast Youth in order to give minorities in the region a voice and so I founded it with this idea in my head.“ Eine Ausweitung der kritischen Öffentlichkeit ergab sich auch dadurch, dass diese über den virtuellen Raum hinaus auf die realen Plätze getragen wurde bzw. sich mit dem Protest auf den Straßen verband, wodurch sich Partizipationschancen für weitere Bevölkerungsgruppen eröffneten.

Betroffenheit als Kriterium der Teilhabe

Laut Fraser ist die öffentliche Meinung legitim, wenn sie durch diejenigen gebildet und getragen wird, die gemeinsam verstrickt sind in „Strukturen und/oder Institutionen, die ihr Leben beeinflussen“ (Fraser 2007, 249) verstrickt sind, kurz gesagt, wenn sie auf Betroffenheit basiert.

Versuche, Betroffenheit zu formulieren, zeigen sich sowohl in den öffentlichen arabischen Online-Arenen als auch in den Äußerungen unserer InterviewpartnerInnen. Auf der Website von Mideast Youth heißt es in einem Comic: „We grew up with 21st century culture and see the foolishness of old barriers and grudges.“ Die Betroffenheit der jungen Generation zu mobilisieren, zeigt sich als ein starkes Element der kritischen Netzöffentlichkeit, wie auch die folgende Aussage einer 23jährigen Netzakteurin aus den Vereinigten Arabischen Emiraten illustriert: „We wanted people to know ,look we're the youth in the Middle East (...). We have the voice and we want it to be heard.“ In der Kritik an den herrschenden Strukturen wird auf eine geteilte Betroffenheit abgehoben, die teilweise bezogen ist auf die Gesamtbevölkerung, teilweise auf bestimmte soziale Gruppen in diesen Ländern wie Kurden, Homosexuelle, Atheisten, Migranten. Von dem Mangel an Meinungsfreiheit sind aus Sicht

einer Netzakteurin aus Bahrain alle BewohnerInnen des Mittleren Ostens betroffen. Sie stellt fest: „There was a lack of freedom of speech in Middle East.“ Wenn dieselbe Netzakteurin erklärt “we started inviting gay people to come in, gay or bisexual or transgender people to give interviews with Mideast Youth to talk about their life“, dann verweist sie auf eine bestimmte soziale Gruppe, die in der Region Benachteiligung erfährt.

Zur Effizienz kritischer Netzöffentlichkeiten

Inwiefern können diese Netzöffentlichkeiten zu einer wirksamen politischen Kraft werden? Mit dieser Frage ist die Effizienz politischer Netzöffentlichkeiten angesprochen. Die kommunikative Macht digitaler Diskursarenen knüpft Fraser an zwei Voraussetzungen: (1) an die Übersetzung der Forderungen dieser Öffentlichkeiten in geltendes Recht und (2) daran, dass die Regierenden in der Lage sind, den diskursiv gebildeten Willen zu implementieren (Fraser 2007, 250). Beide Voraussetzungen sind in den arabischen Ländern, in denen sich revolutionäre Tendenzen zeigten, nicht gegeben. Die Regierenden genießen nicht mehr das Vertrauen der kritischen Öffentlichkeit und werden häufig aufgefordert, ihre Machtbefugnisse abzugeben.

Der Frage nach Effizienz muss und kann in Abweichung zum Fraser'schen Ansatz auf einer anderen Ebene nachgegangen werden, nämlich dort, wo und wie sich die politische Meinung öffentlich formiert, also quasi im Vorfeld von formalem Recht und dessen Implementation. Der Blick auf die Art und Weise der politischen Meinungsbildung macht unter Effizienzgesichtspunkten Sinn, wenn man davon ausgeht, dass die Gestaltung des öffentlichen Diskurses die Möglichkeiten der Übersetzung des politischen Willens in politische Realität mitbestimmt.

In den untersuchten arabischen Netzöffentlichkeiten konnten drei Komponenten identifiziert werden, die versprechen, die virtuellen Diskursarenen zu einer wirksamen politischen Kraft zu machen:

- Die Entwicklung einer konsensuellen kritischen Position gegenüber den herrschenden politischen Verhältnissen
- Die öffentliche Verständigung über eine gesellschaftliche Alternative
- Die gemeinsame Suche nach Lösungswegen

Entwicklung einer konsensuellen kritischen Position

Die öffentliche Formulierung von Kritik auf den arabischen Online-Plattformen bezog sich auf bestimmte soziale Gruppen und Themen. Hauptinhalte des kritischen Diskurses waren die Diskriminierung und die mangelnden Rechte von ethnischen und religiösen Minderheiten, von Frauen sowie von Menschen, die von der Norm abweichen wie Homosexuelle und Atheisten. Politik, Religion, Sex seien die drei Tabus in arabischen Ländern, wie von verschiedenen InterviewpartnerInnen betont wurde, über die zu schreiben eine Provokation darstelle. Die diskursive Überschreitung einer Grenze in den Online-Arenen durch Ansprechen solcher Themen wird den DiskutantInnen, wie sie uns mitteilten, durch die etablierte politische Macht signalisiert in Form von Aufforderungen, Kritik zu unterlassen, in Form von Bedrohungen in Form von Blogsperrern bis hin zur Verhaftung. Die NetzakteurInnen begegnen den möglichen Attacks mit Achtsamkeit im eigenen Interesse und im Interesse ihrer Familien, bleiben aber bei der Überzeugung, dass die Kritik am Status quo öffentlich gemacht werden muss, wie diese Bemerkung illustriert: „It's time for Yemen to be not hidden“ .

Öffentlich diskutierte gesellschaftliche Alternativen

Visionen unterstützen die Effizienz kritischer Netzöffentlichkeiten , weil sie ein Ziel jenseits des Status quo benennen und Bewusstsein für Alternativen schaffen. Das Visionäre zeigte sich in den arabischen Netzöffentlichkeiten in digitalen Kommunikationsspielen, die durch bestimmte Fragen dazu animieren, sich eine andere Gesellschaft vorzustellen. Mit Fragen wie „What would you do if Saudi Arabia just has its first female president?“ oder “What would you do if Kurdistan become a country in Middle East with its own culture, with its own identity

instead of being separated into four countries?“, wurden Diskussionen über gesellschaftliche Alternativen initiiert. Unabhängig von solchen Spielen werden von den NetzakteurInnen Lebensformen propagiert, die sich nicht nur aus einer, sondern aus vielen kulturellen Quellen im Sinne von mixed cultures speisen. Sie beziehen sich beispielsweise sowohl auf den Islam als für sie wichtigen Orientierungsrahmen als auch auf westliche Denker als Ideengeber. Die visionären Äußerungen in den Netzdiskursen lassen erkennen, dass es den Diskurs-TeilnehmerInnen darum geht, weder die eigene kulturelle Tradition fraglos zu adaptieren, noch westliche Modelle zu kopieren, sondern ihren eigenen Weg in eine andere Zukunft zu kreieren. „This is a community“, erklärte eine dieser NetzakteurInnen, „that is created by Middle Easterners that represent us and not what other people are saying or thinking about us“.

Die gemeinsame Suche nach Lösungen

Die politische Meinungsbildung in den untersuchten arabischen Netzöffentlichkeiten blieb weder bei der Kritik noch bei den Visionen stehen; es wurden auch Lösungen erörtert. ‚Tabus lüften und Schweigen brechen‘ kann als erster Schritt einer diskursiven Lösung identifiziert werden, der in den Interviews von den arabischen NetzakteurInnen immer wieder benannt wurde. Eine revolutionäre Lösung, wie sie durch den Arabischen Frühling in Gang gesetzt wurde, war in den Netzdiskussionen und in den Interviews vor dem Ausbruch des Arabischen Frühlings nicht erkennbar. Propagiert wurden vielmehr Lösungen, die im Bereich von Bildung und Bewusstseinsveränderung lagen. Bildung und Lernen wurden als die wichtigsten Mittel genannt, um gesellschaftliche Zusammenhänge zu durchschauen. „Learning is all about questioning what you’re being told“, definiert eine Netzakteurin aus Bahrain ihren Bildungsbegriff. Ein weiterer Lösungsweg wurde in der Öffnung des eigenen Denkens und der eigenen Nation nach außen gesehen, sowohl in Richtung des gesamten arabischen Kulturraums als auch in Richtung westlicher Demokratien. Der produktive Umgang mit kulturellen Differenzen hat aus der Perspektive der NetzakteurInnen einen hohen Stellenwert, weil er den Vergleich, das Sich-Reiben, das Entdecken neuer Möglichkeiten befördert. Die Nutzung digitaler Medien schließlich wurde als unverzichtbare Bedingung geschildert, die öffentliche Meinungsbildung zu mobilisieren.

Die Rolle der digitalen Medien bei der Entwicklung einer kritischen Netzöffentlichkeit

Nancy Fraser steht den Möglichkeiten digitaler Netzwerke zur Förderung transnationaler Öffentlichkeiten skeptisch gegenüber. Sie zweifelt, ob sich eine kritische öffentliche Meinung als politische Kraft entwickeln kann, wenn sich globale Medienunternehmen und dezentrale Internet-Netzwerke das Feld teilen (Fraser 2007, 243). Mit diesen Zweifeln ignoriert sie ihr eigenes Konzept von Teilöffentlichkeiten, das sie etwa zehn Jahre zuvor in ihrem Aufsatz ‚Öffentlichkeit neu denken‘ formuliert hat (Fraser 1996, 163 ff.). Im Falle der arabischen Online-Netzwerke ist die Konkurrenz zu den etablierten Medien, soweit sie unter staatlicher Kontrolle stehen, eine notwendige Konkurrenz bzw. eine Ergänzung für jene etablierten Medien, die selbst an der Herstellung einer kritischen Öffentlichkeit interessiert sind, aber in Krisengebieten nicht mehr agieren können. Solche Medien greifen häufig auf Berichte und Bildmaterialien zu, die in den digitalen Netzwerken präsentiert werden. Ich möchte auf drei Merkmale digital gestützter Kommunikation eingehen, die die Bildung einer kritischen transnationalen Öffentlichkeit fördern, ohne den Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit zu erheben.

Digitale Kommunikation und Reflexion

Kommunikationsmedien stimulieren Reflexion, denn Kommunikation erfordert, Erfahrungen, Hintergrundwissen, Wörter bei der Entwicklung eines Arguments aufeinander abzustimmen, die Argumente anderer zu registrieren und darauf zu reagieren. In diesem Prozess werden notwendig eigene Wahrnehmungen und Positionen hinterfragt, gedreht, gewendet, relativiert, erweitert, kurz: reflektiert. Die Multimedialität digitaler Medien verstärkt diesen Prozess. Bilder etwa haben als Kommunikationsmedien während des Arabischen Frühlings stark an Bedeutung gewonnen. Videos über die Ereignisse auf dem Tahirplatz in Kairo oder auf dem Perlenplatz in Manama führten die BetrachterInnen einerseits sehr nahe an das Geschehen heran und gewährten als Medium

zugleich Distanz. In diesem Wechselspiel von sinnlicher Nähe und Distanz steckt das Potenzial zur reflexiven Praxis, die stets das Moment von Widerständigkeit enthält, weil sie prinzipiell hinterfragt und damit den Grundstein für eine kritische Öffentlichkeit legt.

Digitale Kommunikation als grenzüberschreitende Kommunikation

Die digitalen Medien unterstützen als grenzüberschreitende Medien, was nur dem Menschen möglich ist und von den arabischen NetzakteurInnen, wie erwähnt, als zentrales Moment einer kritischen transnationalen Öffentlichkeit betrachtet wird: Weltoffenheit. Als Netzwerkmedien fördern sie interdependente Bezüge, was den Vorstellungen der arabischen NetzakteurInnen insofern entgegen kommt als sie an einer Öffentlichkeit interessiert sind, in der Differenzen – die eigenen und die der anderen – Raum bekommen, in dem die Auseinandersetzung mit Differenzen stimuliert wird und externe Einflüsse möglich sind. Sie wollen den transnationalen Austausch, um sich davon inspirieren zu lassen. Sie wollen aber auch, dass sich die Welt von ihnen inspirieren lässt. Diese Intention taucht auffallend oft in den Interviews auf und hört sich z.B. so an: „In my blog I’m talking to the world. I’m trying to allow people to look at things especially in Saudi Arabia and especially when they look back to Saudi Arabia through Mideast Youth or through my blog to see the social and intellectual fabric of what makes Saudi Arabia Saudi Arabia“.

Digitale Kommunikation als hybride Kommunikation

Digitale Kommunikation weist in mehrfacher Hinsicht hybride Strukturen auf: Ich möchte mich auf eine Facette von Hybridität beschränken: auf die Überschneidung/Mischung von Öffentlichkeit und Privatheit. Die Teilhabe an der transnationalen Cyberöffentlichkeit kann aus dem privaten Lebensraum heraus erfolgen, in den man sich jederzeit wieder zurückziehen kann. Dies erweitert die Teilhabechancen an diesen Öffentlichkeiten gerade in restriktiven politischen Systemen, in denen der Zutritt zu den realen öffentlichen Räumen bestimmten Gruppen wie z.B. Frauen verschlossen ist. Es dürfte kein Zufall sein, dass arabische Frauen in den diskursiven politischen Online-Arenen stark vertreten sind, oft eine führende Rolle einnehmen und alle Möglichkeiten der digitalen Kommunikation nutzen, wie die Aussage einer Bloggerin aus dem Jemen verdeutlicht, die erklärt: „I tweet, I blog, I skype, I chat, I sms“.

Die Möglichkeit, zwischen Privatheit und Öffentlichkeit zu flanieren, macht den virtuellen Raum nicht nur zu einem geschützten Raum, sondern auch zu einem Trainingsort für Öffentlichkeitskompetenzen. Man kann lernen, wie man Diskussionen initiiert, Aufmerksamkeit erregt, ein Thema setzt, mit Widerspruch und Kritik umgeht, Handlungsstrategien entwickelt.

Fazit

Die politischen Öffentlichkeiten in arabischen Online-Netzwerken sind als transnationale Öffentlichkeiten angelegt, weil sie auf die Konfrontation mit Differenz, auf Anregung von außen, auf Verkoppelung von Erfahrungen, auf common ground und neue kulturelle Mischungen setzen. Gemessen an den Fraser’schen Kriterien politischer Wirksamkeit zeigt sich Betroffenheit als stärkstes Element dieser Öffentlichkeiten. Als Kernpunkte dieser Betroffenheit werden von einer jungen bildungsnahen arabischen Mittelschicht die Unterdrückung von Menschenrechten, von Freiheit und von Minderheiten genannt. In den arabischen Netzöffentlichkeiten formierte sich schon zwei bis drei Jahre vor Ausbruch des Arabischen Frühlings der Wunsch nach selbstbestimmten offenen Lebensformen, frei von politischen und/oder religiös-kulturellen Fesseln.

Die transnationalen arabischen Online-Netzwerke erweisen sich als politisch-kulturelle Gegengewichte. Doch wer sind die Adressaten dieser Gegenöffentlichkeiten? In der Adressatenfrage scheint aus meiner Sicht eine der größten Herausforderungen für die neuen kritischen Öffentlichkeiten im arabischen Raum zu stecken. Die öffentliche Kritik richtet sich gegen die repressiven Kräfte, die teils das Gesicht autokratischer Führer haben, teils in den Strukturen stecken etwa in Form religiöser Tabus, die Macht im Sinne von Foucault verkörpern (Foucault 1976, 229 ff.).

Wie mehrfach erwähnt, spielten die digitalen Medien nicht erst als Instrumente zur Organisation der politischen Proteste offline eine Rolle, sondern bereits Jahre zuvor als Reflexions- und Dialogräume, in denen ein Bewusstsein entstehen konnte von dem, was sich ändern soll. Zu einem weltweit sichtbaren und politisch nicht mehr ignorierbaren Faktor wurde dieses Bewusstsein aber erst, als es aus dem Netz hinaus und in die realweltliche Öffentlichkeit (Winter 2010, 144) auf den zentralen Plätzen der großen Städte drängte. Das verweist nicht zuletzt auch auf die wirklichkeitsprägende Kraft medialer Diskurse.

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Enrique Javier Díez Gutiérrez:

Tecnologías de la Información, ¿motor de participación o de dominación?

Abstract:

In recent years, discourses about the democratising potential of the Internet and social networks have proliferated. The theoretical spectrum in which these discourses are located range from the consideration of the Internet and social networks as a complement to the procedures and techniques used by representative democracy (as a "digital democracy"), to their potential to generate new forms of citizenship as part of a move towards a new direct and participatory democracy of a horizontal nature. The analysis described here explores the extent to which the Internet and social networks are changing the relationship between governments and citizens, and whether they do in fact constitute another means of constructing citizenship and democratic political participation, through social mobilisation, moving towards a sense of strong, direct democracy and even the possibility of participatory self-government.

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En los últimos años están proliferando los discursos alrededor de las potencialidades democratizadoras de internet y las redes sociales. El espectro teórico en el que se mueven estos discursos abarca desde la consideración de internet y las redes sociales como complemento de los procedimientos y técnicas utilizadas por la democracia representativa (como la "democracia digital"), hasta sus potencialidades para generar nuevas formas de ciudadanía en el camino hacia una nueva democracia directa y participativa de corte horizontal. El análisis que aquí se desarrolla se plantea en qué medida internet y las redes sociales están cambiando las relaciones entre gobiernos y ciudadanía, incluso si, efectivamente, suponen otra forma de construir ciudadanía y participación política democrática, mediante la movilización social, avanzando hacia un sentido de democracia fuerte y directa e incluso con la posibilidad de llegar al auto-gobierno participativo. O si, más bien, estamos ante una cierta idealización sobre las grandes potencialidades de internet y las redes sociales, en donde lo que surgen son discursos míticos que anticipan los usos deseables de estas herramientas en el campo de la participación social y política. Y acaso, solo nos quedemos con un activismo digital, obsesionado por el seguimiento de los *clicks* realizados en internet y las redes sociales a favor de una causa, que va introduciendo altas dosis de banalización práctica del compromiso cívico, delimitado y domesticado comercialmente por los dueños de este ciberespacio virtual que son quienes controlan las posibilidades y los límites de una "pseudociudadanía" cautiva en el reino del ciberespacio. En definitiva, podemos decir que internet y las redes sociales pueden conducir al *boom* o al *doom*: pueden llevar a la materialización de las utopías tecnológicas de un mundo más igualitario o, por el contrario, pueden reproducir y exacerbar aún más los desequilibrios de poder que existen ya en la realidad social. Este es el reto, este es el desafío. El futuro se está construyendo con las redes que vamos tejiendo.

Internet: ¿Participación o banalización del compromiso cívico?

Proliferan los discursos alrededor de las potencialidades democratizadoras de internet y las redes sociales (Díez Rodríguez, 2003; Putnam, 2009; Marí, 2010). Se nos prometía que contribuirían a la creación a escala de nación o incluso mundial del ágora ateniense. El espectro teórico en el que se mueven estos discursos abarca desde la consideración de internet y las redes sociales como complemento de los procedimientos y técnicas utilizadas por la democracia representativa (como la "democracia digital"), hasta sus potencialidades para generar nuevas formas de ciudadanía en el camino hacia una nueva democracia directa y participativa de corte horizontal (Díez, 2003; Frank, 2003; De Moraes, 2004; Del Moral, 2005; Caldevilla, 2010; Sánchez y Poveda, 2010; Bringué y Sádaba, 2011).

En esta reflexión lo que me planteo es en qué medida internet y las redes sociales están cambiando las relaciones entre gobiernos y ciudadanía, incluso si, efectivamente, suponen otra forma de construir ciudadanía y participación política democrática, mediante la movilización social, avanzando hacia un sentido de democracia fuerte y directa e incluso con la posibilidad de llegar al auto-gobierno participativo. O si, más bien, estamos ante una cierta idealización sobre las grandes potencialidades de internet y las redes sociales, en donde el compromiso cívico está delimitado y domesticado comercialmente por los dueños de este ciberespacio virtual que son quienes controlan las posibilidades y los límites de una "pseudociudadanía" cautiva en el reino del ciberespacio (Hurtado y Naranjo, 2002).

La fe en las bondades y posibilidades de las tecnologías no son nada nuevo en nuestro siglo. Se dice, que uno de los colaboradores de Marconi, el precursor de la comunicación sin hilos, le comentó al inventor una vez logrado el primer éxito: "ya podemos hablar con Florida". A lo que Marconi respondió: "¿pero tenemos algo que decirle a Florida?".

No podemos ser ingenuos. No podemos olvidar que ha sido la sociedad moderna capitalista la que ha generado un determinado tipo de tecnología, que a su vez produce determinadas herramientas, métodos y procedimientos con unos fines determinados. Desde la Revolución industrial no es posible separar la ciencia y la técnica de los intereses económicos y sociales a los que sirven y en función de los que han sido potenciadas unas determinadas orientaciones en la ciencia y unas concretas aplicaciones de la técnica.

Las herramientas y máquinas creadas por el ser humano transforman a los seres humanos, no sólo porque les imponen su tiempo y su ritmo de trabajo, sino porque, poco a poco, van dibujando el horizonte de desarrollo posible y por tanto probable (Díez Rodríguez, 2003). E internet y las redes sociales se han convertido en tecnologías dominantes en nuestra sociedad global que están marcando relaciones, hábitos o estilos de consumo. Ha transformado la manera en que nos comunicamos y, en consecuencia, en que nos vinculamos.

Frente a la visión ahistórica y neutral de la tecnología, que pretende ocultar los intereses y fuerzas que han llevado a su gestación, debemos ser conscientes de que "las tecnologías tienen política". Los medios, que ahora denominamos tradicionales (prensa, radio y televisión), antes que proporcionar información o favorecer la comunicación entre los usuarios, que sería uno de los pilares del modelo democrático, crecen, se reproducen y se concentran bajo la consigna de «manejar» a las masas en su alianza con los poderes públicos y económicos. Se mantienen así discursos hegemónicos, prácticas comunicativas normativas y estructuras de relación humana que establecen unas determinadas condiciones de poder. ¿Puede alguien creer que la revolución vendrá a partir de estas herramientas tecnológicas?, se pregunta Castells (2009), ¿Siendo Twitter y Facebook empresas, qué clase de revolución permitirían?

Se ha consolidado un control oligopolístico de unas cuantas megacorporaciones sobre buena parte del núcleo de la red global de medios de comunicación. En definitiva, los procesos de dominación y desigualdad presentes en las redes sociales reales, son amplificados por las redes sociales virtuales. Un ejemplo: *Google, Yahoo* y otros sitios web usan una combinación de relevancia de palabras clave, popularidad de los términos buscados, vínculos otros sitios y el comportamiento de los usuarios finales para determinar el orden de los resultados de la búsqueda. Cuántos más usuarios utilizan unos vínculos determinados, más arriba suben estas fuentes en la *googlearquía*. Por tanto, los usuarios de los motores de búsqueda al mismo tiempo consumen información y contribuyen a determinar la accesibilidad y el dominio de esa fuente de información para otros usuarios en Internet. Esto tiene un efecto dominó. Es más probable que los usuarios elijan un vínculo en las primeras páginas de resultados. Por tanto, la relevancia engendra relevancia. Por ejemplo, la búsqueda de temas africanos utiliza pocas fuentes africanas, ya que no están entre el primer grupo de resultados.

En este contexto han surgido términos como *tecnodemocracia, tecnopolítica, democracia electrónica, Netizen, E-government, etc.*, redefiniendo una nueva y futura forma de democracia: más democrática, más participativa, más igualitaria, etc. Sin embargo, dentro de esta nueva «imagería», parecen estar imponiéndose las visiones que, sin dejar de alabar sus potencialidades, las recluyen en el ámbito del desarrollo y/o profundización del modelo de democracia representativa, específicamente centrándose en el «voto electrónico», o en la recogida de información de la ciudadanía al estilo de un gran sistema de encuestas. Otros (Marí, 2010; Monbiot, 2011) sugieren mejorar la comunicación entre la ciudadanía y sus representantes políticos, completando las insuficiencias participativas, etc. Pero sin dejar de apostar por la mejora de la democracia representativa.

Democracia digital 4.0

Una de estas apuestas es Democracia 4.0. (2012), iniciativa apoyada por Democracia Real Ya (DRY). Esta iniciativa propone que la ciudadanía participe directamente en la toma de decisiones que le afectan desde su casa, a través de Internet. Se argumentaba que ya que en España hay 35 millones de ciudadanas y ciudadanos mayores de edad, a quienes representan 350 diputados, existe la posibilidad de descontar una pequeña cuota de representación por cada ciudadano, una treinta y cinco milonésima parte (la cuota de soberanía que nos corresponde), para que cada uno de los ciudadanos y ciudadanas pudiese participar por vía telemática, si así lo deseaba, en las votaciones del Congreso. Como todos los diputados representan en conjunto la soberanía popular, a todos se les restaría la parte proporcional correspondiente al número de ciudadanos y ciudadanas que decidiesen utilizar su derecho a votar.

Esto supondría, según esta iniciativa, que por cada cien mil ciudadanos que votaran on-line, un escaño "volvería al pueblo". Si fueran un millón, pues diez escaños para la ciudadanía. Según la propuesta el control sobre las decisiones tomadas en el Parlamento, por parte de las personas, crecería; los presupuestos, los recortes sociales, las medidas más polémicas y de mayor trascendencia podrían ser evaluadas y controladas por los destinatarios de las mismas, lo que obligaría a los diputados y diputadas a tomarse más en serio su trabajo, a

sabiendas de que muchos ojos lo fiscalizan. En definitiva, se eliminaría el actual cheque en blanco que suponen las elecciones y se constituiría una democracia responsable y exigente.

Lo cierto es que la participación en redes sociales está cambiando el panorama de las propias prácticas democráticas: desde el rol de los partidos políticos y su utilización de las redes en las campañas y en el trabajo político posterior; hasta la presión a través de las redes (p.e. el caso de wikileaks) a favor de una mayor transparencia de los gobiernos, los bancos y las grandes multinacionales y sus prácticas.

La participación en internet: más allá del Slack-clickactivismo

Pero tampoco podemos hacer una lectura demasiado optimista sobre la participación en internet y las redes sociales como construcción de una democracia más inclusiva. Nos debemos plantear de entrada una serie de dificultades que expongo a continuación.

La "brecha digital" no sólo del acceso a la web 1.0 (el acceso a internet –personas mayores, zonas rurales, países del sur, etc.-), sino a la web 2.0 (quién produce contenidos y relaciones en el ciberespacio) nos obliga a plantearnos si realmente se ha democratizado el acceso a la red, y se ha democratizado la producción de contenidos.

El denominado "voyeurismo 2.0" (Del Moral, 2005; Caldevilla, 2010; Sánchez y Poveda, 2010; Bringué y Sádaba, 2011), en el sentido que el uso más habitual de estas redes sociales entre los jóvenes se centra en el contacto y la creación de amistades y las relaciones, así como el entretenimiento y el conocimiento de vidas ajenas.

La "infoxicación", lo que Levy (1997) ha definido como un "segundo diluvio", el de la información. Todo es información, por todas partes circula, cada vez con mayor velocidad, convirtiendo la red en un océano de información, en una telaraña compleja y recurrente. Y como dice Chomsky en el decálogo de las reglas básicas de la manipulación mediática, el primer mandamiento es el la estrategia de la distracción:

*"El elemento primordial del control social es la estrategia de la distracción que consiste en desviar la atención del público de los problemas importantes y de los cambios decididos por las elites políticas y económicas, mediante la técnica del diluvio o inundación de continuas distracciones y de informaciones insignificantes. Mantener la atención distraída, lejos de los verdaderos problemas sociales, cautivada por temas sin importancia real"*¹

Cuando se introduce una reforma laboral o de pensiones, surge simultáneamente una "cortina de humo" de informaciones –sea el mundial de fútbol y el triunfo de "la roja" o la prohibición de fumar en los espacios públicos- que hacen aflorar los vínculos emocionales y difuminan o desactivan el análisis y la contestación de esas reformas.

La "cyberbalkanización" (Van Alstyne y Brynjolfsson, 1996), es decir, la creación de comunidades virtuales en internet y las redes sociales que tienden a centrarse exclusivamente en los temas que son considerados de interés de esa "comunidad". Esto en parte pasa, por ejemplo, en la red n-1 que ha tratado de sustituir a facebook desde otro enfoque, pero que ha quedado reducida a la comunidad informática del 15-M. Algunos afirman que esta estrategia, al restringir el acceso a la información divergente y limitar las perspectivas de análisis, crea "ciberguetos" aislados. Aunque probablemente los grupos virtuales en internet y las redes sociales no son tan homogéneos ni los presenciales tan heterogéneos.

El "anonimato" que permite internet (Monbiot, 2011) puede llevar a una disminución de la probabilidad de crear vínculos basados en la reciprocidad y el compromiso, al obstaculizar los procesos de confianza y solidaridad. Aunque existe evidencia, sin embargo, de que, por otra parte, en situaciones de anonimato las personas pueden sentirse más libres para expresar sus emociones de forma sincera.

1 Chomsky, Noam: Las 10 principales estrategias de manipulación mediática.

Incluso están surgiendo nuevas formas híbridas de interactuar en la red a medio camino entre el consumo y el compromiso social, desde el crowdsourcing al clickactivismo.

El *Crowdsourcing* trata de poner en las manos de una multitud una tarea. Existen muchos ejemplos de crowdsourcing: la Wikipedia emplea editores y editoras que, de forma voluntaria, participan en crear una enciclopedia libre. El concepto es simple, emplear talento que está ocioso en lograr un fin colectivo. Hay muchas cosas que nos gusta hacer, además de nuestro trabajo, cosas que estamos dispuestos a hacer gratuitamente o por una pequeña compensación. Pero realmente no cuestiona ni corrige el control cultural y social detentado por unos pocos al mando de la industria cultural, económica y política. Puede ser una forma de participación social, pero sobre todo es una forma de emplear el ocio y el tiempo libre en algo productivo, que en muchos casos acaba realimentando el sistema. Más que formas de "gobierno de la muchedumbre", son formas sutiles de control en los que ya están predefinidas las expresiones, las posibilidades, las alternativas y las opciones.

Se denomina "clickactivismo" al activismo digital que tiende a abrazar sin demasiada crítica la ideología de la comercialización. Obsesionado por el seguimiento de los clicks realizados en internet a favor de una causa o una ONG acepta implícitamente que las tácticas publicitarias y de estudios de mercado usadas para vender papel higiénico pueden también construir ciudadanía. Esta práctica manifiesta una fe excesiva en el poder de la métrica para cuantificar el éxito, al estilo "típico" de las redes sociales que cuantifican el número de "amigos y amigas" que se poseen. De hecho las ONG no se resisten a utilizar esa "fuente de apoyos" que simplemente consiste en hacer click con el ratón del ordenador. De hecho las ongs diseñan "campañas para vagos digitales" (Slackactivism: slacker (vago) + activism (activismo)), campañas en las que importa más el número de firmas recogidas o clicks recibidos, que el compromiso de esas personas. De ahí que se denomine 'activismo de salón', el que se hace desde el sofá, haciendo click sobre las pestañas de Twitter o Facebook, uniéndose a sus "causas". Avaaz.org se ha constituido en un lobby a través de la red para "influir en los políticos y dirigentes más destacados", como manifiesta en su propia web. Amnistía Internacional tiene también este modelo de ciberacción o "cibercompromiso". Eso sí, pidiendo siempre una donación tras el compromiso cibernético. Aunque hemos de reconocer que esta forma de participación puede servir también para compartir ideas, inquietudes, incluso para demostrar que hay gente preocupada en hacer algo. Pero lo cierto es que el clicktivismo es al activismo social y ciudadano lo que McDonald's es a la comida mediterránea, una comida con ingredientes sanos que se necesita planificar y elaborar cuidadosamente y que es un espacio de encuentro y de intercambio.

Internet y la primavera árabe

Es posible en este contexto que la acción colectiva florezca en la red. Y en caso de florecer, tenemos que preguntarnos si ha sido una "revolución digital". Analicemos el ejemplo de la denominada "primavera árabe".

Es cierto que lo ocurrido en Egipto en febrero de 2011 y que tuvo su culmen con la caída de Hosni Mubarak parece apuntar a internet y las redes sociales, Facebook y Twitter, así como a los mensajes vía teléfono móvil, según nos lo presentan en los medios de comunicación. "Una revolución de las redes sociales que hace avanzar la democracia" dijeron muchos. Parecen considerar las redes sociales como "las nuevas armas que hoy llevan los ciudadanos en las calles para enfrentar al poder: son los celulares que diseminan mensajes de texto libertarios o los Twitter y Facebook que dejan de transmitir banalidades y minucias privadas para compartir la información relevante que muchas veces ocultan los medios al servicio del poder".

Pero recordemos que la primera vez que la prensa empezó a hablar de "revolución Twitter" fue en Irán, durante las fallidas protestas del 2009. Pocos se pararon entonces a pensar que el número de usuarios de Twitter en Irán (unos 8.000) los convertía en una minoría muy pequeña, sobre todo porque entonces no era posible twittear en farsi, la lengua local. La activista iraní Golnaz Esfandiari publicó entonces un artículo en la revista Foreign Policy en la que ridiculizaba la obsesión de la prensa occidental con Internet y las redes sociales. «El viejo boca a boca, era, con mucho, el medio más importante que utilizamos los de la oposición». «Todo el jaleo de Twitter -declaraba el también activista Mehdi Yahyanejad al Washington Post - se reducía a un montón de norteamericanos twitteando entre ellos». Dos años después, el marchamo de "revolución digital" vuelve a aplicarse a las protestas del mundo árabe. Pero de nuevo los números no encajan. Juntos, Túnez, Egipto y el

Yemen no llegan a los 15.000 usuarios de Twitter. Menos del 5% de los egipcios tienen perfiles de Facebook (en los otros países, el número es aún menor). Aunque es muy posible que estos medios hayan facilitado a algunos manifestantes comunicarse entre sí, su importancia tiene que haber sido mínima en comparación con el uso de simples teléfonos móviles o la televisión satélite Al Yazira. Mahmoud Salem, el twitterero más famoso de Egipto reconocía a la *PBS* norteamericana que en una ciudad con tanta cultura de calle como El Cairo los rumores son más veloces y eficaces que Internet. De hecho, las revueltas se recrudecieron en un período en el que el Internet estaba siendo bloqueado por el Gobierno. Evgeni Morozov, autor de *El espejismo de la Red*, recuerda que imaginar Internet como una fuerza liberadora supone ignorar inocentemente que los Estados poseen siempre mayor capacidad tecnológica que los individuos.

Los mass media nos presentaron las rebeliones de Túnez, Egipto, Libia, Yemen, Marruecos y Bahrein como un ejemplo de lucha pacífica del pueblo contra la opresión; una lucha que, por lo demás, es presentada como horizontal, sin líderes, producto de una espontaneidad creadora de valores políticos surgida "desde abajo" gracias, especialmente, a las redes sociales. La imagen general promovida por los medios es que tal evento se debe a la movilización de los jóvenes, predominantemente estudiantes y profesionales de las clases medias, que han utilizado las redes sociales (Facebook y Twitter, entre otros) para organizarse y liderar tal proceso.

Pero esta explicación es incompleta y sesgada. En Egipto, sólo en 2009 existieron 478 huelgas obreras claramente políticas, no autorizadas, que causaron el despido de 126.000 trabajadores, 58 de los cuales se suicidaron (Navarro, 2011). El punto álgido de la movilización fue cuando la dirección clandestina del movimiento obrero convocó una huelga general. Los medios de información internacionales se centraron en lo que ocurría en la plaza Tahrir de El Cairo, ignorando que tal concentración era la cúspide de un témpano esparcido por todo el país y centrado en los lugares de trabajo -claves para la continuación de la actividad económica- y en las calles de las mayores ciudades de Egipto. Nadie niega que los jóvenes profesionales que hicieron uso de internet y las redes sociales (sólo un 22% de la población tiene acceso a internet) jugaron un papel importante, pero es un error presentar aquellas movilizaciones como únicamente impulsadas por redes sociales (Facebook, Twitter) mediante el valeroso empeño de jóvenes líderes de clase media occidentalizados, que luchan por lo que tenemos aquí contra malvados y «tercermundistas» déspotas (que anteaer no lo eran para el «mundo libre») a través de métodos pacíficos.

La utopía democrática de la ciudadanía cibernética

Cabría, por lo tanto, preguntarse si, a pesar de todas sus limitaciones, la aparición de este tipo de espacios sociales virtuales estaría transformando la tendencia a la baja del interés por la implicación social y política de las y los jóvenes en España. El tiempo nos dirá si internet y las redes sociales se van a convertir en una herramienta para el empoderamiento de grupos, comunidades y movimientos sociales. Si a través de ellas va a ser posible la globalización de las causas como el medio ambiente y los derechos humanos, con el fin de movilizar voluntades, ejercer presión, instalar temas y legitimar voces disidentes en las agendas nacionales e internacionales, tal como de efectiva ha sido la globalización del capitalismo y de las instituciones financieras y multinacionales que manejan la economía y la política mundial utilizando las nuevas tecnologías.

En definitiva, podemos decir que internet y las redes sociales pueden conducir al *boom* o al *doom*: pueden llevar a la materialización de las utopías tecnológicas de un mundo más igualitario o, por el contrario, pueden reproducir y exacerbar aún más los desequilibrios de poder que existen ya en la realidad social. Las redes pueden servir para enredarse (para la construcción de redes orientadas al cambio social) o para liarse (para la fragmentación social y la dispersión respecto a las estrategias de cambio) (Marí, 2007).

Nuevas posibilidades de participación, el acceso a múltiples fuentes informativas, el modelo horizontal de la comunicación, la generación de un espacio de interacción social que traspasa la cartografía clásica y los límites corporales, haciendo posible superar ciertas barreras físicas, sociales e incluso psicológicas y políticas.

Pero, simultáneamente, abren dificultades por la fragmentación y la consecuente polarización o "balcanización" de posiciones y acciones, por la insuficiente fiabilidad y calidad de las informaciones en la Red o la saturación informativa, por una ciberparticipación clickactivista conforme a las estrategias de marketing publicitario.

Este es el reto, este es el desafío. El futuro se está construyendo con las redes que vamos tejiendo.

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Mohammad Abdelhamid:

La transgression discursive en Egypte à travers les inscriptions murales: le graffiti sur les réseaux sociaux, un nouveau champ de contestation.

Abstract:

L'objectif principal de cette recherche sera d'étudier les inscriptions murales en Egypte après la révolution de 2011. Le tag, le graffiti et l'art de rue n'avaient quasiment aucune visibilité dans le pays avant cette période de fortes instabilités politiques, quand soudainement ils apparurent à tous les coins de rue.

Ma thèse interroge une thématique particulière à savoir la naissance d'un nouveau public, au sens de Dewey c'est-à-dire un public actif bataillant pour sa liberté. Un nouveau public est né en tant que producteur d'un nouveau champ de protestation dans la rue, laissant une marque pour publiciser son opinion. Puis viennent à la vie d'autres publics qui assistent à l'émergence de ces nouveaux objets et parfois même les postent sur l'internet. La plupart du temps, ce n'est pas l'artiste qui fait la démarche de publier une photographie de graffiti mais un activiste ou un citoyen lambda. Et c'est là que l'étude prend un tournant bien plus intéressant.

En tant que sémioticien, le travail portera sur l'analyse des graffiti sur les nouveaux murs, c'est-à-dire sur l'internet et plus particulièrement Facebook, où le graffiti accède à une plus large visibilité. Les réseaux sociaux octroient un nouveau sens au graffiti qui n'était pas originellement prévu par l'artiste. La nature locale de l'œuvre se voit d'un seul coup transformée en un message global accessible de par le monde.

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Je souhaite tout d'abord exprimer ma gratitude la plus sincère et mes remerciements les plus profonds aux webmasters de « We are all Khaled Said », « Graffiti in Egypt » et « Ganzeer » pour leur soutien et leur autorisation au libre usage des images postées sur leur page.

L'art de rue contemporain s'apparente à une forme unique d'expression. Plusieurs types d'inscription, plusieurs styles et différentes motivations se bousculent afin de s'accaparer le terme de 'graffiti'. Le tag définit l'écriture d'un nom ou plutôt d'un blaze, rapidement et souvent de manière répétitive, d'un seul trait de marqueur. Le graffiti se trouve être une évolution sophistiquée du tag, en en faisant un design artistique, un pochoir à la bombe parmi tant d'autres techniques. Nous devrions noter l'influence prépondérante du mouvement hip-hop qui est apparu aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique (USA) dans les années 1970. Même si l'inscription murale, ou plus généralement en lieu public, a toujours côtoyé notre existence, c'est à partir de cette période que l'art de rue a rencontré un grand succès et le graffiti made in US a grandement influencé le reste du monde. Nous pouvons aisément l'observer dans le cas égyptien au jour d'aujourd'hui.

Le graffiti émerge souvent en période de trouble politique et de situation économique compliquée. Aux USA, ce mode d'expression s'est surtout développé parmi les communautés minoritaires à cause des tensions raciales et des ségrégations subies au quotidien. La motivation première de l'écriture (c'est ainsi que la définissent les pionniers du graffiti) est de marquer un territoire exactement comme le ferait un animal. Cependant, il faut ajouter une dimension politique intrinsèque au message. Prenons un exemple, pour un noir américain le message serait le suivant : comme je n'ai aucun droit dans ce pays je vais m'accorder des droits par la force et de manière illégale, c'est un défi lancé aux autorités. J'annonce : cet espace est mien et j'attends que la police tente de m'attraper.

La visée principale de cette recherche est d'étudier les inscriptions murales en Egypte après la révolution de 2011. Le tag, le graffiti et l'art de rue n'avaient quasiment aucune visibilité dans le pays avant cette période de fortes instabilités politiques, quand soudainement ils apparurent à tous les coins de rue.

Ma thèse interroge une thématique particulière à savoir la naissance d'un nouveau public, au sens de John Dewey¹ c'est-à-dire un public actif bataillant pour sa liberté. Un nouveau public est naît en tant que producteur d'un nouveau champ de protestation dans la rue, laissant une marque pour publiciser son opinion. Puis viennent à la vie d'autres publics qui assistent à l'émergence de ces nouveaux objets et parfois même les postent sur l'internet. La plupart du temps, ce n'est pas l'artiste qui fait la démarche de publier une photographie de graffiti mais un activiste ou un citoyen lambda. Et c'est là que l'étude prend un tournant bien plus intéressant.

En tant que sémioticien, le travail portera sur l'analyse des graffitis sur les nouveaux murs, c'est-à-dire sur l'internet et plus particulièrement Facebook, où le graffiti accède à une plus large visibilité. Les réseaux sociaux octroient un nouveau sens au graffiti qui n'était pas originellement prévu par l'artiste. La nature locale de l'œuvre se voit d'un seul coup transformée en un message global accessible de par le monde. Au début de la révolution, les médias égyptiens n'accordaient aucune attention à ce qui se passait dans le pays, donc la publication de telles images sur l'internet était essentiellement destinée aux égyptiens vivant hors des frontières nationales et aux médias étrangers. Il s'agit par conséquent d'étudier le transfert d'un mur urbain à un mur numérique et virtuel, d'un espace à une place dans laquelle il y a beaucoup plus de circulation de l'information comme le proclamait Michel De Certeau².

La triple transgression ayant lieu durant le passage de l'image d'un mur urbain à un mur digital nous mène à un point capital de notre étude. Avant tout, l'artiste prend un risque non négligeable en peignant dans un espace public, en second lieu une personne quelconque décide de prendre en photo l'œuvre et de la poster sur

1 DEWEY John, Le public et ses problèmes, Farrago/Editions Léo Scheer, Publications de l'Université de Pau, 2003.

2 DE CERTEAU Michel, L'invention du quotidien, Gallimard, Paris, 1994.

un réseau social et enfin un surfeur prend son courage à deux mains et va visiter la page en question et va peut-être même, risque ultime face aux renseignements généraux, commenter l'image de la dite œuvre.

Le problème majeur que nous rencontrons concernant une analyse sémiotique, c'est la perte de source du graffiti au moment de son poste sur l'internet. Presque à tous les coups, nous ne disposons d'aucune information au sujet du lieu où se trouve le graffiti, ni le moment et encore moins qui a sévi pour nous faire part d'une telle œuvre. Ceci dit, nous pouvons prendre ces objets transgressifs comme étant une manière anonyme de s'exprimer (ça n'est pas toujours le cas) ; souvent le nom est à cacher pour fuir aux yeux du régime en place.

Pour ce qui est de l'article, le fondement de notre travail se basera sur l'analyse de cinq graffitis provenant principalement de pages, ayant pour thème la révolution égyptienne avant tout, les plus visitées et les plus commentées sur Facebook, tel que « We are all Khaled Saïd » (2 178 321 like it · 591 433 discuss about it).

Dewey et sa définition du public.

Sept points peuvent être sélectionnés pour rendre compte de cette notion de public dans la pensée praxéologique de Dewey :

- a) Pas de censure dans la discussion ou dans le débat
- b) Exiger des enquêtes, c'est la mission du public
- c) Tout est basé sur l'expérience
- d) Un public « dispersé », « chaotique » et « éclipsé » doit être regroupé
- e) Des conséquences d'intérêt public
- f) Dernière étape en vu d'une constitution d'un public, l'apparition d'un **Nous** faisant face à un **Eux**
- g) La reconstruction du public doit être permanente et continue

Vérification des critères deweyiens.

Une fois la notion de public bien déterminée, nous voilà engagés dans une analyse empirique afin de vérifier si la vision de Dewey peut s'appliquer au cas égyptien.

Nous sommes tous Khaled Saïd



Khaled Saïd fut la goutte d'eau qui a fait déborder le vase. L'histoire de ce jeune alexandrin est considérée par tant d'observateurs comme étant le déclencheur de la révolution. Il avait publié une vidéo sur Youtube révélant le comportement mafieux de policiers se partageant les fruits d'une saisie douanière. Seulement, la saisie est composée d'argent, de tabac mais aussi de drogues. La réponse ne se fait pas attendre, le six juin 2010, il est battu à mort par deux indicateurs de police.

Le message est ici on ne peut plus clair, « Nous sommes tous Khaled Saïd », à proprement parler nous sommes tous des victimes du régime qui a une facilité déconcertante pour ce qui est de la condamnation des citoyens ou plutôt de ses sujets. Sans procès, la sentence tombe, et avant même que quiconque exige une explication, une excuse est fournie. Dans le cas de Khaled, la justification au lendemain ne surprend guère. Khaled était, selon la police, un drogué qui a refusé de coopérer avec les forces de l'ordre et c'est pour cette raison que l'intervention s'est très mal déroulée. Le fautif est facilement désigné.

Ce qui importe dans notre analyse, c'est l'usage d'un « Nous ». Le passant se trouve, sans son accord, affilié à un collectif, un « Nous » qui s'oppose à un « Eux », à savoir le régime. Soulignons ici la réflexivité de la phrase. Les membres de ce groupe sont donc conscients de faire partie d'une communauté. Par coutume, c'est là la première définition donnée à un public ; c'est-à-dire prendre conscience de son appartenance à un collectif. Le « tous » est synonyme d'une expérience collective, nous sommes « TOUS » victimes de ce régime exactement comme Khaled ou du moins nous connaissons tous, dans notre entourage, une personne qui a souffert d'humiliation de la part de représentants du régime.

Concernant la peinture en tant que telle, le style est assez occidental avec des formes rigides, carrées et angulaires. Le graffeur affine le mouvement révolutionnaire à un monde occidental qui serait connu pour sa culture de la démocratie et pour son goût pour les libertés. Il opte pour un mode d'expression occidentale dans le but de transmettre un message égyptien. Tous les égyptiens sont Khaled Saïd mais de manière occidentale.

Nous voyons également que le dessin prend la forme d'un nuage. Avec des couleurs claires et vives, le graff semble monter droit vers le ciel. Illusion de bandes dessinées mais le nuage souligne, non seulement le côté enfantin mais surtout, un aspect angélique du message qui est à la fois chargé d'une foi puissante. La personne est décédée et se trouve déjà dans l'au-delà alors l'artiste lui envoie un message de soutien pour lui prouver qu'il n'est pas mort pour rien. Nous nous inspirons de son expérience, il sera le champion de la cause égyptienne.

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Sois avec la révolution



Ce qui ressort tout de suite de ce graff, ce sont les couleurs du drapeau égyptien : noir, blanc et rouge. Pochoir effectué à la bombe, le style est complexe et précis. Contrairement au graff précédent, celui-ci apporte une touche orientale. La calligraphie est employée dans ce cas, l'artiste utilise un mode d'expression *a priori* occidental mais se l'approprie et le transpose à une situation locale. Quoi de mieux que d'opter pour la calligraphie pour effectuer un graffiti ? cet art oriental offre une liberté totale à l'artiste, il peut ainsi écrire, les mots ou même les lettres, dans l'ordre qu'il souhaite. Nous pouvons donc surnommer ce type de travail le « calligraffiti ».

En effet, le graffiti et la calligraphie se rencontrent et vont se balader main dans la main dans les rues du Caire. « Etre » et « avec » sont liés alors qu'ils ne sont pas supposés l'être. Puis « révolution » nous saute aux yeux grâce à sa couleur typique, le rouge, rouge sanguin. La révolution est imprégnée de sang !

Et soudainement, quelque chose attire notre attention. La ponctuation de « révolution » se distingue, elle n'est plus rouge mais noire comme le reste du pochoir. Elle s'ajoute à l'entité « Etre avec », ils composent à eux deux le même CORPS. A traduire donc comme suit : la révolution est le sang qui coule dans nos veines.

Alors, nous pouvons interpréter cela de la manière suivante : nous ne sommes pas censés être avec la révolution, ni aller vers elle pour la rendre effective. Non ! cette révolution est incorporée en chacun de nous, elle est en nous. La révolution est dans notre nature. Nous ne pouvons la combattre, tout comme nous ne pouvons faire face à notre nature.

Nous nous trouvons donc face à une double contrainte, la première provenant de l'auteur, grâce à son injonction à travers l'impératif du verbe, et la seconde nous serait supposément imposée par notre nature. Nous devons être avec la révolution, nous n'y sommes pas conviés, nous devons être en plein dedans.

Une autre interprétation pourrait exprimer une version moins directe. « Etre » et « avec » représenteraient le citoyen qui aurait donc en son pouvoir de ponctuer la révolution comme bon lui semble grâce à sa participation. Tout dépendrait de lui !

Fais nous entendre ta voix



Etre un soutien de la révolution ne signifie guère rester chez soi et être convaincu du bien-fondé de celle-ci, et qu'elle est le chemin à suivre pour la nation. Ca ne suffit pas ! Chaque citoyen doit participer. Encore une fois le destinataire est clairement pointé du doigt. Le « tu » est directement nommé. Toi, oui toi, écoute-moi et fais-nous écouter ta voix. Voici en substance le message dans le texte. Mais ce n'est pas tout, prenez un haut-parleur, allez place Tahrir et criez, dites ce qui est enfermé dans votre cœur depuis des années, voire des décennies. Enfin, vous pouvez exprimer votre colère, et même faire part de votre opinion, alors faites-le.

Cette peinture a toutefois quelque chose de particulier. Le jaune n'est pas une couleur que le graffeur égyptien Keizer utilise souvent. Ses habitudes le renvoient plutôt vers le rouge et le noir, ce qui donne à ce graff un sens particulier. Le haut-parleur brille dans une atmosphère ensoleillée. De ce fait, exprimer son opinion en public serait assimilé à un acte de résistance qui nous mènerait depuis les ténèbres à la lumière. Vous ne devez pas vous contenter d'une résistance virtuelle et de transgression sur les réseaux sociaux mais vous devez descendre dans la rue et hurlez votre douleur devant tout le monde. Rendez votre souffrance publique pour enfin voir le bout du tunnel.

Notre arme contre leur arme.



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Quand il s'agira d'arme, il faudra combattre l'ennemi avec ses propres ressources. Le révolutionnaire doit prendre les armes s'il y est forcé, mais uniquement des armes pacifiques. Quel antagonisme ! « Notre » arme n'est ni plus ni moins qu'une caméra, donc l'optique des révolutionnaires serait de publier la violence de l'adversaire. La caméra prend le rôle ici du représentant de toutes les nouvelles technologies qui ont servi à combattre le régime, comme les téléphones portables et les réseaux sociaux entre autres. Le militant se doit donc de montrer aux yeux du monde à quel point l'ennemi est brutal. Une klashinkov s'engage dans un face à face avec une caméra. Les deux objets sont dessinés dans un même style, d'une seule et même couleur et se trouvent à la même hauteur. De prime abord, ils paraissent égaux pourtant quand nous y regardons de plus près un sentiment de combat inéquitable nous saisit. Deux opposants se lancent dans un combat mais avec des défenses tout à fait inéquitables. Une caméra est confrontée à une arme de guerre. Une victime faible doit donc batailler avec un « méchant » bourreau tout puissant, c'est-à-dire la police ou même l'armée.

Par conséquent, la population est victime d'une agression atroce mais elle doit résister et révéler au monde la brutalité du régime qui l'opprime au quotidien, de sorte que le reste du monde prendra le parti des citoyens égyptiens. La mission de la population est donc de rendre public les injustices subies constamment. Des citoyens mourront, non pas les armes à la main, mais ils s'en iront pour une noble cause, qui est de publiciser les humiliations du quotidien et de les faire connaître de par le monde. Aux yeux du graffeur, le public a les traits d'un héros. Il est brave, courageux et est prêt à se sacrifier. Il peut donner sa vie dans le but de recouvrir sa liberté.

L'image recèle de bon nombre d'éléments à analyser, le plus capital concerne le destinataire. En tant que lecteur arabe ou égyptien, le passant ou le webnaute n'a pas le choix entre le « Nous » et le « Eux ». La peinture est tellement manichéenne qu'il vaut mieux pencher pour le « bon » côté. Qui plus est, l'arabe se lit de droite à gauche, le destinataire voit donc tout d'abord la caméra avec le « Nous » inscrit en-dessous, qui lui est alors assigné de suite. Les rôles sont partagés sans demander l'avis du passant. Ensuite, ce qui compte plus que tout dans cette image, c'est la place occupée par chaque arme. Se trouver à droite ou à gauche n'est en rien anodin. Dans le monde arabe, autant que dans la tradition judéo-chrétienne, la droite représente le « bien », les anges, tandis que la gauche (la senestre) fait figure de « mal » et incarne la diable.

C'est aussi simple que cela, lorsqu'un message consomme une antithèse manichéenne, la charge symbolique s'en trouve renforcée³. Pour la rétention de l'information, il vaut mieux émettre un message simple et clair comportant un bon et un mauvais parti, un noir et un blanc, pas de place pour le gris dans notre monde où la dictature de l'image fait rage.

3 Maingueneau Dominique, Analyser les textes de communication, Armand Colin, coll. « Lettres sup », Paris, 2007.

Le jeu d'échecs



Encore une fois, les références au drapeau égyptien et à l'opposition entre deux camps sont présentes.

Le choix des échecs est très pertinent. Les échecs sont bien évidemment un jeu de stratégie dans lequel prennent place une guerre des nerfs et une guerre d'usure. Le joueur le plus intelligent l'emportera, il n'est pas question de vaincre grâce à ses muscles ou par la force. Un évident message d'espoir est lancé à la population.

Regardons plus attentivement le graff, quarante pions se situent dans la partie haute de l'échiquier alors que huit autres pièces occupent le bas. Mais ces huit pions ne sont pas quelconques, il s'agit là des pièces maîtresses du jeu, le roi, la reine, la tour, le cavalier et ainsi de suite. Cela dit, quelque chose perturbe notre lecture, le roi est retourné, il est battu. Moubarak est donc vaincu, son règne touche à sa fin. Echec et mat ou plutôt « al shaikh mat » en arabe qui se traduit tout simplement par « le roi est mort », ce qui donna naissance à la formule française ou encore à l'anglaise. Mais les autres membres du régime sont toujours sur leurs pieds et tiennent tête aux pions. Le roi est mort, vive le Roi ! Moubarak a lâché prise mais le régime tient toujours et ce avec fierté, il attend le défi lancé par les citoyens sans crainte. Les dirigeants du pays n'ont en rien perdu de leur superbe.

Pourtant, les pions du dessus (ou les citoyens) possèdent un avantage, qui est celui du nombre. Mais pas seulement, ils se retrouvent, comme nous l'avons souligné auparavant, en haut de l'échiquier, ce qui nous donne cette impression qu'ils vont couler sur les pièces du dessous et les avaler d'un mouvement sans aucune pitié. En fait, le message émis n'est qu'un encouragement ou même une incitation poussant la population à être active au cours de cette révolution. Effectivement, les pions ont besoin d'une rangée de plus pour s'assurer la victoire finale. Donc symboliquement l'idée transcrite dans ce graff est la suivante : un petit effort supplémentaire et la révolution atteindra ses objectifs initiaux.

Conclusion

En résumé presque tous les éléments sont réunis :

Nous sommes tous des victimes (Expérience (c) et des conséquences d'intérêt public (e))

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Donc rejoignez la révolution (regrouper les citoyens (d))

Exprimer vos opinions (Pas de censure (a))

Combattez et révélez les injustices (exiger des enquêtes (b) et apparition d'un « Nous »(f))

Et la victoire en sera le résultat

Un public, au sens de Dewey, a émergé durant la révolution égyptienne. Toutes les conditions, pour la naissance d'un public, sont réunies mise à part l'élément (g) qui manque à notre analyse pour l'instant. Nous avons souligné que le public doit être remis en question en permanence et dans le cas égyptien, il est bien trop tôt pour apporter, ne serait-ce que, des bribes de réponse. Nous ne pouvons pour le moment affirmer que les critères de Dewey sont tous regroupés dans le cas du graffiti, et plus particulièrement en Egypte.

Ajoutons à cela que l'approche de Dewey ne manque d'engendrer quelques questionnements comme par exemple ce « Nous » qui doit émerger pour l'aboutissement d'un public. Le pronom « Nous » peut mener aux pires horreurs dont l'Histoire fut témoin à tous les instants, c'est par ailleurs ce que soutiennent Daniel Dayan et Annabelle Sreberny⁴.

En ce qui concerne les analyses ci-dessus, il y a une évidente tentative de constitution d'un public mais il est compliqué de se prononcer sur la réussite de cet essai pour l'instant. Nous devons certainement patienter quelques années encore et suivre ce qu'il en sera de l'évolution de la situation égyptienne. Le graffiti va-t-il continuer son bonhomme de chemin et inciter les citoyens à se lever à chaque fois qu'un de leur droit sera bafoué ?

D'autres pistes s'ouvrent et seront certainement poursuivies par la suite. Le passage de murs urbains à des murs virtuels a joué un rôle majeur dans la révolution puisque procéder à ce transfert a permis la publicisation en Egypte mais aussi hors des frontières du pays. Au sein même de l'Egypte, l'objectif était clair, regrouper des manifestants ; à l'étranger, le but était tout autre : se mettre l'opinion internationale (si toutefois il y en a bien une) de son côté et constituer un public plus large qui saura défendre celui déjà existant en Egypte. Le combat gagnait donc en puissance dans les médias et surtout sur l'internet.

Le grand souci de cet exposé est que la narration présentée est totalement fictive dans sa constitution chronologique. J'ai moi-même composé un ordre entre ces différents graffitis sans chronologie cohérente. J'ai procédé de la sorte pour faire parler les murs. Très souvent, l'histoire que nous racontent les graffitis est similaire à celle que je soumetts ici. Je suis bien conscient que ce travail est loin, très loin d'être abouti mais cela constitue seulement un galop d'essai pour étudier un mode d'expression universel, mais en même temps marginal.

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⁴ DAYAN Daniel (dir.), La terreur spectacle, terrorisme et télévision, De Boeck, Institut national de l'audiovisuel, Bruxelles, 2006.

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Natalia Garrido:

***Ciberparticipación* en Buenos Aires: ¿los sitios de redes sociales como espacio público?**

Abstract:

This paper will discuss the concepts of deliberation, public space, and the role of new information and communication technologies (ICT) in the light of the major social and political transformation processes from the recent protests, particularly since 2011, in different parts of the globe. We also refer to changes in Argentina in the last decade and, then, analyze, in particular, youth social political participation in Buenos Aires and the social appropriation of ICTs engaged for this purpose today. Finally, we will reflect on the limits and potential of certain forms of cyberactivism of Kirchner youths.

Agenda:

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Contexto global: crisis del capitalismo y las movilizaciones desde 2011

La crisis financiera que comenzó en 2008 trajo profundas consecuencias sociales que, sobre todo durante el 2011, se expresaron en numerosas ciudades del mundo a través de la presencia de movimientos sociales y protestas, con sus propias particularidades y reivindicaciones. Entre ellas, pueden mencionarse, en primer lugar, las rebeliones de masas de la Primavera Árabe en el norte de África que provocaron el derrumbe de las dictaduras de Túnez, Egipto, Libia y Yemen. También en Europa, en países como Grecia, se produjeron ocupaciones y huelgas, y en España, el Movimiento 15-M (por el 15 de mayo de 2011) o Movimiento de los Indignados (cuyo nombre surge del escrito de Stéphane Hessel, que propone como principio la insurrección pacífica). En Portugal, se llamó el M12M (Movimiento 12 de Marzo). En Londres también hubo revueltas en los suburbios. Por su parte, en América Latina, las movilizaciones por la educación pública en Chile, cuyas reivindicaciones se extendieron a otros sectores, lograron cuestionar las herencias pinochetistas y socavar la legitimidad del gobierno neoliberal de Sebastián Piñera. En decenas de ciudades de Estados Unidos los "ocupas" (como es el caso de *Occupy Wall Street*) difundieron la idea de oposición entre un 1% dominante frente al resto, el 99% (Soares Carneiro, 2012; Alvez, 2012). Se trataría, por tanto, de una suerte de "sincronía cosmopolita" en la que, entre sus elementos comunes, puede destacarse el uso de las redes sociales en Internet (como *Facebook* y *Twitter*), y la posibilidad de autocomunicación de masas (Castells, 2009) "viral" y sinergia social en red¹, así como las articulaciones políticas que exceden a los espacios institucionales tradicionales (Ibidem). A pesar de las diferencias entre los casos señalados, encontramos una recuperación del espacio público y una revuelta social que se enfrenta al *statu quo* y al *establishment*.

Entre las características de estos diversos y heterogéneos movimientos sociales, puede destacarse su gran capacidad de comunicación y creatividad política (Alves, 2012). Asimismo, en la mayoría de los casos son movimientos democráticos y pacíficos. Sin embargo, han recibido una respuesta reaccionaria por parte del *establishment* que intenta invisibilizarlos de los medios masivos de comunicación, lo que revela la importancia de los *new media* en este nuevo contexto.

Durante el Foro Social Temático-2012 (Porto Alegre, del 25 al 28 de enero), se realizó un intercambio denominado "Resistencia a la crisis, nuevos medios y alternativas de comunicación", en el cual se destacó la importancia de la comunicación, su democratización y su articulación de iniciativas para los procesos sociales. Entre los temas que allí se debatieron encontramos que a los nuevos medios (*social media*) se los considera *facilitadores* de la ampliación de los flujos informativos. Se hizo hincapié en la necesidad de que los movimientos sociales se apropien de ellos (sea *Facebook*, *Twitter* o radios comunitarias), pero también se advirtió acerca de la dependencia de estas estructuras y el control que los propietarios, empresas o gobiernos intentan ejercer sobre las mismas.

En el caso del "resurgimiento político global" de los y las jóvenes, se destaca, entre sus causas, el presente contexto de "pérdida de centralidad del trabajo, la distancia entre los avances de la educación y las limitaciones del mercado laboral, la brecha entre los anhelos de autonomía y las posibilidades ciertas de ejercerla, y la base tecno-económica sobre la que descansa todo esto: la expansión de las nuevas tecnologías de la información y la comunicación en el marco de la sociedad del conocimiento" (Natanson, 2012: 54). Aun considerando el alcance global de estas dimensiones, creemos que es preciso ponderarlas en cada caso nacional incluido en esta dinámica.

En la Argentina, en el contexto del 2011, el movimiento de *indignados* ha sido numérica y relativamente muy menor (ver Garrido, 2011a), ya que lo que ha predominado aquí fue un apoyo y militancia a favor y en reconocimiento de las medidas tomadas por el gobierno nacional. Aunque cabe destacar que en la actualidad han acontecido fenómenos como el 13-S (por el trece de septiembre) y el 8-N (por el ocho de noviembre), como marchas "espontáneas" impulsadas desde las redes sociales y las ONG's ligadas a partidos de la derecha

1 A modo de ejemplo: en la manifestación en la Puerta del Sol el 15-M, el 65,3% de los asistentes se enteró por medio de la red social Facebook (ver Calvo Borobia, K., Gómez-Pastrana, T. & Mena, L., 2011).

neoliberal. Muchos analistas locales reconocen en estos "indignados" vernáculos el descontento de quienes han visto afectados sus intereses económicos particulares, ligados a la sociedad fragmentada predominante en el neoliberalismo.

Los sitios de redes sociales en Internet

Facebook y *Twitter* aparecen considerados como un *escenario* de debate en el que los jóvenes pueden expresarse libremente: en algunos casos, en relación de complementariedad con respecto a los grandes medios, y en otros, como un aspecto táctico de la lucha política en el cual es posible difundir información, perspectivas y propuestas invisibilizadas. En algunas oportunidades, estos sitios son mencionados como un espacio para contrarrestar los efectos de los mensajes difundidos por los grandes medios, ya que por su dinámica la participación masiva en este tipo de redes podría tener influencia sobre los estados de ánimo colectivos. En este sentido, es posible contribuir a la conformación de una agenda pública instalando y debatiendo temáticas específicas, y también sortear cualquier tipo de censura con mayor facilidad. Sin embargo, se reconoce que aún falta expandir estas posibilidades de expresión.

TIC y cambios culturales: nuevas formas de participación

Este tipo de comunicación se ha expandido a partir de una serie de transformaciones socio-tecnológicas. Así, las nuevas tecnologías de comunicación (en adelante, TIC²) han influido de manera significativa en aspectos sociales, económicos, culturales, identitarios y políticos. Al respecto, durante los últimos años la mediación tecnológica asume una dimensión cada vez más estructural (Garrido, 2012) en amplios sectores de la población y de la juventud en particular. De este modo, la creciente producción de contenidos, formatos y sus representaciones posee repercusiones en la conformación de un nuevo tipo de *sensibilidad cultural* (Wortman, 2003). Asimismo, la comunicación mediada por la computadora produce modificaciones en las formas de socialización y, en este sentido, también en las formas de organización e intercambio de información de índole política. Podríamos señalar que, en conjunto, con estos procesos se produce, a nivel subjetivo, una fuerte centralidad de las identidades y sus lógicas de negociación y luchas por el reconocimiento (Martín Barbero, 2002).

A medida que las TIC adquieren protagonismo en el espacio público, se incorpora la idea del advenimiento de una *tecnocultura*, en la cual las redes informáticas interactivas crecen de modo exponencial, creando nuevas maneras y canales de comunicación, y dando forma a la vida a la vez que ésta les da forma a ellas (Balardini, 2002; Castells, 2001a). Como afirma Saintout (2006), los jóvenes que tienen la posibilidad de acceder a Internet con regularidad no suelen hacerlo sólo para buscar información, sino que Internet ha entrado en sus vidas desde distintos registros, convirtiéndose en un nuevo territorio de lo común (en forma de dispositivo de juego, del encuentro con el otro, etc.).

Por otro lado, con las TIC se están creando nuevas formas de *ciberparticipación* o *ciberactivismo* que abren cauces de participación creativos, abiertos y no jerárquicos (Informe ONU, 2005), y que en determinadas condiciones pueden habilitar la creación de comunidades que faciliten la participación, la cooperación y el intercambio de información entre actores sociales individuales y comunitarios (Finquelievich, 2000). Por *ciberactivismo* entendemos la participación de personas que interactúan en la red y en la Web 2.0 transmitiendo contenidos de su propia elaboración, abriendo espacios para debatir con otras personas y expresar sus reclamos, organizar actividades, marchas, etc., a los fines de una demanda que consideran prioritaria.

En relación con la *ciberparticipación*, podemos diferenciar, según establece Gomes, dos conjuntos de acciones. En primer lugar, seguir noticieros políticos *online*, leer *blogs* de políticos, ver videos de política en *Youtube*, etc., es decir, acciones que no constituirían literalmente una participación política pero sí podrían servir para orientar al individuo en su participación política en la vida pública o el juego político. Según el autor, este

2 Incluye al conjunto de tecnologías de la microelectrónica, la informática (hardware y software), las telecomunicaciones y la optoelectrónica.

conjunto de acciones incluso puede, en virtud de la información obtenida, producir un efecto inmediato de participación (2011: 37). En segundo lugar, escribir un *blog* de política, hacer campaña *online*, escribir peticiones electrónicas, manifestarse en un fórum electrónico o realizar consultas presupuestarias digitales y postear videos políticos serían formas de participación en la vida pública o el juego político, es decir, verdaderas acciones de participación (Ibídem).

Como hemos señalado en otros trabajos, cuando se cumplen determinadas condiciones, la *ciberparticipación* admitiría la proliferación de debates y el acceso a información relevante, incluyendo la política, así como discusiones referidas a la coyuntura y diálogo en relación con la agenda de gobierno. Teniendo en cuenta que los medios de comunicación constituyen un actor importante en la construcción del espacio público, el contexto comunicativo es una arena privilegiada para observar cómo se procesan los cambios sociales, cómo se reconfigura el poder político y cómo los nuevos actores sociales conquistan relevancia en la política contemporánea. Sin embargo, en cuanto a los contenidos y la posibilidad de diálogo entre los actores, Donsbach (2011) señala que la evolución de los contenidos en Internet sugiere necesariamente que los "rumores" vayan ganando lugar por sobre la información con fuentes constatadas. En cambio otros autores consideran que, al ser más conversacionales que informacionales, estos medios pueden fomentar el debate desestimulado por la cultura de masas. Lo cierto, es que no hay una posición consensuada al respecto.

Por último, un aspecto a considerar en este último tipo de participación es que no reemplaza ni tiene los mismos alcances que la militancia denominada "tradicional" o territorial, ya que se verían soslayados aspectos fundamentales vinculados a la comunicación directa y las dimensiones de lo corporal (ver Garrido, 2012b).

Deliberación online

Para que la *deliberación online* sea posible, debe producirse en espacios habilitados para compartir información entre personas con intereses comunes. Las personas, asimismo, tienen que disponer de los recursos sociales y culturales para poder participar según las reglas existentes o posibles. En este sentido, *Facebook* representa, por lo menos, un espacio comunicativo, o *Entorno Tecnosocial* (Vacas, 2004, citado en Fumero y Roca, 2007), en el que, cumplidas dichas condiciones, se producen *contextos comunicativos significativos*. Entre sus características, podría reconocerse cierto potencial dialógico, la importancia de los *feedback* como elemento de reconocimiento entre los sujetos, la reciprocidad de la confianza necesaria para el intercambio y la mayor atención sobre el mundo de las imágenes. Sin embargo, existen múltiples limitaciones para que esta deliberación pueda desarrollarse. Por un lado, las limitaciones propias del acceso aún restringido a Internet como sucede en el caso de América Latina; por otro, las limitaciones que se producen debido a la configuración restringida propia de un *software* corporativo de "código cerrado". También se observan límites a las posibilidades de deliberación debido a cierta tendencia al diálogo e intercambio basada en afinidades previas que implican que las redes sean incluso más cerradas.

En este sentido, tanto *Twitter* como *Facebook*, el primero por las limitaciones a la extensión de la escritura, el segundo porque implica mayores restricciones en los permisos para iniciar el intercambio, van generando redes en función de afinidades de diversa índole y producen incluso cierta resistencia o rechazo a incorporar a aquellos que no comparten los mismos intereses, ideología, pertenencia política, etc.

En cuanto a su inclusión dentro del espacio "público", en primer lugar podríamos pensar que los principios normativos habermasianos (igualdad, transparencia y publicidad, inclusión de todos los involucrados, racionalidad y reciprocidad) en Internet no se cumplirían y, por ello, no podría ser considerada una esfera pública. Asimismo, no puede soslayarse que, dadas las condiciones de propiedad de estos nuevos medios corporativos, pueden entrar en contradicción con los intereses colectivos (Garrido, 2011b). Sin embargo, a pesar de estas condiciones, cabe destacar que en estos espacios comunicativos o *entornos tecnosociales* se evidencian dinámicas muchas veces "alternativas", que en algunos fenómenos sociales asumen centralidad y grados relativos de autonomía de los medios masivos de comunicación tradicionales. Se trata, en definitiva, dependiendo del caso de estudio en cuestión, de que si bien podemos encontrar en estas redes nuevos modos de empoderamiento que repercuten en la participación política de las democracias del Siglo XXI, en particular, la *deliberación online* todavía se encontraría muy restringida por los factores señalados.

La necesidad de análisis situados

La tecnología, según Williams, ha sido desarrollada con una intención original que "se corresponde con las prácticas conocidas o deseadas de un grupo social particular, y las intenciones y la fuerza relativa específicas de ese grupo afectan radicalmente el ritmo y la escala del desarrollo. No obstante, en muchos estadios sucesivos, otros grupos sociales, a veces con otras intenciones o al menos con diferentes escalas de prioridades, adoptarán y desarrollarán la tecnología, a menudo con propósitos y efectos diferentes. En muchos casos, surgirán además usos y efectos imprevistos que serán también una alteración real de la intención original" (2011: 165). En relación a esos usos de las TIC, cuando pensamos en su apropiación social nos referimos al uso cotidiano que de las herramientas TIC se realiza para generar nuevos conocimientos útiles para determinado grupo social, incluso cuando dichas herramientas se orienten en un sentido distinto del ideado originalmente.

Consideramos entonces que las TIC deben ser estudiadas desde el punto de vista de la apropiación que de ellas realizan los distintos actores sociales y desde una perspectiva situada (de las condiciones y contextos socio-históricos particulares) (Benithez Larghi, 2009). Si analizamos los espacios tecno-sociales y virtuales, aun allí la política es situada, como señala Vommaro (2011: 17): "aún la política más mediática y más superestructural, más ligada a lo que podría ser un no lugar, si expresa un conflicto y tiene que ver con la superación de lo individual, hay un colectivo, hay una organización, y hay algo en común, está situada".

La Argentina: el conflicto, la vuelta de la política y el rol de las TIC

En el caso de la Argentina, en los últimos años este fenómeno puede observarse en las disputas que se articularon en torno a la Resolución 125, durante marzo y julio de 2008. La Resolución 125/08 fue un intento de implementar un sistema de retenciones móviles a las exportaciones de soja y girasol, y un acontecimiento político que significó una divisoria de aguas en los posicionamientos políticos de sectores de peso dentro de la sociedad. Implicó un conflicto entre el gobierno nacional, durante el primer mandato de la Presidenta Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, y un sector importante de los productores agrarios. Estos sectores produjeron bloqueos de rutas (*lock out*), desabastecimientos y movilizaciones sobre las que tomaron partido los medios masivos de comunicación monopólicos (el grupo Clarín) y sectores de la sociedad civil. Pero también implicó un punto de inflexión en torno al nivel de politización y posicionamiento de los distintos actores y sectores sociales.

Sin bien es preciso señalar que la participación no es un valor democrático por ser un valor en sí mismo, sino que sólo cuando puede producir algún beneficio para la comunidad política, en el contexto descripto resultó por demás significativo el fenómeno de los *blogs*, como medio y difusión de perspectivas alternativas a las de los grandes medios acerca del gobierno nacional. A partir de la proliferación de los *blogs* muchas personas se conocieron, se reunieron y estrecharon vínculos duraderos. Con el tiempo, superado el conflicto, algunos dejarían de publicar y continuarían otros, que luego serían llamados por los medios masivos "los blogueros K". En relación con las TIC, a partir del contexto mencionado, en la Argentina se destacó la autoconvocatoria por Internet de *678 Facebook*³, un grupo conformado, de manera espontánea, a raíz del surgimiento de un programa llamado "6-7-8" emitido en la Televisión Pública argentina, desde abril de 2009, que apoya manifiestamente al gobierno nacional. Para este caso, vemos la importancia de las redes sociales en contextos de conflicto y disputa política⁴. El momento en que el grupo *678 Facebook* se tornó particularmente relevante fue cuando convocó a una marcha, el 12 de marzo de 2010, con el fin de expresar su apoyo a la Presidenta Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. Se trató de la primera de estas autoconvocatorias. Otros grupos, a lo largo del

3 Esta página de Facebook sigue funcionando en la actualidad, con más de 518 mil personas que han manifestado que les gusta, y posee una constante y sostenida actividad que incluye difusión de videos, noticias, fotos e información vinculada al programa de televisión 678, siempre en consonancia con el gobierno nacional. Esta página, a partir de 2010, cuando tenía alrededor de 38.500 personas, pasó a ser moderada por el equipo TIC de la Televisión Pública.

4 Tal como puede observarse en otros casos como el del golpe de Estado en Honduras y las manifestaciones estudiantiles en Chile, as redes sociales ocuparon un rol importante para el intercambio de información y la organización.

país, participarían en manifestaciones con el fin de apoyar la Ley 26.522 de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual de la Argentina, conflicto que al momento de la elaboración de este artículo aún sigue vigente⁵.



Según Sarlo (2011), *678 Facebook* no sería un espacio de pensamiento político sino de identidad y de autoafirmación de una audiencia. Consideramos que podrían señalarse límites en torno al alcance de la discusión, de la *deliberación online*, sin embargo su relevancia se evidenció en la considerable capacidad de movilización, su espontaneidad, su horizontalidad y su permanencia en el tiempo.

Cabe destacar que la constitución de nuevas o reconfiguradas identidades políticas en el caso argentino, en gran parte desde el 19 y 20 de diciembre de 2001 y la Masacre de Puente Pueyrredón en junio de 2002⁶, encuentra en el *kirchnerismo* un punto de inflexión y un acontecimiento político generacional de significativa relevancia –tanto para quienes están a favor o en contra. Este acontecimiento político ha ido procesando las demandas y los conflictos, por lo que se pasó de una profunda crisis de representatividad a una reconstitución del sistema político.

El gobierno de Néstor Kirchner, iniciado en el 2003, trajo consigo una serie de medidas significativas tales como la Asignación Universal por Hijo, la Ley de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual, el paso a la administración estatal de los fondos de jubilaciones, la Ley de Matrimonio Igualitario, los juicios a los agentes de terrorismo de Estado. En su conjunto, todas estas medidas constituyen un verdadero cambio de escenario.

En este sentido, Sarlo sostiene que este gobierno “restituyó densidad a una política que, durante los años noventa, se había propuesto como administración de las cosas según las leyes del mercado. Frente al realismo (catastrófico) de los noventa, la pregnancia simbólica del *kirchnerismo* puede ser discutida en sus formas y en su tónica, pero no en la importancia que tomó como dinámica repolitizadora” (Sarlo, 2011: 226).

En definitiva, este cambio en la escena política nacional, así como los mayores grados de conflictividad social, resultan fundamentales para comprender el surgimiento y las características del fenómeno aquí analizado y denominado *ciberparticipación*.

5 Para mayor información acerca de la Ley 26.522 de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual de la Argentina se puede consultar el siguiente artículo de mi autoría: <http://oembaralhadordeideas.wordpress.com/2012/12/09/la-ley-26-522-de-servicios-de-comunicacion-audiovisual-de-la-argentina/>

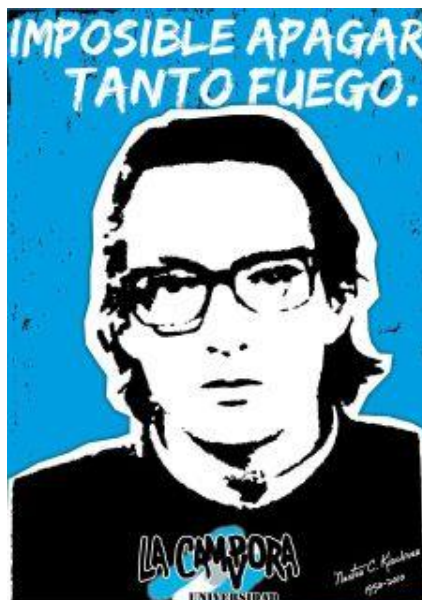
6 “Donde las fuerzas represivas del Estado asesinan a los jóvenes militantes Maximiliano Kosteki y Darío Santillán, que se constituirán en emblemas del compromiso y de la lucha contra las políticas de ajuste” (Saintout, 2006).

Apropiación social de las TIC en Buenos Aires: ciberparticipación, ciberactivismo o cibermilitancia

Entre los hitos relevantes para pensar la apropiación social de las TIC, por parte de las juventudes kirchneristas, para la *ciberparticipación* se destaca la realización de un taller, en 2006, acerca de "blogs y política" en el que se inscribieron cientos de personas, muchos de ellos jóvenes, de los cuales algunos terminaron formando parte del grupo de los *bloggers* que perduraron en el tiempo. Un año después, se realizó la primera *cibercampaña* a través de la plataforma "Sumate a Cristina" (que en ese momento tenía sólo tres mil personas). En 2008, a raíz del conflicto con el campo, se incrementó la actividad y la cantidad de *blogs* y también surgió *Facebook* en español, medio por el cual se empezaban a visualizar distintas campañas a favor de medidas tales como la Ley de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual, la Ley de Matrimonio Igualitario, entre muchas otras.

Desde las políticas públicas destinadas al acceso de los jóvenes a las TIC, cabe destacar el "Programa Conectar Igualdad", que es una política de inclusión digital de alcance federal, por medio de las que se distribuyen 3 millones de *netbooks* en el período 2010-2012, a cada alumno y docente de educación secundaria de escuela pública, educación especial y de institutos de formación docente⁷.

A nivel colectivo, próximos al arco político y horizontes de sentido que conforman el *kirchnerismo*, se encuentran diversas plataformas *online*. Entre ellas, la de la organización más masiva, la de La C mpora, agrupaci n pol tica juvenil que apoya al gobierno: <http://www.lacampora.org/>, que cuenta con diversas noticias y enlaces referidos a la militancia de esta agrupaci n. Tambi n existen otros soportes tales como PJ DIGITAL (www.pjdigital.org), SUMATE A CRISTINA (<http://sumateacristina.net/>), Militancia Creativa (www.militanciakreativa.com.ar), Artes Visuales con Cristina (http://avcc-artesvisualesconcristina.blogspot.com), entre otras, que dan cuenta de la creatividad puesta al servicio de difundir un mensaje de car cter pol tico de manera "no tradicional". Del mismo modo, se destacan algunos blogs de producci n colectiva, como *Artepol tica* (<http://artepolitica.com/>) y *Bloggers en Acci n* (<http://bloggersenaccion.blogspot.com/>), que "pretende ser un link hacia lecturas de mundo alternativas a la hegem nica". Asimismo, proliferan en los perfiles muros y *links* de las redes sociales en Internet (sobre todo en *Facebook*), de los usuarios de Buenos Aires, im genes y textos referidos al *kirchnerismo*.



(Imagen del ex Presidente N stor Carlos Kirchner, Fuente: perfil de Facebook, noviembre de 2011)

⁷ Ver: <http://www.conectarigualdad.gob.ar/>

Estos sitios seleccionados dan cuenta de la diversidad de las formas de participación en el debate colectivo y de los modos de significación del proceso político argentino actual. Se trata de modos de apropiación social por parte de los jóvenes de estos nuevos medios con un fin político. Consideramos que en estas formas de participación se cumplen las condiciones de una cooperación flexible, tal como describe Shirky (2008) –una promesa, una herramienta, un acuerdo –, en muchos casos de manera persistente en el tiempo (2006-2012). Las dimensiones vinculadas a la conformación de una “comunidad” y a la mutua cooperación son, numéricamente hablando, de alcance reducido. Sin embargo, cada vez más jóvenes que se interesan por la política se apropian de estas herramientas, ya que las entienden como una instancia necesaria y provechosa de su participación y su compromiso político. A nuestro entender, queda como interrogante saber cómo los partidos políticos tradicionales canalizarán de manera efectiva esta nueva aproximación de los jóvenes a la política en la actualidad.

A modo de conclusión

En este trabajo esbozamos algunas cuestiones referidas a la *repolitización*, relativamente reciente, de grandes sectores de la sociedad argentina, su vinculación con la participación de las juventudes de Buenos Aires y algunos aspectos propios de dicha participación en el presente contexto socio-cultural, en el que se ha acrecentado de manera exponencial el uso de las TIC en la vida cotidiana de los jóvenes.

La idea de tomar partido en la batalla cultural frente a los intereses corporativos, como modo defensivo para preservar el modelo, ha sido bastante extendida en los últimos años y aparece como explicación recurrente de la conformación de estos colectivos de jóvenes en las plataformas señaladas. Es preciso recordar que se trata de grupos que, asimismo, se encuentran inmersos en un contexto en el cual el desarrollo de los medios de comunicación masivos, más específicamente el consumo masivo de Internet, sitúa a la comunicación política en una posición cada vez más influyente. Todo esto deriva en lo que se ha denominado mediatización de la política.

Finalmente, si bien hemos observado que en Internet encontramos formas novedosas de agenciamiento político y modos creativos de intervención de las juventudes, deben analizarse en cada caso con gran detenimiento quiénes son los sujetos sociales detrás de estos nuevos modos de participación, sus trayectorias e intereses, el contexto político específico en el cual emergen, así como las condiciones de propiedad y características de estos nuevos *entornos tecnosociales*. Teniendo en cuenta su vinculación con las democracias del Siglo XXI, los casos de *Facebook* y *Twitter* resultan al menos controversiales, sobre todo si son pensados como espacio “público”.

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Julián Marcelo:

Debilidades, Amenazas, Fuerzas y Oportunidades (DAFO) en las redes sociales

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) in Social Networks

Abstract:

As well as a first step in strategic planning within production realm, a SWOT analysis of a system-process-project in relationship with its environment is often carried out. Correspondingly, the different types of social networks can also be regarded as socio-technological environments used by social groups in the development of different projects; each of them with its own Strengths and Weaknesses in the use of such networks, which in turn entail generic and specific Opportunities and Threats to these groups. Furthermore, each social network, seen as a set of techniques and users, adopts forms of communication which enable/encourage the emergence, consolidation or disappearance of certain organizational models, for instance, with a different degree of horizontality, hierarchical, permeable or manipulated by the groups. These models are analyzed using organizational schemes, as particularly studied by Mintzberg who considers their design parameters and contingency factors. The paper deepens the analysis of deviations risks in the very complex systems-processes-projects which can be originated by the users of social networks – though with a high degree of uncertainty –, as well as their contribution feeding back the development of types and forms of the own social networks. Moreover, special attention is focused on synergies of different intensity in the acceleration of real changes within such social networks and their generated relationships, and particularly towards the likely creation of new systems of relations (in material and intellectual production, distribution, etc.) in all fields of economy, sociology, politics and culture.

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Introducción. El cambio como objetivo y como proceso para alcanzarlo

Dentro de un debate amplísimo -como es el paso *de la indignación al cambio* en sus *aspectos éticos, políticos y estéticos*, contando con las *Redes sociales*-, esta contribución se reduce a los *aspectos políticos del cambio* derivables de lo que explicitan los usuarios-pensadores de dichas redes sociales pertenecientes al propio movimiento social español de 'indignados' del 15 de mayo [de 1991] (en adelante #15M)¹, precisando en lo posible el alcance de ese uso y sus perspectivas razonables.

Para aclarar conceptos, la Real Academia entiende por 'cambio' la "*acción y efecto de permutar (..) cuando se transita de un estado a otro*" (entre otras acepciones), lo que permite introducir la *teoría de los proyectos* [1] que se definen como procesos de cambio dirigido con cierto 'riesgo' de incumplimiento (fig.1).

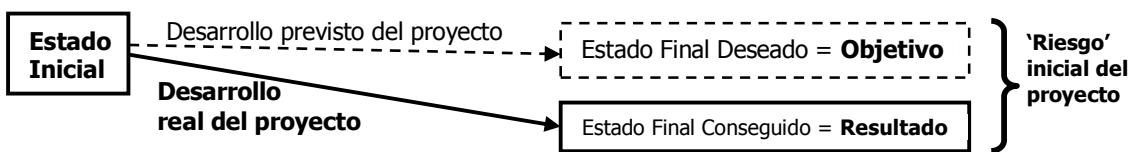


Figura 1. El proyecto visto como acción de cambio entre estados (Fuente: propia)

En cuanto un proyecto tiene alguna complejidad, su 'gestión' busca reducir ese 'riesgo' de 'no éxito' (o de incumplimiento) fraccionando el proyecto en hitos intermedios, cada uno con sus respectivos estados (deseado, conseguido, rectificad). En cada estado intermedio, dónde se alcanza ya un resultado desviado, el proyecto se reanuda empleando medidas potencialmente reductoras del riesgo, para conseguir, en el desarrollo subsiguiente del proyecto, un estado final resultante que se desvíe (del estado final deseado planificado inicialmente) menos que si no se hubieran aplicado dichas medidas [2] (figura 2).

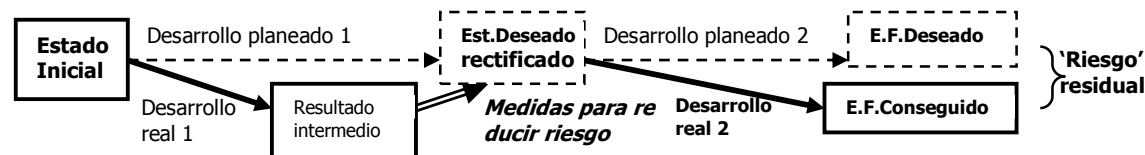


Figura 2. Gestión del proyecto reductora de su riesgo de incumplimiento (Fuente: propia)

La r-evolución evolucionaria

El tránsito de la indignación al cambio, por parte del movimiento socio-político #15M tomado como paradigma de indignación, es un macro-proceso-proyecto cuyo alcance debería poderse deducir de sus objetivos básicos a partir de las manifestaciones escritas de los 'indignados' en sus 18 meses de vida organizada que aquí se examinan. Escritos que van evolucionando, desde los producidos en los primeros meses de forma muy literaria por algunos de los autocitados como 'protagonistas' del #15M (por ejemplo [3] o [4]); hasta los más recientes referidos al uso de las redes sociales como [5], dónde ya se conjuga la experiencia adquirida, junto a una mayor precisión instrumental. Se puede vivir así el paso de una primera etapa de movilizaciones indignadas y orientadas por objetivos iniciales, a otra que está fijando los suyos, con tensiones lógicas entre: por un lado, la fidelidad a los primeros (más o menos conseguidos y retocados); y por otro, las posibilidades futuras que el incuestionable 'éxito' de la movilización inicial permite entrever. *Para analizar la evolución del proyecto #15M, se parte aquí del primer 'manifiesto de los indignados' de la Puerta del Sol [4], materializado en 25 propuestas: 24 en 4 bloques y una final sobre feminismo igualitario.*

1 Los informáticos del movimiento 15M lo denominan #15M en su libro [5], que este artículo citará profusamente. Muchos de sus autores también usan el distintivo @ (@SuNotissima, @axebra, @quodlibetat, @democraciareal, @acampadasol, etc.) como una forma algo pedante, aunque hoy fácilmente comprensible, de autodenominarse en la era de la informática y así distinguirse como usuarios de las redes sociales, sea 'twitter' o la simple mensajería electrónica.

- Un bloque de 6 propuestas sobre **'política real ya'** se inicia con *"la reforma de la ley electoral para que la democracia sea representativa y podamos participar"*. Y sigue con *"poner fin a los privilegios de los políticos"*; *"revocación de los mandatos"*; blindar los jueces *"frente a las injerencias del poder político y del poder económico"*; *"separación de poderes"*; *"transparencia política para evitar el favoritismo y la corrupción"*; o sea *"reinventar el sistema político"* pues *"la sociedad está preparada para una nueva Asamblea Constituyente"*.
- El bloque central de 11 propuestas con **'SOL-uciones [!] económicas contra el malestar'** exige que *"las decisiones que no estaban incorporadas en programas electorales se sometan a consulta popular"*; la *"dación en pago y salir de la trampa de la vivienda en propiedad"*; *"luchar contra el fraude y la falta de corresponsabilidad de las grandes fortunas con la solución de la crisis"*; *"nacionalización de las cajas de ahorro y su reorientación"* (hacia una *"banca ética"*); *"reparto del trabajo, subsidio de paro, cumplimiento de los derechos laborales en su integridad, terminar con la precarización"*; *"comisiones de investigación de los organismos financieros"*; *"coordinación internacional para abolir los paraísos fiscales, imputación de las agencias de calificación, creación de una agencia pública de calificación"*; *"castigo impositivo a las empresas con comportamientos asociales y beneficios a las que cumplan con los principios de responsabilidad social"*; *"democratizar las instancias financieras internacionales"*; *"tasa a los movimientos especulativos de capital"*; y contra *"el pacto del euro, los impuestos indirectos, el copago sanitario, la disminución de las prestaciones sociales, el reimpulso a las privatizaciones"*.
- Otro bloque de 3 propuestas sobre **'educación para indignarse'** propone para la universidad *"revisar el Plan Bolonia, aumentar becas y suprimir las becas-préstamo"*; *"educación pública, gratuita y laica"*; y en los medios de comunicación, *"contenidos que ayuden a entender la realidad y una mayor conciencia crítica, límites a la concentración, protección a la independencia del periodista y acabar con su precariedad"*.
- El bloque de 4 propuestas sobre **'los riesgos del mundo'** se orienta a un *"mandato: los países ricos tienen que reducir el consumo de muchos bienes"*; así como a *"prohibir los alimentos transgénicos y acabar el monopolio de las grandes superficies"*; *"consumir menos energía y menos perjudicial"*; y a la *"agroecología mediante el consumo local, ecológico y sostenible"*.

Este cuarto bloque de propuestas podría ser difícil de conseguir en el entorno del vigente sistema político-económico capitalista global. Pero el resto de propuestas del manifiesto reproducido constituye un programa reformista, recuperador de cierto 'estado de bienestar' perdido por medio de una 'd-evolución' a la sociedad (más que revolución contra/en el sistema). Para conseguirlo, una mezcla de espontaneidad -tan deseada como teorizada- y de somera estructuración 'natural' se formaliza en **"inventarse una nueva manera de discutir. Horizontal, asamblearia, con tiempo para consensuar las propuestas de mínimos y marcar horizontes de máximos. Comisiones para tratar las medidas inmediatas, y otras con menos prisa para llegar más lejos (..) Había que inventárselo todo y organizar el tráfico interno de la plaza, ocuparse de los más mínimos detalles del nuevo orden (..) En menos de 24 horas, en la Puerta del Sol se crea la estructura más compleja de comisiones y grupos de trabajo que se haya conocido en una movilización (..) Como si se fuera a abolir el dinero en aquel instante, o el trabajo obligatorio al día siguiente, como si quedaran apenas 7 días de plazo para arreglarlo todo, nadie más tenía 'nada más' que hacer que estar allí (..) El espíritu del recién bautizado 'mayo español' inauguraba una manera diferente de discutir (..) Es como una especie de terapia de grupo"**.

En estos primeros pasos del #15M las líneas organizativas escasean, ya que al parecer sólo "se trataba de llegar a acuerdos con la responsabilidad de dotar de contenido las propuestas (..) No hay un centro, pero tampoco una periferia. Es una red que se tensa cuando se hace presión (..) En el magma inicial, todos caben. Pero el propio movimiento irá clarificando quién de verdad comparte el manifiesto de los indignados".

Un año más tarde, el folleto colectivo [5] empieza a explicitar la relación entre las **formas de organización y de decisión** (*"llegar a acuerdos"*) con las **formas de comunicación** realizadas por medio de las redes sociales, como base de sus análisis **"sobre la centralidad de las redes digitales en el #15M"** y en sus movimientos socio-políticos previos y consecuentes. Su introducción resume en cierta forma este primer tanteo de una marea creciente de encuentros-textos: *"La sociedad deviene (en) red"*. Tras este impactante retruécano de la 'red social' como variante de la 'sociedad-red' de Castells, se enuncia cómo *"en las últimas décadas, formas de organización nacidas EN internet [será CON o CON AYUDA DE Internet pues EN no es cierto ni*

técnica ni socio-políticamente] *se multiplican y extienden por el territorio urbano, generando nuevas topologías, técnicas y políticas (..) Motores y síntomas de cambio en la historia moderna, las revoluciones y movimientos sociales pueden resultar ilustrativos a este respecto. La silenciada revolución islandesa, la celebrada primavera árabe y los movimientos como el #15M y Occupy han confirmado la ascensión de nuevas formas de acción política en red. Se ha hablado de wikiRevoluciones, twitRevolution, Revolución 2.0... No siempre queda claro qué ideas, experiencias, tácticas o proyectos se esconden tras dichos eslóganes."*

Para aclarar dichos proyectos o procesos y estudiar su adaptación a los objetivos propuestos, puede y suele emplearse instrumentalmente la técnica DAFO en todo tipo de espacios [6] y no sólo en los empresariales. DAFO parte de la situación o estado inicial del proyecto con un enfoque estratégico que tenga en cuenta las **Fuerzas** y **Debilidades** de la Entidad implicada (y que ésta puede manejar pese a su complejidad) con las que pueda aprovechar las **Oportunidades** ofrecidas por su Entorno y enfrentarse a las **Amenazas** de éste (menos manejables y por tanto más inciertas). La combinación de Oportunidades del entorno y Fuerzas propias constituye los Factores Críticos de Éxito FCE del proyecto en su dinámica. La entidad debe usar/potenciar esos FCE para enfrentarse a los Factores Críticos del Riesgo FCR del proyecto (no alcanzar los objetivos deseados), soslayando las Amenazas del entorno y reduciendo las Debilidades propias [7] (figura 3)

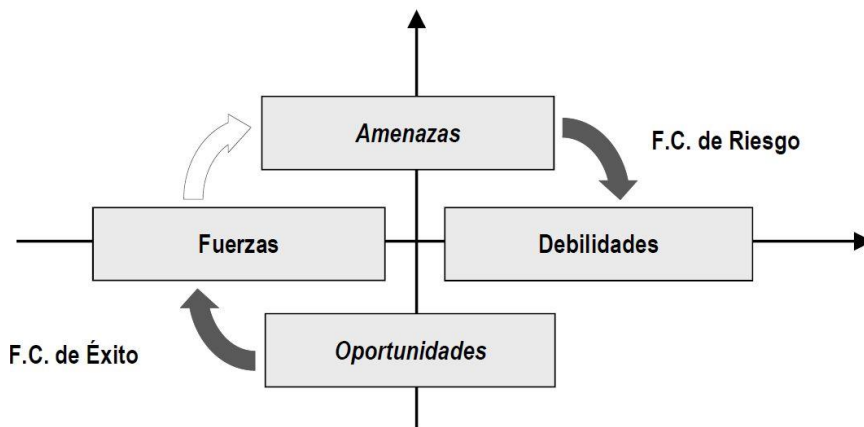


Figura 3. Esquema de confrontación dinámica de los Factores Críticos de Éxito y de Riesgo

Aquí se estudiarán, como entidades implicadas, los **movimientos socio-políticos** con sus Fuerzas (y sus Debilidades) para aprovechar las Oportunidades y enfrentarse a las Amenazas que les ofrecen las **redes sociales** que forman parte del entorno socio-tecnológico de dichos movimientos, centrándose en #15M.

Oportunidades de las redes sociales para los movimientos

Todo movimiento sociopolítico está sostenido ineludiblemente por redes de comunicación que, al asumir su propia función dinámica, se convierten tautológicamente en redes sociales. Éstas han utilizado a lo largo de la historia 'lenguajes' -procedimientos de comunicación-, tan relevantes que se han tomado incluso como causa o consecuencia de los movimientos socio-políticos [8]. Desde el siglo XX ha ido creciendo la importancia de los 'lenguajes' de la Galaxia Von Neumann, hasta ocupar gran parte de la renacentista Galaxia Gutenberg y en agría competencia con la Galaxia Marconi [9]. Esta revolución tecnológica -por su generación- y socio-económica -por su uso- procede de dos características básicas del lenguaje soportado informáticamente: su re-productibilidad a bajo coste, lo que dificulta su reducción a mercancía; y la re-simetrización del emisor-receptor, lo que no requiere la intermediación (con lo que este lenguaje se retrotrae en cierta forma a los de relación primitiva como el coloquial y mensajístico). Estas características sociales se completan con otras dos tecno-científicas que reducen el tiempo y amplían el espacio: la miniaturización portátil de los dispositivos de intercambio (basada en la nanomecánica química y la bidireccionalidad satélite-tierra); y la transmisión-manipulación de contenidos con algorítmicas revolucionarias de compactación reversible e indexación.

No puede obviarse la capacidad del sistema capitalista para condicionar el desarrollo de esta nueva tecno-cultura, sobre todo mientras se requieran concentraciones técnico-financieras en grandes servidores (por otro lado muy vulnerables y que podrán obviarse con técnicas de *cloud-computing* y uso cooperativo de capacidad de almacenamiento y transmisión excedente). Pero paso tras paso técnico, se constata que ha sido posible, en sólo dos décadas, una apropiación socio-técnica imparables de la red, con Internet como derecho humano básico, con software abierto, con comunidad creativa, con accesibilidad ética que alía privacidad personal y transparencia institucional. Esta conquista social ahora parece tan banal como para que quepa en un conector-colector móvil –smartphone-tablet- de nueva generación, más o menos barato pero hiper-equipado con chips, gigas, banda ancha, pantalla táctil, cámara, android-iOS-x, GPS, apps... Una conquista que en todo caso requiere defenderla como cualquier otra frente a los intereses de sus enemigos (y así se ha hecho con notable éxito, impidiendo su mercantilización abusiva). Una conquista que, si probablemente ha pasado el punto de irreversibilidad, sólo anularía una hecatombe planetaria.

A partir del bagaje disponible de **oportunidades** que ofrece dicho entorno socio-técnico, cabe analizar sistemáticamente cómo el #15M aprovecha este "conjunto de tecnologías y prácticas que apuntan a una reconstrucción de la acción y el espacio políticos" en la dirección que se deduce de los pronósticos hechos en 2011 por [4] y las afirmaciones hechas en 2012 por [5] "sobre la centralidad de redes digitales en el #15M". Los indignados ya afirmaban en [4] la asociación del #15M a la socio-tecnificación de la comunicación: "Si hace un siglo 10 personas podían reunirse para organizar un partido político, 100 años después hacen falta el **mismo puñado** de personas, pero el instrumento es una **fluida comunicación en las redes sociales**. Sobre esta base, DRY -Democracia Real Ya- tuvo la virtud de ir abriendo su propuesta sin perder la horizontalidad (...) Los enemigos de la Ley Sinde utilizaron la estructura de la red para armar una revuelta social que apenas ha costado mil euros. El apoyo de algunas organizaciones, grupos y redes de internautas permitió que la propuesta del 15M tuviera una gran repercusión (...) Quién nos hubiera dicho que esto que se articulaba en Internet sería la mayor movilización ciudadana que jamás haya tenido este país".

Jurado Gilabert (@SuNotissima) y otros destacan en [5] aún más a Internet, "no ya como sujeto central de una revolución tecnológica, sino como herramienta de transformación del marco cultural hegemónico cuando la red vehicula una profunda transformación, un auténtico **cambio de paradigma**, en los procesos comunicativos. Del esquema Emisor-Mensaje-Receptor, hemos pasado a un mapa complejo de multitud de emisores que, al mismo tiempo, se conforman como receptores, en la construcción conjunta y colaborativa de nuevos metarrelatos, que no tienen por qué coincidir (y no lo hacen) con la narrativa institucional que se viene reproduciendo desde las esferas de(l) poder y a través de sus medios de conformación de la realidad."

Que Internet y sus herramientas sean en su origen 'corporativas' (o sea propiedad de multinacionales y orientadas a los intereses del sistema) no importa en [5] para su uso progresista: "Que sean redes sociales **corporativas** no deja de resultar **paradójico**, si atendemos a los principios que guían al Movimiento (código abierto, Net Neutrality, conocimiento libre...). No sabría explicar este fenómeno sin otorgar al **azar** cierta dosis de protagonismo." @axebra lo ve dialécticamente: "la principal razón por la que han sido vertebradores de la acción colectiva es precisamente porque **no** estaban pensados para eso. Nadie visitaba las redes sociales esperando que arrancara una revolución. La gente las usa para expresar la complejidad de sus vidas: su trabajo, sus amores, su ocio, sus relaciones... eso genera relaciones de manera dispersa y amplia".

Facebook FB y Twiter TW bastaron para preparar el movimiento cuando "nacieron las comisiones y los grupos de trabajo (...) Se empezó a construir la infraestructura tecnológica de las acampadas, sus webs, sus espacios en FB y en la red N-1 (...) Los perfiles y canales de comunicación crecieron exponencialmente en cuestión de días y llegaron a tener cifras de seguidores realmente impresionantes. En FB, DRY tiene más 427.000 seguidores. En TW los perfiles más importantes del movimiento son el de @democraciareal con más de 118.000 seguidores, @acampadasol con más de 67.000 y @acampadabcn con más de 40.000 (...) Estas redes sociales corporativas fueron reapropiadas para un uso político, a pesar de los **problemas y riesgos** que tienen." Por su causa el #15M buscó otros niveles tecnológicos, disponibles o a desarrollar. "Al mismo tiempo (...) las acampadas y DRY utilizaron herramientas creadas en base al **software libre** para **organizarse**: además de los blogs de 'tomaplaza.net', ha sido 'N-1', una red social libre y autogestionada, que pasó de tener 3.000 usuarios antes del 15-M a más de 30.000 en apenas un mes (...) Se crearon herramientas digitales como 'propongo', 'stopdesahucios' y 'oiga.me' (...) que plantearon, tanto la autonomía de las redes digitales

dentro del movimiento, como la capacidad para inventar dispositivos tecno-políticos que facilitarán las formas de decisión, organización y acción colectiva." El capítulo II de [5] detalla a 'Lorea', 'Takethesquare', '15octobernet' o 'Democracia4punto0', que aquí retomará el capítulo 6 sobre 'Amenazas'.

Fuerzas de los movimientos en el uso de las redes sociales

El #15M presenta en [5] sus 'fuerzas' en el uso de las redes como ingentes e ilimitadas en el futuro. Sus portavoces tecnopolíticos han dado un enorme salto tecno-político que al menos ha superado décadas de desconfianza intelectual, filosófica y política [21] e incluso de crítica feroz izquierdizante contra la cibernética, informática, robótica y similares, vistas como negocios demoníacos manejados por reformistas vendidos al capitalismo, o al menos como denigraciones del papel central de las personas/masas en su liberación.

De forma tan excesiva como las condenas anteriores, Toret plantea en [5] que *"quiero pensar la irrupción del #15M dentro de una sociedad inmersa en un **devenir-cyborg**, como una transformación vertiginosa de los hábitos sociales y subjetivos debida a una profunda socialización en los mundos digitales interactivos, que genera nuevas capacidades que pueden expresar los cerebros y maquinas en red. La sociedad red vislumbra nuevas formas organizativas y de contrapoder gracias al crecimiento de capacidades tecnopolíticas de las multitudes conectadas. Es la emergencia de nuevas formas de organización, inteligencia y acción colectiva. Comprender el 'cómo', las mentalidades, las capacidades y competencias colectivas del intelecto general aliadas a nuevas herramientas tecnológicas, puede **crear nuevas formas de cambiar el mundo** (..) El sistema-red 15-M se ha insertado dentro de una **mutación** de la subjetividad colectiva, de una politización del **devenir cyborg** de la sociedad, de una socialización en un ambiente cada vez más tecnológico que ataca a los intermediarios. Los cuerpos y cerebros siempre más **inconfundibles** [i!] con **procesos de producción** del trabajo vivo online, de información, de bits y de datos están profundamente conectados por sistemas de comunicación siempre más sofisticados. Por un lado, generan la **nueva economía del capitalismo cognitivo**, al mismo tiempo que pueden ser -como en la experiencia del #15M- capacidad de auto-organización, innovación y autonomía de la cooperación común. Esa ambivalencia concierne a la potencia de transformación de las mentes conectadas en red, una transformación de los hábitos, de los usos de las herramientas digitales y canales de comunicación a partir del crecimiento, por momentos exponenciales de la auto-comunicación de masas o auto-organización común del intelecto general".* Toret insiste en su visión ideológica al prologar su aportación con una cita de Franco Berardi 'Bifo', que ahora teoriza cómo *"la crisis de la izquierda que se manifiesta en el retroceso político de las fuerzas organizadas del movimiento obrero y progresista es solo el epifenómeno de un problema mucho más profundo: la crisis de la transmisión cultural en el pasaje de las generaciones alfabético-críticas a las generaciones pos-alfabéticas y configuracionales. La dificultad de la transmisión cultural no se reduce a una incapacidad de transmitir contenidos ideológicos o políticos, sino en la imposibilidad de poner en comunicación mentes que funcionan según formas diferentes y a menudo incompatibles."* Según 'Rebelión' (16-08-2012) esta opinión excluyente es la que sostiene un sector político-ideológico citado como 'El autonomismo y su influencia en el 15-M'.

Sin llegar a este grado de converso, otros autores de [5] abarcan posiciones distintas, pero casi todas destacan incluso con soberbia las **fuerzas** con las que el #15M usa las redes sociales, sin considerar más **debilidades** que las tópicas, como se verá. Pero además desligan el uso actual de las redes sociales de la persistente presión progresista mundial por el uso libre de Internet desde su creación. Ignoran también las movilizaciones por la informática y las libertades desde los años 80 en nuestro país; y minusvaloran en todo caso los antecedentes que no sean los directamente ligados a los grupos constituyentes del #15M. Tanto @SuNotissima como @axeбра recogen, como único antecedente a recordar, el *"papel que ha tenido la lucha contra la 'ley Sinde' y por la neutralidad de la red como anticipadora del #15M"*. Esta ha sido *"la manera de aterrizar y cohesionar el descontento político, la indignación de millones de personas que se creían aisladas e incomprendidas, que ahora se han interconectado y puesto a trabajar, al unísono, por un nuevo mundo"*. Simona Levi es la única que recuerda como antes *"se echa a un ministro en 2009 con la campaña 'Molina Pírate'"*. [El ministro que precedió a Sinde]. Porque @axeбра ningunea las luchas previas a la ley Sinde *"a la hora de desenmascarar las trampas de la llamada democracia o la ausencia de ella en nuestro país (..) Cuando los **pequeños** partidos se negaron en [sic] apoyar al Partido Socialista con su voto, los populares no tuvieron ningún problema en hacer un par de cambios estéticos a la ley y ayudar a su aprobación."* Reducir a lo inconcreto *"los **pequeños** partidos"* no sólo busca el 'apoliticismo' global más allá del bipartidismo turnante de gobierno. Lo quiere reforzar tecnopolíticamente, *"porque Internet, por su propia condición no puede separarse en derechas o izquierdas, o de tal*

*partido o tal otro, de tal manera que su transversalidad supuso una movilización también transversal". Toret incluso teoriza el poco peso que debe darse a los antecedentes: "La relación entre tecnologías y transformación social no es nueva, más bien lo contrario. Nos arriesgamos a plantear que **sólo cuando** los movimientos o agentes de transformación **se anticiparon o superaron la apropiación por los 'poderes'** de la comunicación y la tecnología se produjeron y aceleraron realmente los cambios sociales". Toret contradice así la visión marxista clásica en toda formación socio-económica de un desarrollo relativamente autónomo de las fuerzas productivas -en este caso las redes sociales y otros mecanismos relacionales-; desarrollo que entra en contradicción con las relaciones de producción y con todas sus superestructuras [14]. Esto no quita que el #15M se apoye a menudo en los marxistas renovadores Deleuze y Guattari, citados incluso como fundamento de sus redes sociales abiertas y autónomas (RSAA) como **N-1**, "una de las redes de Lorea, proyecto que engloba varias redes sociales y busca su federación y también está enredado con Rhizomatik Labs. Es una noción utilizada por Deleuze y Guattari en el libro 'Mil Mesetas', en 'Introducción al Rizoma' o la multiplicidad no reducible al Uno. Es 'la resta que permite multiplicar'. Es el espacio de menos, que no suma dimensiones a un conjunto, sino que permite, a través del desarrollo de una interfaz herramienta compartida, componer y recombinar en un común abierto." [5]*

En esta línea de cierta inmadurez o dispersión ideológica totalmente comprensible aparecen contradicciones como las de @quodlibetat cuando busca superar las redes sociales corporativas RSC: "reivindicamos, en lo referente a la organización de la actividad de la inteligencia colectiva, el uso de RSAA, así como su federación, en base a principios colaborativos, participativos y horizontales, como sería el caso de N-1, Rise up, red DRY, o de herramientas como Diaspora o Identi.ca etc. Desde un punto de vista meramente **técnico**, las RSAA ofrecen una mayor diversidad de servicios de manera tal que se optimiza la organización de la actividad en red, así como su productividad en términos de eficacia y eficiencia respecto a las RSC. Desde el punto de vista **ético-político**, abogamos por las RSAA frente a las RSC, en tanto estas son privadas y privativas, es decir, en base al **concepto de propiedad. Privadas** entendiendo que no comparten su código, y por tanto limitan el acceso al conocimiento libre y compartido. **Privativas** dado que el acceso a ellas está condicionado a la aceptación de unas condiciones y términos de uso que, más allá de atentar contra la privacidad, suponen la cesión impuesta, la **expropiación**, de toda nuestra **productividad inmaterial** en la red, hasta el punto de no tener ningún derecho sobre esta, al mismo tiempo que se lucran de la gestión y explotación de nuestros datos y actividad sin que haya un retorno social o **retribución**".

¿El #15M no era anti-Ley Sinde? ¿O es que admite los derechos de autor, por supuesto de tipo copyleft?

Debilidades de los movimientos en el uso de las redes sociales

Los autores de [5] reconocen debilidades, que estudiarán mejor para reducir el riesgo de incumplimiento de sus objetivos. Para @axeбра, "el **riesgo** de dispersión o de incapacidad de adaptarse al territorio es alto (..) También el **riesgo** de hiper-adaptarse hasta el punto de ser incapaces de proveer experiencias que puedan funcionar en otros territorios o llevados a cabo por otras personas (..) Si no es posible conectar esos nodos distribuidos de manera mallada (redundante) o p2p (comunicación organizada), el cultivo de experiencias puede caer en saco roto o desgastarse por la multiplicidad de convocatorias. El modelo copyleft se produce en otra escala, la del evento distribuido (..) Se es capaz de conectar, aunque sea momentáneamente, todas las luchas locales, estatales e internacionales en un corto espacio de tiempo donde se consigue dar una alta visibilidad. Esta acción, a pesar de su potencia visual, tiene el **riesgo** de caer en la propia de los eventos, que es su incapacidad para producir procesos (..) La potencia de este tipo de acciones vendrán marcadas por las fuerzas de los distintos nodos, pero sobre todo de la capacidad que tengan de 'romper la regularidad' (..) El objetivo de **revolución global** no debe extenderse a otros territorios sino extenderse a otras personas. La red es infinita en profundidad, de igual forma lo tiene que ser la movilización. No centrarse tanto en el número de ciudades sino ser capaces de **inundar de conflicto los centros de trabajo, las escuelas y universidades, o las propias relaciones sociales**. El dispositivo para llevarlo a cabo solo puede ser el que ha distinguido al propio 15-M, que es llenar un espacio de democracia radical y sobrepasarlo".

@SuNotissima también constata otra debilidad del movimiento: "El **cómo** la red se expresa en las plazas es, **aun habiéndose avanzado mucho**, una de las asignaturas pendientes del movimiento. Se pueden distinguir

dos escalas bien diferenciadas dentro del 15-M. Una es el ámbito de actuación e interrelación puramente digital, mientras que la otra la conforman las personas que **aún** funcionan fuera de internet, únicamente en plazas, en la calle. Que existan aún muchas asambleas a las que les es ajena la manera de comunicarse en red ocasiona el que recurran a viejos esquemas organizativos, a saber, que las asambleas de una ciudad tengan que designar enlaces que asistan a coordinadoras para transmitir iniciativas e información; que éstas desciendan vía enlaces de nuevo a todas y cada una de las asambleas y que retornen a la emisora original, de nuevo, previo paso del dictamen por la coordinadora. Es fácil comprobar que estos procesos no se corresponden con la **auto-definición** de las asambleas como entes horizontales, pues la información traza claramente rutas de abajo hacia arriba y viceversa. De generalizarse aún más la comunicación vía internet, se podrían evitar estos caminos, donde sin duda se producen cuellos de botella, pérdidas de cantidad y calidad de la información y cierta **posición de poder** de aquéllos que ejercen de enlaces."

Simona Levi también analiza las debilidades del #15M, pero desde el suelo, sincera, valiente y acertadamente. "En momentos de reflujo el espacio sano de la asamblea lo suelen ocupar **'reiteradores'** que intentan convencerse a sí mismos que a fuerza de repetir las mismas palabras estas tiene vigencia, sin darse cuenta de que tan solo producen una fuga generalizada a otros espacios, dejándoles frente a una asamblea de **si-mismos**. **Últimamente estamos diciendo: sé radical, pide lo posible**. Aquí llega un aspecto confrontativo con un sector -pequeño, por suerte- del 15-M. Si se me permite una simplificación un poco caricaturesca debida a la exasperación por la cantidad de horas que hemos dedicado a debatir con él, este sector está constituido por los que consideramos el verdadero problema. **Trolls** aparte [los que publican mensajes provocativos o irrelevantes], estoy hablando por un lado de los **radicales 'puros'**, que piensan que el sistema no se puede reformar -hasta aquí de acuerdo-, pero que también sabotean los intentos de utilizar demandas reformistas como arma de guerrilla; y, por otro lado, de los **'intelectuales críticos'**, que no se ven mucho por las asambleas. Nosotros pensamos que las **demandas de reformas destruirán el sistema actual**, porque el sistema está preparado para encarar enemigos pero no para que estallen sus propias contradicciones internas. Encarar el sistema a un imposible ontológico, 'destrúyete', ya le ofrece su defensa, la de ser tu antagonista. Si fuerzas a un sistema cerrado en torno a sus privilegios a 'mejorarse', solo le queda la desertión y la fuga como salida. Todo sabemos que al enemigo hay que dejarle una vía de salida si queremos ganar (..) No sabemos ganar. Quien magnifica el enfrentamiento no consigue 'hacer' porque el enfrentamiento es su 'hacer'. Cuando estamos ganando se deben abandonar posturas de trincheras (..) Lo que ha destruido grandes experimentos revolucionarios es el miedo interno a lo nuevo; por eso nos interesa la **cooptación** de nuestro mensaje y asumirla como una victoria. Quizás esto que voy a decir sea un poco 'islandés', pero lo comparto con mucha gente del 15-M. Si en tan solo un mes los políticos han dado ya varios pasos intentando copiar o aplicar nuestras demandas, nos debemos alegrar y marcarlo como victoria."

"(..) La acusación que más daño nos hace, ya que nos hace perder comunicación con gran parte de la gente, no es que seamos unos violentos, sino que seamos una **chavalada** que protesta sin **nada que proponer e incapaz de gobernarse** (..) Los que niegan esta opción táctica luego defienden fervorosamente las **protestas contra los recortes**, como si esta no fuera la **demanda más reformista** y como si antes de los recortes el mundo hubiese sido bueno. Esta guerra es una guerra del lenguaje. El primer cambio ha de ser en el lenguaje, desde una profunda **autocrítica**. Ya no podemos complacernos en el martirio de **pedir lo imposible**; hemos de evolucionar de nuestro papel de antagonistas perdedores. Si el propio lenguaje que utilizamos es incomprensible es para **hacernos los incomprensidos**. Tenemos que ser responsables de nuestros actos. Si no somos leíbles para la mayoría, ayudamos a la fascistización de la sociedad. Por la euforia y luego la fuerza que nos dio vernos unidos en tan grande multitud en el movimiento 15-M, algunos están intentando imponer estéticas y lenguaje, dogmas que están en el tintero y que repiten como 'mantras' desde hace ya muchos años. Que se me entienda bien, por favor: una cosa son las palabras y otra las ideas, que pueden ser excelentes pero que a menudo se pueden expresar, digamos, con sinónimos, teniendo al fin y al cabo el mismo objetivo. El consenso masivo que hemos alcanzado con el movimiento 15-M justamente no viene de ninguna de las palabras que llevamos años repitiendo. Nos estamos confundiendo; no estamos ganando por lo que **siempre hemos dicho**, sino por lo que **siempre hemos defendido**. Primero viene la abolición práctica de privilegios y luego la justicia global. Así nació el 15-M y esta es su ola, queramos o no."

"(..) Hemos de estar presentes a todos los niveles. Debemos trabajar la implementación de la democracia directa **pero también dismantelar el poder existente por dentro** y su imagen mediática y memética.

Hemos de ser tácticos con las palabras y con los actos. Pensar una acción por el resultado real y concreto que quiere obtener, no por razones viscerales o de justicia en abstracto... Si pides a la gente que odie su forma de vida se pondrán en tu contra; si compartes el odio por las mismas frustraciones, seremos invencibles. Como dicen los islandeses 'ocupar los medios para ganarse a la gente que mira la tele'. ¿No queremos este gran consenso? ¿Qué pasa?, ¿no queremos mezclarnos con el pueblo? Si usamos el lenguaje que entiende la mayoría, naturalmente estaremos usando un lenguaje copado por el sistema (..) La parte principal de juego es estudiar la ley, comprenderla, explicarla con otras palabras, ponerla en ridículo, hackearla para inutilizarla, destruir su autoridad sustituyéndola por otros cauces positivos que, finalmente, sean asimilados con el mal gusto y retraso que caracteriza al sistema."

Amenazas de las redes sociales para los movimientos

Los autores de [5] apuntan lógicamente que *"debemos ser conscientes de las potencialidades y limitaciones de las herramientas y servicios de los que disponemos a fin de decidir los usos que le damos (..) La utilización de estas redes sociales corporativas fue relevante, aunque en nuestra opinión es importante problematizarlas, y a pesar de los problemas y riesgos que tienen, fueron reapropiadas para un uso político (..) Seguramente influyó el que gran parte de la población ya utilizase dichas redes, y desconociesen la existencia de otras herramientas más adecuadas, como las redes federativas de LOREA."* Ésta se autodefine como *"una comunidad de personas preocupadas por la seguridad, la privacidad y mantener el control de las herramientas de comunicación que utilizamos y los datos que compartimos en ellas. Por eso en las redes sociales de LOREA no hay usuarios, sino habitantes."* Débil defensa si es sólo terminológica, frente a las amenazas a la seguridad y privacidad. Afortunadamente hay una preocupación real, *"ya que sospechamos (y se empieza a ver) que, tanto FB como TW se verán presionados por los gobiernos para censurar comunicaciones que pongan en peligro su hegemonía. La indignación incluyente (lo que en **occupy** llaman «the 99%») hace que estas redes se conviertan en el herramienta para expresarse y hacer crecer la indignación. Sin embargo, una vez estallada, estas **dejan de ser útiles para organizarse**. Las corporaciones que las poseen (en términos económicos) no van a apoyar esa revolución, y por lo tanto hacen falta otras redes para **organizar** la indignación como ha sido N-1 (..) Sin duda, uno de los retos que se nos presentan es ir abandonando esas redes corporativas hacia otras emergentes como Diáspora o Identi.ca"*.

Esta sensatez contradice otras expresiones de autosuficiencia, como que *"la práctica de la Tecnopolítica se da cuando se altera el uso habitual de Facebook y Twitter, para convertirlas en auténticas armas de **difusión masiva de la información**, o en **útiles organizativos**" (@SuNotissima)*. Es arriesgado olvidar que se aceptó el uso de Facebook por su difusión y facilidad de empleo, infravalorando su trayectoria sospechosa sobre todo si importa la seguridad y privacidad para la transformación de indignación en cambio. No sólo porque *"las condiciones de la licencia ofrecen a FB la propiedad comercial de todo lo que tiene que ver con la vida privada de cada miembro de la red"* ni porque sea casi imposible darse de baja. Porque Facebook (más aún que otras redes sociales corporativas) hace 'tecnopolítica', pero para los 'enemigos' del #15M.

No puede olvidarse el análisis que hace Hodgkinson en *'With friends like these ...'* (*'Con amigos como éstos...'*) al indagar la propiedad de la CIA sobre Facebook:² *"Los vínculos de FB con la CIA pasan por Jim Breyer (uno de los tres socios clave que invirtió en esa red social 12,7 millones de dólares en abril de 2005), también asociado del fondo de capital Accel Partners, miembro de los directorios de gigantes como Wal-Mart y Marvel Entertainment y además ex presidente de National Venture Capital Association (NVCA), caracterizada por invertir en talento joven. 'La más reciente ronda de financiamiento de Facebook fue conducida por una compañía financiera llamada Greylock Venture Capital, que puso 27,5 millones de dólares'. Uno de los mayores socios de Greylock se llama Howard Cox, 'otro ex presidente del NVCA que también está en la junta directiva de In-Q-Tel', que 'es un fondo de capital de riesgo de la CIA', creado en 1999 (2 años antes del 11-9) según su página web para 'identificar y asociarse con compañías que estén desarrollando nuevas tecnologías para ayudar a proveer soluciones a la CIA'. El origen de FB también se vincula con la renuncia del FBI a "su polémico programa de espionaje Carnivore creado para rastrear los correos electrónicos de internautas sospechosos en*

² The Guardian, 14-1-2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2008/jan/14/facebook>. Visitado el 25/11/2012.

busca de palabras comprometedoras. The Register alude a dos documentos de 2002-2003 remitidos por el Centro de Información sobre la Intimidación Electrónica al Congreso de EEUU, donde se detalla que el FBI no utilizó en dichos años 'Carnivore' ni su versión 'DCS-1000', recurriendo a programas comerciales de rastreo en las 13 investigaciones que llevó a cabo durante ese periodo".³ Además "el Ministerio de Defensa trabaja en un Carnivore europeo mejorado";⁴ aportando de 2007 a 2009 2.784.000 €, el 3% de su Presupuesto.⁵

El análisis semántico de los contenidos que fluyen por las redes sociales, corporativas o no -para la discriminación por ideas y su posible neutralización y represión- es una amenaza con la que hay y habrá que contar cada vez más en el futuro. No es la única. La aplicación de 'matemáticas a la búsqueda del origen del rumor' lleva a la investigación de "un algoritmo capaz de localizar el foco las ideas que corren por Internet (..) El trabajo se basa en localizar a unos cuantos internautas centinelas, y aplica criterios como el tiempo de recepción o la cantidad de personas que están vinculadas a cada uno. Por ejemplo, para saber por qué todos los amigos de uno de repente empiezan a llamarnos Pepe -cuando siempre fuimos José- basta con fijarse en 15 de nuestros 500 mejores amigos (esos que tenemos dados de alta en FB). A partir de ahí, con tomar unos datos de sus cuentas se puede llegar al origen"; destacando como 'aviso a los navegantes' "su uso para llegar al núcleo de redes terroristas que se comunican mediante Internet o llamadas de móvil. Con tener a unos cuantos pinchados se podría llegar hasta el jefe. Cualquier sistema de divulgación en red es susceptible de ser descifrado con este algoritmo".⁶ Por otra parte el jefe de los servicios secretos nos avisa: cuidado con lo que se habla por los móviles. En una jornada sobre 'Protección de la información sensible en Defensa y Seguridad', el general Félix Sanz Roldán avisa de que las informaciones que pasamos por teléfono pueden ser 'espías': **'Es sorprendente la ligereza con que utilizamos los teléfonos móviles, no en conversaciones, sino en el uso de sms'**.⁷

En definitiva, para saber si estos anuncios propagandísticos de invencibilidad son exageraciones o no (sobre todo en este periodo donde no se puede impedir ni el hackerismo) habría de llevarse a cabo el típico análisis 'cañón-coraza' sobre la hegemonía relativa entre lo ofensivo (amenazas) y lo defensivo (oportunidades) en materia de seguridad e intimidad de la red. En todo caso, todo movimiento-red que la utilice debe velar por el empleo de precauciones simples, recordables y en definitiva realizables en todos sus nodos [17].

Riesgo, complejidad e incertidumbre en proyectos de 'cambio'

Tras el somero análisis DAFO realizado y volviendo a la figura 3, ahora puede entenderse que las Debilidades de los movimientos sociopolíticos (#15M en este caso) crecen con la **complejidad** de su sistema organizativo, ligado como cualquier otra organización a una dinámica de extensión geográfica, multiplicación de polos y profundización de actividades en grupos de trabajo (pese a la contención que en este caso implica el uso de las redes socio-políticas de comunicación). Este sistema organizativo ha de complicarse a su vez debido a sus actuaciones para controlar las Amenazas del entorno que constituyen dichas redes socio-políticas. Amenazas que producen cierta **incertidumbre** en cuanto a la selección y eficacia de las medidas que permitan gestionar -reducir- el riesgo del proyecto de 'cambio' del #15M (en línea con las figuras 1 y 2).

La gestión del riesgo del proyecto de 'cambio' del movimiento se apoya en sus Factores Críticos de Éxito (sus propias Fuerzas y las Oportunidades del entorno de las redes socio-políticas) para reducir sus Factores Críticos de Riesgo (las correspondientes Debilidades y Amenazas). Pero por otra parte esa gestión debe tener en cuenta, como factores principales, la dinámica de la Complejidad organizativa del propio movimiento, así como la dinámica de la Incertidumbre ambiental que proceda de las redes sociopolíticas implicadas (además de contar

3 <http://www.libertaddigital.com/internet/el-fbi-deja-de-utilizar-su-polemico-programa-de-espionaje-carnivore-1276241827/> Visitado el 25/11/2012.

4 El País, 22/02/2007.

5 www.la-moncloa.es/ConsejodeMinistros/Referencias/_2006/refc20061229.htm#Inteligencia (citado por El País, 22/02/2007).

6 El País, 10/08/2012.

7 El País, 21/10/2009. El propio periódico cita como fuente: <http://www.diariocritico.com/2009/Octubre/nacional/179028/cni-espionaje-movil-sms.htm> Visitado el 25/11/2012.

con los recursos para realizar dicha gestión y de querer aplicarlos, por supuesto). [10] De forma más concreta: se ha realizado la exposición y análisis de los factores críticos (DAFO) que intervienen en el riesgo/éxito de cumplimiento del programa y de los objetivos del #15M (o de cualquier otro movimiento socio-político) en la parte ligada a su empleo de las redes sociales que permean la sociedad-red.

Pero falta por estudiar el empleo de las técnicas de gestión de riesgos del proyecto que permita pasar de la indignación al 'cambio'. Esas técnicas requieren un control suficiente de la complejidad de la estructura organizativa que adopte el #15M (de forma voluntaria o que se vaya desarrollando en él). Pero esto necesita cierto estudio de las estructuras organizacionales y de su dinámica (sea evolutiva o mutacional), como se indica en el capítulo 7 siguiente. Además dichas técnicas deben ofrecer la forma de enfrentarse dinámicamente a la incertidumbre generada en las redes sociopolíticas que van a utilizarse, lo que es mucho menos controlable, aunque factible, como se indicará en los capítulos finales 8 y 9 de conclusiones. [11]

Comunicación, organización, decisión

En [5] aparece a menudo "*Organización... meta-organización... auto-organización... meta-comunicación... organización/comunicación (..) La decisión pasa por una interfaz que permite una permanente inclusión (auto-agregación, auto-organización) y a la vez una regulación colectiva (no exenta de dificultades) de los pasos a dar (..) inventar dispositivos tecnopolíticos que facilitarán las formas de decisión, organización y acción colectiva (..) emergencia de nuevas formas de organización, inteligencia y acción colectiva.*" Los autores de [5] juegan frecuentemente con los términos de **comunicación, organización y decisión**, sin quedar claro cómo entienden y explotan las relaciones entre estas **formas**, que se vienen estudiando en la planificación estratégica de los proyectos-procesos desarrollada sobre todo para las empresas, lo que no impide utilizar con ventaja sus resultados en otros ámbitos como el de los movimientos sociopolíticos.

De entrada, la estructura de toda **organización humana** suele definirse como el conjunto de formas en que se divide el trabajo y se consigue su coordinación. El profesor Mintzberg [12] parte de un sencillo esquema organizativo (véase el Anexo) basado en las relaciones entre grupos de personas agrupadas por sus intereses, afinidades y roles; bloques que pertenecen a dos grandes conjuntos: el **dominio en estudio** o sistema formado por grupos de intereses 'internos' a dicho dominio (directivos, apoyo técnico, apoyo administrativo, cuadros medios, operarios y sus mandos, así como cierta 'cultura' o ideología aglutinadora de la entidad); y el **entorno** de dicho dominio formado por otros grupos de intereses 'externos' (gobiernos, propietarios, clientes, proveedores, socios, competidores, sindicatos o asociaciones de empleados, público). Mintzberg desarrolla 6 tipos organizacionales básicos ligados al predominio que ejerzan los 6 grupos internos del dominio en estudio y añade como 7º tipo la Organización Política, que aparece "*cuando una organización no tiene una parte que predomine, ni un mecanismo de coordinación que sobresalga ni una forma estable de centralización. Probablemente tenga dificultad en ajustar los conflictos internos y su comportamiento se caracteriza por el impulso a la desunión*". Otros autores añaden como 8º el tipo de Organización Virtual [13].

En particular, la **forma de toma de decisiones** coordinable con la **forma estructural de la organización** está directamente ligada a su **forma de coordinación-información-comunicación** y ambas a su nivel de **(des)centralización, vertical y/o horizontal**. La búsqueda de descentralización en las formas de toma de decisiones con las redes sociales (que son los sistemas de información-comunicación de la 'organización' implícita en el movimiento #15M) lleva a retener los tipos organizativos más descentralizados y más alejados de los mecanismos de coordinación por supervisión directa (la realizada por jefes o directivos segregados del conjunto organizativo).

El cuadro siguiente destaca 3 estructuras organizacionales de las 8 paradigmáticas de Mintzberg, que permiten combinarse y describir organizaciones reales como la asumida por el #15M, como su dinámica (que suele desarrollarse hacia estructuras más complejas para enfrentarse a entornos más inciertos). El repaso de esas 3 estructuras será útil para prever la dinámica de los movimientos sociopolíticos:

Organización	Parte predominante	Mecanismo de coordinación	Característica básica
Empresarial	Directivos	Supervisión directa	...

Burocrática	Apoyo técnico	Normalización de procesos	...
Divisional	Línea media	Normalización de resultados	...
Profesional	Operarios y mandos	Normalización de habilidades	...
Política	Todas por igual	-	...
'Misionera'	Ideología	Normalización de valores	responde a entorno hostil
Innovadora	Apoyo + Operarios	Adaptación mutua	planificabilidad limitada
Virtual	Sistema de información	Comunicación	red sinérgica+catalizadora

- En una **Organización 'misionera'**, los miembros permanecen unidos en torno a los valores normalizados y tienden a una división del trabajo difusa y poco especializada. La socialización es clave para asegurarla.
- Una **Organización Innovadora** se estructura por proyectos y fusiona armoniosamente a expertos de diferentes especialidades en equipos creativos que usan la adaptación mutua y dispositivos de enlace.
- Una **Organización Virtual** potencia la comunicación de todos con todos y tiene los sistemas de información como centro neurálgico.

El complejo 'comunicación-organización-decisión' que explicita y al parecer experimentaría el movimiento #15M, puede reflejarse como combinación de estos 3 tipos de estructuras organizacionales: 'misionera' (en torno a los valores ideológicos de su 'misión'), innovadora (coordinante de equipos creativos y de apoyos multidisciplinares que se adaptan mutuamente en sus discusiones y pueden replanifican constantemente sus proyectos) y virtual (apoyada en redes sociales de comunicación sinérgica y catalizadora de sus decisiones). Falta comprobar que esta tri-estructura deducible de las declaraciones tecnopolíticas de [5] puede conseguir una distancia-riesgo razonable entre los objetivos declarados del proyecto y el resultado futuro, centrándose en este caso en el papel que juegan y jugarán las redes sociales, como se verá en las dos conclusiones que siguen. ¿Cómo controlar su tendencia a la complejidad en el avance del proyecto? Pues podría resolver flexiblemente la mayoría de situaciones la continua preocupación por no salirse de las estructuras rízmáticas en el complejo de formas cohesionadas de comunicación-organización-decisión adoptadas.

Conclusión 1: el proyecto 'cambio' para una democracia real

Volviendo a la Introducción de [5], su final reinterpreta en clave técnica los objetivos sociopolíticos del #15M: *"La reapropiación multitudinaria de las redes sociales corporativas y la invención de nuevas herramientas libres, junto a estrategias hacktivistas a gran escala para fines de organización y comunicación político-vírica, han abierto un nuevo campo de experimentación socio-técnica. Este es el ámbito de la Tecnopolítica, como capacidad colectiva de apropiación de herramientas digitales para la acción colectiva, explorando esta nueva centralidad desde una visión tecnopolítica y tecnológica, pensando nuevas formas de organización/comunicación así como la transformación subjetiva de los cuerpos conectados en red. Partiendo de una reapropiación de la política a la altura de los tiempos, este complejo movimiento ha mostrado la potencia de la cooperación en red como marco de apertura a nuevos horizontes políticos y colaborativos, desafiando los actuales sistemas de representación y apuntando a una posible r-evolución de la democracia."*

La 'r' separable o conjuntable a **evolución** busca una ambigüedad calculada en los objetivos del movimiento y por lo tanto en el 'cambio' deseado. Puede interpretarse así razonablemente que el movimiento #15M es una expresión organizada derivada de la indignación de las llamadas clases medias –sobre todo las juveniles– en su resistencia a la proletarización y su deseo de retorno a la situación previa a la crisis. Muchos interpretan así la composición y el discurso mayoritario de los grupos originales, acampados y portavoces del #15M, así como su distanciamiento tanto de los partidos políticos gobernantes como sobre todo de los sindicatos mayoritarios con quienes no comparte historia, sin distinguir entre presuntos dirigentes institucionalizados y masas de afiliados reducidos a un status proletario que no desmiente un pasajero espejismo consumista.

El #15M estaría así dispuesto por ahora a un 'cambio' de tipo **"sé radical, pide lo posible"**, como ilustran sus *"dispositivos políticos para la acción colectiva"* y siempre que se tuvieran en cuenta y se redujeran los factores críticos de riesgo considerados anteriormente (debilidades propias y amenazas desde el entorno

digital). Este 'cambio' se centraría más en la participación social (modelizada en particular con 'Democracia 4.0' y 'Oiga-me') y en la vuelta a un 'estado de bienestar' recuperador del status de las clases medias y aceptable para el proletariado. O sea un sistema más avanzado que el de los años 90 pero sin los excesos 'burbujeantes' del primer decenio del siglo XXI, con las garantías que pueda dar un mayor control ciudadano y con los avances que pueden ir dando 'victorias' relativas como las consignadas por Simona Levi (siempre que las apoyen las movilizaciones específicas crecientes y los instrumentos como 'Stopdeshaucios'): *"Quizás esto que voy a decir sea un poco 'islandés', pero lo comparto con mucha gente del movimiento del 15-M. Si en tan solo un mes los políticos han dado ya varios pasos intentando copiar o aplicar nuestras demandas, nos debemos alegrar y marcarlo como victoria. Con 'VdVivienda' no nos marcamos este tanto cuando la Chacón puso la ayuda para jóvenes"*(pero que ha suprimido el PP al bajar la presión).

"La silenciada revolución islandesa (..) la transformación política de Islandia conocida como 'Revolución silenciada islandesa', que llevó a la cárcel los banqueros y políticos que llevaron a la quiebra al país". Estas y otras referencias al modelo islandés lo convierte para gran parte del #15M en paradigma de **revolución**, frente a otras referencias más ambiguas o exóticas como la 'primavera árabe'. Pero no debe olvidarse cierta contestación descalificadora desde los 'media', con artículos como *'¿Quién dijo que en Islandia hubo una revolución?'* de Daniel López en [15]: *"Me pregunto, pues, y lo hago sin retórica, quién se encarga de poner nombre a una **revolución** (..) He sido cuerpo indignado en la primavera española del 2011 y a día de hoy soy modesto aspirante a formar parte de la ejemplar comunidad islandesa, digamos que he trasladado mi indignación y mi hambre de una a otra de las zonas presuntamente revolucionadas. Pues bien, si he de ser honesto, debo decir que tanto aquí como allí no he conseguido aún vivir 'nihil novum sub solem' [nada nuevo bajo el sol] capitalista (..) que debo seguir siendo, aquí como allí, un perfecto adicto a la explotación, a ese veneno que matándonos nos permite vivir justo el tiempo que le somos necesarios."*

Conclusión 2: proyecto 'cambio' para un socialismo del siglo XXI

Simona Levi, tan cauta e 'islandesa' (término que emplea ella misma), anuncia otra etapa al plantear *"cuáles son las principales urgencias ahora, **de cara a la #globalrevolution**"*: objetivo no explicitado del que sólo se intuyen rasgos a partir de problemas internos en el seno del #15M: *"1) Realizar un 'fork' [horquilla] entre 'imaginario islandés' e 'imaginario griego' para que ambos puedan convivir sin cortarse las alas. Lo que nos está resultando más difícil es luchar **contra** el proverbio 'mejor permanecer unidos' cuando la **tensión interna es paralizante** y cuando nuestra fuerza justamente es tener **mil caras y mil nombres**."*[5]

Otros autores de [5] también se preguntan *"¿Qué formas de **organización revolucionaria** se van a dar en la sociedad red y el capitalismo financiero y cognitivo? ¿Cómo y de qué manera puede servirnos una politización del uso de las tecnologías de la comunicación para **organizar el contrapoder** en la sociedad red?"*. Preguntas que habría que precisar más ¿Solamente el "contrapoder"? ¿qué "mil caras y mil nombres"? ¿"tensión interna" entre quién? ¿Qué se está discutiendo? Al parecer, en el #15M *"hemos planteado algunas cuestiones como puntos de partida que abren los diálogos establecidos durante estos últimos meses. Las cuestiones permanecen abiertas como espacios de reflexión y a la vez nos orientan en el **proceso de ensayo-error** que permanentemente habitamos."* Este clásico método para manejar la incertidumbre ofrecería cierta perspectiva de avance hacia esa 'global revolution' -con 'r'- que no se pare en una d-evolución a la islandesa, viendo a ésta incluso como etapa histórica necesaria para lo que viene a llamarse 'socialismo del siglo XXI' (una aproximación 'marxiana' a la complejidad, incertidumbre y crisis puede verse en [20]).

Los autores de [5] hacen sólo magras y fugaces referencias a la *"**socialización** de una parte de la población (..) **socialización** en los mundos digitales interactivos (..) **socialización** en un ambiente cada vez más tecnológico que ataca a los intermediarios"*. Es lógico cuando los textos se centran en las herramientas tecnopolíticas que el #15M y otros ya emplean y podrían desarrollar para ir superando sus debilidades reconocidas y des-amenazando las redes socio-políticas. Pero empiezan a otorgar a dichas herramientas y redes una gran capacidad inexplorada de organización y sustentación del empoderamiento político, económico, social y cultural de los ciudadanos, de forma directa y no mediatizada, que permita generalizar una socialización cuyas características y viabilidad están en pleno debate.

Una etapa como la actual de desarrollo de la 'sociedad de la información' (o 'digital' para otros) permite sostener para muchos la visión marxista de una contradicción fundamental: entre el uso socializado de estas nuevas fuerzas productivas (y en particular el de las redes socio-políticas aquí analizadas) frente a la forma de propiedad de los medios de producción y distribución que sustenta la explotación del modo de producción capitalista y de los anteriores. No hay más que ver la persistente y no derrotada resistencia profesional y social que no permite la reductibilidad de la información, el conocimiento y sus derivados a ser una simple mercancía valorable más o menos por los mercados. Se abriría así (sin fecha) el camino político-económico a la 'sociedad del conocimiento' socialmente revolucionaria por su potencialidad reductora de una explotación que se apoya en las longevas superestructuras jurídicas, sociales y culturales de nuestro entorno.

Epílogo

El movimiento social #15M parte de un proyecto de 'cambio' para una 'democracia real' y parece orientarse vagamente hacia alguna forma de 'socialismo del siglo XXI', según intuyen en [5] varios de sus portavoces tecnopolíticos. Pero ciertos extremos tecno-políticos como los que se ha visto que emplea Toret en anteriores páginas podrían implicar cierta deriva sociopolítica, en parte del movimiento, hacia una formación de tipo Partido Pirata (si el #15M logra superar su prevención antipartidaria).⁸ Tras el PP sueco, ahora el PP alemán es, según [23], *"un fenómeno fluido (..) Los Piratas nacen de las comunidades culturales de Internet, con personas de diferentes tendencias políticas. Les une la mutación del mundo del trabajo y el uso intensivo de Internet, que implica ciertos principios organizadores: transparencia, participación e igualdad. La campaña electoral de los Piratas apuntaba, en primer lugar, al modo de funcionamiento del sistema político y la forma de hacer política (..) La "protesta" del electorado de los Piratas se vuelve "contra el artificio ritual de una política cuya comunicación para muchos ciudadanos se reduce a los 'talk shows', a frases para la televisión o a comunicados que suenan a hueco (..) Los Piratas tienen tres áreas predilectas de desarrollo socio-político y las trabajan a la ofensiva: la utopía del libre acceso al conocimiento, la eficacia de los derechos de los ciudadanos y la implantación de prácticas democráticas."* Para ellos, *"la 'democratización de la democracia' significa ante todo que el problema no reside tanto en el sistema democrático como en su concepción actual. Su principal proyecto es desarrollar nuevas formas de participación política como respuesta a una crisis latente de la democracia representativa. Además de reivindicar más democracia directa y formas de participación no convencionales, añaden aportaciones de la tecnología como los open data o la open governance. Sin embargo, lo más importante, a sus ojos, es su propio trabajo sobre el proyecto de liquid democracy y liquid feedback (retroacción): un software experimental interactivo que permitirá recoger reivindicaciones y propuestas para facilitar el proceso participativo. La idea fundamental es la introducción del principio de la delegación del derecho de voto y la idea de "sufragio ponderado". Cada cual tendrá que decidir por sí y cada vez el nivel de su conocimiento sobre el tema y el grado de su participación (..) Los Piratas ponen en tela de juicio dos axiomas del sistema político actual: los partidos representan los intereses comunes de capas enteras de la población; y una organización debe integrar en un programa unitario la diversidad de los campos de acción política mediante la mayor eliminación posible de contradicciones (..) Creen que la diversidad de opiniones y el intercambio de puntos de vista diferentes por Internet es el mejor medio de elaborar estrategias políticas. Hay indicios para saber realmente que los Piratas han atraído a votantes descontentos, no porque fuera un nuevo partido, sino porque era un partido diferente."*

Preocupa a los piratas *"mantener la integridad de la información y poder determinarse libremente frente a la vigilancia del estado y la represión en una sociedad de comunicación digital (..) Detrás de la demanda de 'mantenimiento de los derechos burgueses a la libertad' se ocultan distintas posiciones: open source, open access, free culture, acceso libre al conocimiento son los conceptos esenciales para una nueva regulación de la Internet. En el centro están las condiciones de apropiación, las cuestiones de derechos de autor y los patrocinios. La posición de los Piratas no es homogénea. Hay quienes ponen el acento en la 'libertad de las condiciones de producción' y siguen comprometidos con la idea básica del copyright y la compensación financiera. La otra posición se refiere al principio del 'conocimiento libre' como patrimonio común de la*

⁸ <http://www.pp-international.net/> Visitado el 25/12/2012.

humanidad, y rechaza la noción de 'propiedad intelectual', *copyright* o patentes de software propietario. Los productos de un trabajo de creación se consideran como 'creative commons'.

"Esta idea de comunidad procede de dos principios fundamentales de la 'vida' de los Piratas: la idea de la cultura de Internet libre y la de unos 'bienes comunes' para todos en los campos de la cultura, del conocimiento, la genética, la biología y las infraestructuras públicas de agua, energía y derivados (...) La exigencia de esos 'bienes comunes' responde a la 'dialéctica de la precariedad' -en el trabajo, en la forma de vida- que se ha convertido en una situación normal. El mundo antiguo dónde el Estado garantizaba los derechos sociales de los trabajadores y la adquisición de bienes por el trabajo se ha convertido en un muy lejano, inaccesible. La falta de seguridad, la flexibilidad traen un alto grado de autonomía y libertad de elección, pero también obligan a encontrar continuamente un equilibrio frente a los excesos de trabajo, la irregularidad de ingresos y la disponibilidad exigida en cualquier momento. Si se quieren dominar los cambios venideros en el ámbito del trabajo y la vida personal sin que aumenten dramáticamente los gastos inducidos por estos cambios (prestaciones sociales, salud), hay que recurrir a ciertos 'bienes comunes'. Una renta mínima conviene más a identidades inseguras y heterogéneas que el establecimiento a largo plazo de las garantías que pueda dar un Estado social. No piden ya al Estado y a la sociedad más que estos 'bienes comunes'. En lo demás, cada cual se apaña. En Piratas, la imagen liberal-libertaria de los individuos y la sociedad participa a la vez del liberalismo y del socialismo, con una comunicación digital que en el futuro puede llegar fácilmente a áreas sociales diferentes (...) Una política de *red* en torno a la forma de derechos civiles y democracia penetra en las líneas de fractura social que la ciencia política sitúa en el enfrentamiento entre sistemas de valores autoritarios y libertarios. En realidad, estos polos están ocupados por los partidos tradicionales. Como éstos han perdido la oportunidad de entrar en la revolución digital o han dado a entender que este mundo cultural emergente les era bastante ajeno e indiferente, los Piratas pueden tener éxito y han encontrado su legitimidad política llenando ese vacío. Un vacío que podrán seguirlo cubriendo, ya que los partidos tradicionales no podrán llenar sus lagunas por una decisión brusca de cambiar de rumbo."

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Bruno Castillejo & Dimitrina J. Semova:

Elecciones Generales y redes sociales en el caso de España, 2011

General Elections and social networks in the case of Spain, 2011

Abstract:

General Elections of November 20, 2011 marked a turning point in the use of social networks in Spain for political purposes: on the one hand, was the first time the major parties decided to use social networks in their election campaigns, and on the other, all studies show that small parties won on this field. Given that “the smalls” reached unexpected good election results, therefore we must examine the question of a possible relationship between votes won and presence in social networks. It is also important that the vast majority of messages against politicians came from users participants in the 15-M Movement (“The Outraged”). From their personal accounts they proposed different hashtags attacking the two major political parties: the Popular Party (PP) and the Socialist Party (PSOE).

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 - “The Public Value Test- instrument of evaluation of the online services of the public broadcasting: comparative analysis”, in Reinventing Journalism and Media, Vivar J. (coord.), Fragua, Madrid, 2011.

Introducción

Las Elecciones Generales del 20 de noviembre de 2011 marcaron un punto crucial en el uso de las redes sociales con fines políticos en España debido, por una parte, al hecho de que los grandes partidos por primera vez recurrían a esta herramienta, y por otra, a la influencia que alcanzaron los partidos periféricos en la red. Teniendo en cuenta que estos últimos obtuvieron los mejores resultados electorales en su historia, en el futuro, debemos detenernos en la cuestión de una posible relación entre votos ganados y presencia en las redes sociales. Asimismo, resulta importante que la gran mayoría de mensajes en contra de los políticos provenían de aquellos usuarios que forman parte del Movimiento 15 M ("Los Indignados"), quienes desde sus cuentas personales y las cuentas de las asambleas proponían diferentes hashtags atacando a los dos grandes partidos políticos, el Partido Popular y el Partido Socialista.

En este estudio analizamos las acciones online y los TrendingTopics durante la campaña electoral de 2011 en España a través de ejemplos como los siguientes: #ReiniciaElDebate, #Prostituit, #PuntosRubalcaba, #AvatarMariano, #FreeNaniano #PrayForNaniano.

Los partidos políticos españoles descubren las redes sociales

En el momento en el que Alfredo P. Rubalcaba (PSOE) dejaba su cargo de ministro en el gabinete de J.L. R. Zapatero, su equipo electoral creó la cuenta en Twitter @conRubalcaba anunciando en uno de los primeros tuits: "Estamos aquí para escuchar vuestras sugerencias, críticas... y para charlar". Según publicaron los principales diarios, a las cuatro horas de abrirse el perfil, la cuenta contaba ya con más de 4.000 seguidores. Así se puso el principio de una tendencia negativa que consistía en competir por el número de seguidores y por el mero número de los tuits dejando al lado la verdadera interactividad con el público. Los candidatos utilizaban estos cálculos como publicidad que exponían en sus respectivos perfiles sin darse cuenta que el objetivo de estas actividades consiste en optar no tanto por la cantidad sino por el aspecto cualitativo de la comunicación online. La cuenta del actual presidente Mariano Rajoy (PP) fue abierta el 15 de septiembre del 2011 de cara a las Elecciones Generales del 20 de noviembre y para entrar en un terreno donde su principal rival, Alfredo P. Rubalcaba (PSOE), ya tenía cuenta propia.

El principal eslogan de la campaña del PSOE, "Rubalcaba Si" fue replicado en seguida con el hashtag #RubalcabaNo. Simultáneamente, en la plataforma youtube aparecieron vídeos a modo de contra-campaña criticando el mensaje electoral.¹ Una acción que podemos calificar como positiva, fue la encuesta online que invitaba a los usuarios a votar las propuestas políticas del PSOE con el fin de elegir las favoritas. Se trata de una iniciativa que impulsó al público a entrar en contacto con el programa político del partido generando en consecuencia verdaderos espacios de debate.²

EQUO solo llevaba un año como formación cuando decidieron embarcarse en un proyecto político. Su líder, Juan Antonio López de Uralde Garmendia es conocido por ser el director de Greenpeace-España entre los años 2001 y 2010. Al contrario que el resto de partidos a analizar, EQUO tenía una gran desventaja y es que al ser un partido de nueva creación no disponía de presupuesto para hacer una campaña masiva, así que basaron toda su estrategia en las redes. Crearon una comunidad equounidad.org para debatir sobre cuáles serían los ejes de actuación de su programa electoral.

1Una tendencia importante, tiene que ver con los materiales audiovisuales otorgados por los partidos políticos. Resulta que, en los propios canales dentro de la plataforma youtube, los mismos subieron vídeos que no se podían visualizar en ningún otro medio convencional.

2Otra forma de promoción puesta en marche por parte de las fuerzas políticas fue el mobile marketing: a través de aplicaciones gratuitas en sus móviles los ciudadanos recibían información acerca de diversas actividades en las redes sociales. Rajoy fue el primero en emplear una aplicación de este tipo seguido por el líder socialista que recurrió a una versión similar.

EQUO creó su propia red social para debatir todos los puntos que llevarían en su programa electoral utilizando herramientas que algunos programadores que participaron en la campaña electoral de Barack Obama liberaron readaptándolo a sus fines. Esta comunidad virtual, aun activa, está abierta a cualquier persona interesada pero con una serie de filtros, como por ejemplo el necesario uso del DNI a la hora de registrarse, para mantener la página lo más limpiamente posible de *trolls* (personas que solo buscan fomentar la polémica con temas irrelevantes, faltando al respeto y provocando a otros usuarios) o cuentas múltiples.

El sistema está basado en lo que ellos llaman "Grupos de trabajo" donde se debaten todas las opciones que los miembros presenten sobre la temática del grupo. Los grupos de trabajo fue una iniciativa empleada a gran escala por el Movimiento 15-M. Rodrigo Alviso, activista y su representante ante los medios explica:

Durante la acampada de Sol y al ver que la convocatoria fue un éxito se empezó a crear diferentes áreas de trabajo como Sanidad o Legal para hacer más efectivo el trabajo. Estas áreas tenían su propio portavoz elegido por el resto de miembros del subgrupo. Cada grupo debatía internamente los problemas y soluciones posibles y en una asamblea general se exponían al resto de áreas para ver cuáles serían las líneas de actuación. Este método de trabajo fue rápidamente difundido y adaptado a las acampadas que se fueron sucediendo en los distintos puntos de la geografía española, además una vez terminada las acampadas este mismo método fue el usado en las conocidas como Asambleas de los Barrio y los Pueblos.³

Debemos mencionar también que la Junta Electoral excluyó a EQUO de la lista de organizaciones políticas que podían anunciarse gratuitamente en RTVE, excepto en las desconexiones territoriales. Según López de Uralde, este hecho "es una interpretación absolutamente restrictiva de una ley que ya de por sí es muy problemática, como viene siendo denunciado en manifestaciones y en diversos movimientos, como el 15-M". En consecuencia, EQUO tuvo que recurrir a la capacidad viral de la red para darse a conocer. Sorprende que lograron varios TrendingTopics como #EquoVa o #ReiniciaElDebate, destacando eventos clave como los debates televisados, donde la ausencia de EQUO junto a otras formaciones hicieron detectarlas en las redes sociales denunciando la situación de desigualdad frente al bipartidismo.

#ReiniciaElDebate fue una iniciativa de EQUO por lo que consideran falta de pluralismo y de acceso a los medios convencionales. El día del debate televisivo entre los líderes de los dos grandes partidos, PP y PSOE, los promotores del 15-M y los partidos pequeños trataron de obtener protagonismo en la red. Al mismo tiempo, *Anonymous* lanzó una iniciativa a través del hashtag #ocupaeldebate que fue un llamamiento para que la gente se manifestara en la puerta del Palacio Municipal de Congresos. La iniciativa no obtuvo un seguimiento masivo pero si, despertó el interés en la red.

La candidata a la presidencia de UPyD, Rosa Díez, no contó con una cuenta en Twitter debido a una polémica producida en mayo del 2009, cuando durante su aparición en la televisión pública los espectadores detectaron que su cuenta seguía emitiendo mensajes simultáneamente con la entrevista. Sus seguidores comprendieron entonces que no era la propia política la que escribía en su perfil, por lo que ante el revuelo generado la líder decidió cerrar su Twitter. En consecuencia, el partido difundía sus mensajes electorales durante la campaña exclusivamente a través de la cuenta institucional @UpyD abierta en 2009. Debemos destacar que la campaña de UPyD en Twitter fue menos mediática que la de los principales candidatos, pero aun así fueron el partido más influyente online según los datos de "politweets.es", un comparador de partidos y políticos donde se valora el número de seguidores, mensajes, menciones y otros factores. Al mismo tiempo fue el partido con más diferencia de votos entre las Elecciones de 2008 y 2011, alcanzando la cifra de 834.163 nuevos votantes.⁴

La líder, Rosa Díez no fue la única persona de UPyD foco de la polémica en las redes sociales. Toni Cantó es posiblemente el político español más mediático en Internet. Desde que anunció que se presentaría a las primarias para encabezar las listas del partido en Valencia, el número de seguidores del actor reconvertido a

3Fuente: Cibernoticias Express, <http://cibernoticiasepress.wordpress.com/category/acampadasol/page/2/>. Fecha de la última consulta: 20/09/2012

4.Fuente: Ministerio del Interior, http://elecciones.mir.es/resultadosgenerales2011/99CG/DCG99999TO_L1.htm. Fecha de la última consulta: 20/09/12.

político no paró de aumentar, ya solo ese anuncio provocó una oleada de comentarios a favor y en contra que le llevaron a convertirse en TrendingTopic. Al mismo tiempo, Cantó respondía a los ataques con mensajes incendiarios como el siguiente: "También gracias a los *trolls* nacionalistas. Vuestra mala baba, vuestros insultos y descalificaciones indican q estamos haciendo bien las cosas!". Estas respuestas provocaban un intercambio de acusaciones entre defensores y detractores que ayudó a que siguiera en lo alto de la tabla de temas más comentados durante horas.

Esta no fue la única vez que Cantó se convirtiera en ejemplo de marketing viral y político de España ya que poco después volvió a protagonizar otro debate a raíz de un vídeo en el que a modo de rap pidió el voto para su partido y que enseguida se convirtió en TrendingTopic. UPyD conociendo ya el tirón mediático de su candidato creó otro vídeo en el que se escenifica un debate entre él y Alfredo P. Rubalcaba.

Debemos destacar que UPyD e Izquierda Unida estrenaron una nueva modalidad de mitin que consistía en contestar a preguntas planteadas en Facebook y Twitter antes de salir a dar el discurso oficial en lo que sería el mitin convencional.

Izquierda Unida fue el partido que buscaba constantemente el apoyo en las redes sociales del Movimiento 15 M.⁵ Al mismo tiempo que presentaban su campaña a los medios de comunicación lanzaron en Twitter el hashtag #TuEliges donde presentaban diferentes dicotomías como "Transparencia o corrupción", "Empleo con derechos o precariedad" o "Sanidad pública o repago" La red social se volcó con ellos y siguió "tweeteando" sus propias dicotomías, incluso una parte de ellos lo hacían en clave de humor: "Evasión o victoria", "SineadO'Connor" o "Ismael Serrano o Julio Iglesias". Esta acogida de la primera acción en las redes sociales fue agradecida y felicitada por el partido, tanto a los que lo hacían en tono humorístico como a los que presentaban opciones más serias, y se sentían satisfechos de "que la comunidad 'twittera' lo haya entendido".

La respuesta de los ciudadanos

El 6 de octubre el PP lanzó una campaña para que los usuarios de Twitter y Facebook cedieran sus cuentas durante los días 6, 7 y 8 de octubre, en los que se producía el congreso en Málaga. Esta cesión consistiría en que automáticamente se publicarían 10 mensajes al día relacionados con dicho evento. Los usuarios interpretaron inmediatamente de manera negativa la violación que suponía semejante acción, además de que tal y como estipula el contrato firmado con Twitter a la hora de registrarse, la cuenta no puede ser cedida a terceros. #Prostituit se convirtió de inmediato en TrendingTopic. A los pocos días del #Prostituit el PP volvió a cometer un nuevo error en la red social. Un usuario había creado la cuenta @NanianoRajoy desde la que se realizaba una parodia del líder del partido. A los pocos días, y dado el éxito que estaba teniendo la cuenta por atacar al candidato, exponiendo sus puntos débiles, el PP solicitó a Twitter el cierre de la misma, aludiendo a que se estaba suplantando la identidad del político. Inmediatamente los usuarios reaccionaron y los hashtags #FreeNaniano y #PrayForNaniano se convirtieron en TrendingTopic. Al mismo tiempo, empezaron a surgir decenas de cuentas parodiando al candidato popular.

Otro grave error vino a finales del mismo mes por parte del PSOE que lanzaba una página web donde al registrarte se acumulaban puntos en función de la cantidad de mensajes que se publicaban en Twitter y Facebook relacionados con la web del candidato a la presidencia. De esta forma se ofrecía cacao para labios, tazas, termos, camisetas, cuadernos, etc. A las pocas horas la comunidad twittera subía al TrendingTopic #PuntosRubalcaba recuperando al mismo tiempo #Prostituit, comparando ambas campañas y criticándolas con sarcasmo.

⁵ La cuenta institucional @iunida fue abierta en 2009 y a finales de 2011 contaba con más de 28.000 seguidores, mientras la cuenta del líder @cayo_lara alcanzó los 58.525 seguidores. Es uno de los líderes más activos en las redes sociales y eso le ha llevado a protagonizar varios TrendingTopics. También es el político, junto con Toní Cantó, que ha adoptado un tono directo y cercano, siempre abierto al diálogo.

El día de la celebración de Halloween el Partido Popular presentó su programa electoral. Aprovechando la fecha algunos usuarios decidieron cambiar su imagen de perfil por la del líder del PP, pero desde la cuenta de Mariano Rajoy su Gabinete de Comunicación respondió de la siguiente manera: @SoyElPutoAmo, cambie la fotografía, por favor. Este error hundió por completo la presentación del programa en Twitter, centrando la atención de los usuarios en el error cometido. A la hora, Twitter reaccionó, con cientos de usuarios cambiando su imagen parodiando al candidato con todo tipo de creaciones subiendo al hashtag #AvatarMariano.

Debemos tener en cuenta una característica muy importante de la campaña electoral en las redes sociales: frecuentemente, los hashtags se convertían en TrendingTopic no por contar con la simpatía de la gente sino gracias a la ironía de los internautas. Así, por ejemplo #sumatealcambio se convertía en #sumatealcambio de país si Rajoy gana.

Conclusiones

Los datos estadísticos muestran que los líderes utilizaban el twitter sobre todo para informar de sus actividades electorales (Rubalcaba en 36,1% de los casos y Rajoy en 33,7%) o para retwittear información (Rubalcaba- 32,7%, Rajoy- 21,9%). Mientras tanto, a las propuestas electorales se dedicaban escasos espacios como son el 21,8% de los tweets de Rajoy y el 17,8%- de Rubalcaba. Un dato al que en el futuro se debe prestar especial atención para ver su evolución durante las futuras campañas electorales es el que determina que los candidatos políticos rehuyeron utilizar el Twitter para lanzar reproches: el 15,3% del total en el caso del PSOE y el 20,1%- del PP.

Según datos del diario Público⁶, en el periodo 29.10.2011- 05.11.2011 se observa la siguiente evolución en el número de tuits entre los líderes políticos:

Líder político/partido político	Tuits/hora	Tuits/ 24 h.
A.P. Rubalcaba (PSOE)	121	4966
M. Rajoy (PP)	2534	31878
Cayo Lara (IU)	412	4464
UPyD	142	925
J.López-Uralde (Equo)	79	408

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de los datos difundidos por el diario El Público.

Por otra parte, pudimos ver como los principales partidos fueron incapaces de moverse adecuadamente por la red social, cometiendo errores que provocaban disgusto en los usuarios de Twitter con independencia de edad, sexo e ideología. Ante esos ataques los usuarios reaccionaron como era de esperar -atacando todo intento de los partidos de dominar la red.

No podemos dejar a parte los problemas ético que surgieron en la comunicación electoral online. Así, por ejemplo, se hizo evidente que en Internet no se respetan las jornadas de reflexión. Los militantes activos no oficiales (y esto es importantes, puesto que los oficiales tienen la obligación de permanecer en silencio) siguen haciendo publicidad de los partidos a los que pertenecen hasta el último momento previo a las elecciones. Debemos mencionar también la falta evidente de respeto y las diversas calumnias y acusaciones

⁶Fuente: El Público, <http://www.publico.es/especial/elecciones-generales/2011/twitter.php>.

Fecha de la última consulta: 09/07/2012.

infundadas que dichos seguidores son capaces de fomentar. Resulta que Internet facilita esta táctica, puesto que es una plataforma de acceso libre.

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James Anderson, Kiran Bharthapudi, Hao Cao:

Occupy the Heterotopia

Abstract:

In this essay, Foucault's concept "of other spaces" – or, *heterotopia* – is used to examine the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement in the context of systemic crisis. Neoliberalism is marked by innovations that amplify and accelerate contradictions, unfolding the false utopia of finance capitalism. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) helped hyper-financialize the economy, enrich banksters and extend inequalities. Conversely, high-tech developments allow for decentralized decision-making and more direct democracy, paralleling the ethics of OWS. New ICTs compress TimeSpace, opening doors for empathic connections, generating conditions for elevation of collective superstructural consciousness. This paper explores how these conditions create – and are recreated by – heterotopic spaces. Drawing on Foucault's method of heterotopology we throw light on the potential of OWS to prefigure another world, analyzing endeavors to promote cooperative autonomy, and raise consciousness in and through mediated environments, always contested, ever in flux, and inevitably over-(but never pre-)determined.

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Introduction

This paper explores Occupy Wall Street (OWS) as a Foucaultian *heterotopia* wherein the inextricably linked movement, media and (collective) consciousness interact in different dimensions of TimeSpace. Our discussion is based on the premise that spatiality is of significance to social movements and the scholarship can benefit by recognizing space – specifically, online space – as an active dimension of social resistance against neoliberalism, power and hegemony.¹ Cyberspace, web addresses, websites, gateways, domains, chat rooms – these are some of the common terms used in the context of the World Wide Web and the Internet. Over the years, we have become accustomed to metaphorically understanding the Internet or the online world as a summation of “virtual” spaces – spaces nonetheless – different from, alternative to and reflexive of “real” or offline spaces. While the debate is far from settled, the Internet and new communication technologies exhibit potential for accelerating and extending social movement praxis, interactively fusing and elevating dissident consciousness and political activism. Internet communication technologies (ICTs) promise to offer alternative public spheres or “virtual spheres”² – communication spaces alternative to mainstream media for “Internet activism,”³ or even spaces for the development of “radical media.”⁴ ICTs can assume the role of radical media for social movements because of their capacity “to prepare the ground for the demonstrations before hand, to enable on-the-ground communication among the demonstrators at the time, to bypass corporate media in order to inform the global public of what had transpired in the confrontation and afterwards, and to facilitate the international discussion of the issue thereafter.”⁵

Our project pushes the scholarship further because, we believe, people's use of emergent media can transcend outmoded conceptions of communication technology as mere tools for mobilizing – which, certainly, they are and have been – but now have the potential to mobilize *and* catalyze superstructural collective consciousness, inseparable from the process of participatory politics. Studies thus far have focused more on the discursive practices that are located in alternative online spaces, for instance, “radical messaging” and “counter informational models” of alternative media.⁶ However, very few studies have discussed the spatial, architectural and superstructural conditions required for alternative discursive practices to operate. In this paper, we focus on the Occupy movement (OWS) and use Foucault's notion “of other spaces,” or *heterotopias*, to examine the spatial (and conceptual) conditions that allow for the movement's discursive practices to operate in/at this historical period of severe systemic crisis. Many informational accounts of OWS have already been written. OWS activists' experiences and reflections have been documented from a variety of perspectives ranging from wealth inequality, political-economic instability, personal debts, home evictions and deficits in democracy.⁷ The Occupy movement has been regarded with mixtures of praise and constructive criticism.⁸ Incisive, historically grounded caustic critiques cynically declare Occupy, for all intents and purposes, dead.⁹ But premature obituaries for OWS often, if inadvertently, reflect out-of-touch perspectives of the power elite, overlooking pockets of (spaces for) resistance that persist.¹⁰ Failures of OWS are identified using rationalist models that measure

1 Wilton, Robert D., & Cranford, Cynthia. Toward the understanding of the spatiality of social movements: 374.

2 Papacharissi, Zizi: The virtual sphere: The Internet as a public sphere. 9.

3 Kahn, Kahn., & Kellner, Douglas: New media and Internet activism: From the 'Battle of Seattle' to blogging. 87.

4 Downing, John: Radical media: Rebellious communication and social movements. 3.

5 Downing, John: Independent Media Centers: A multi-local, multi-media challenge. 215.

6 Rambukkana, Nathan: Is slash an alternative medium? “Queer” heterotopias and the role of the autonomous media. 69.

7 Byrne, Janet: The Occupy handbook.

8 Gitlin, Todd: Occupy nation: The roots, the spirit, and the promise of Occupy Wall Street.

9 Cockburn, Alexander: Biggest financial scandal in Britain's history, yet not a single Occupy sign; What happened?.

10 Hedges, Chris: Occupy will be back.

movement effectiveness in terms of tangible changes like bargains with policy-makers to enact modestly defined redistribution goals.¹¹ Still, critics of OWS even affirm its effectuality in illuminating different symptoms of neoliberal capitalism within the collective psyche.¹² Advancing existing research, we begin to make better sense of OWS using the concept of *heterotopia*. This allows for illuminated understanding of movements operating in the context of, and fighting against, neoliberal hegemony. The concept of *heterotopia*, and Foucault's method for analyzing these alternative spaces, termed *heterotopology*, has been underutilized in studies of media communication. Moreover, Foucault's schemata begs to be applied to new media and ICTs vis-à-vis movement dialectics. We employ it to emphasize the importance of space – discursive, mediatic and physical – for social movements, OWS in particular. In considering the complex interactions that characterize these spaces and the interplay among actors and cognitions that shapes and re-shapes spatial understandings, we enrich collective understanding of Occupy processes. We thus throw light on how the movement and emergent media reinforce and parallel each other, perhaps prefiguring another world.

Occupy Wall Street: Intro to an Occupation of Heterotopia

Zuccotti Park was occupied on 17 September 2011. Just as (we contend) OWS *potentially* prefigures (an)other world(s), it was prefigured by various movements and praxis that preceded it. These include the short-lived Paris Commune of 19th century France;¹³ revolutionary anarchists in 1930s Spain;^{14 15 16} worker and student "tomas" (occupations) of factories and schools in Latin America – in Chile¹⁷ and Argentina¹⁸ in particular; politics of *horizontalidad* (inclusive, non-hierarchical forms of social relations);^{19 20} rhizome structures of knowledge,²¹ ubiquitous networks of social relationships,²² and community-oriented workplace democracies operating just below the surface of mainstream consciousness.²³

We consider it equally important to recall the large-scale protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Seattle in 1999 when the first Independent Media Center (IMC) was created to offer a counter-narrative to the mainstream media coverage of demonstrations, giving protesters the chance to confront the corporate agenda in the physical public sphere, and through the cybersphere of still-nascent Internet technology.²⁴ Other IMC chapters developed subsequently, often "in response to crisis events such as protests against international financial or policymaking institutions, or corporate entities."²⁵ The phenomenon started in the US, but expanded worldwide, connecting localities and nodes of resistance across the globe in a unified yet decentralized manner. The virtual IMC "works in conjunction with physical spaces that function as local nodes of a global network." Downing draws a connexion between the decentralized network of activists and the parallel

11 Roberts, Alasdair: Why the Occupy movement failed.

12 Roberts, Alasdair: Why the Occupy movement failed.

13 Harvey, David: Rebel cities: From the right to the city to the urban revolution.

14 Guérin, Daniel: Anarchism: From theory to practice.

15 Marshall, Peter: Demanding the impossible: A history of anarchism.

16 Sitrin, Marina, & Azzellini, Dario: Occupying Language: The secret rendezvous with history and the present.

17 McSherry, Patrice: Chilean Students Challenge Pinochet's Legacy. 29.

18 Sitrin, Marina: Horizontalism: Voices of popular power in Argentina.

19 Sitrin, Marina: Horizontalism and the Occupy movements. 74.

20 Sitrin, Marina: Horizontalism: From Argentina to Wall Street. 8.

21 Deleuze, Gilles, & Guattari, Felix: A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia.

22 Castells, Manuel: The rise of the network society.

23 Alperovitz, Gar: America beyond capitalism: Reclaiming our wealth, our liberty, & our democracy.

24 Downing, John: Independent Media Centers: A multi-local, multi-media challenge. 215.

25 Brooten, Lisa: The power of public reporting. 239.

structure of the Indy Media technology/movement, seeing it as intrinsically linked to the socialist-anarchist activist tradition critical of state-corporate power.²⁶ The Occupy movement has had, from its very inception, a similar socialist-anarchist predisposition. OWS principles of direct democracy, horizontal general assemblies and opposition to both corporate-financial and state power speak to that same socially-minded autonomous ethos. ICTs and social media tied to the movement further reflect that spirit in organization, form and content. Hence, we argue that it is this anarchist-socialist movement-media counter-site reified by OWS that makes it a viable *heterotopia* in the Foucaultian sense.

Emergence of the OWS heterotopia

No one organization or institution can lay claim to Occupy, but it would be historically inaccurate not to point out certain like-minded convergences that got OWS off the ground. Adbusters, a “global network of artists, activists, writers, pranksters, students, educators and entrepreneurs” whose aim is to “advance the new social activist movement of the information age,”²⁷ formally put out a call on their online blog on 13 July 2011. Titled, “#OCCUPYWALLSTREET,” the hashtagged precursor to heterotopic praxis asked, “Are you ready for a Tahrir moment?” and implored all the “redeemers, rebels and radicals out there” to make like “the acamapados of Spain,” entreating “On Sept 17, flood into lower Manhattan, set up tents, kitchens, peaceful barricades and occupy Wall Street.”²⁸ “But a meme alone does not an occupation make”; to the point, “An occupation needs people on the ground.”²⁹ The 13 July clarion call, “and a bit of poster art were the extent” of Adbusters’ involvement; the anti-consumerist collective “floated the meme and left the rest to others.”³⁰

After autonomous activists working collectively made ample use of the new mediascape, “hundreds responded,”³¹ descending on Zuccotti Park – renamed Liberty Plaza – “to protest the blatant injustices of our times perpetuated by the economic and political elites.”³² As of late November 2011 hundreds of cities across the US were Occupied. Thanks to meme proliferation made possible by new media technologies, and a resonant counter-hegemonic message transversing the global social mediascape, the movement took off. Occupy sites set up across the world.^{33 34} But this challenge to the neoliberal order would not stand – at least not without counterrevolutionary response and repression. Those occupying Zuccotti Park in New York were evicted in the wee hours of the morning on 15 November 2011.³⁵ Since that time most of the OWS physical encampments across the country – and the world – have been evicted, but general assemblies, direct actions, mass gatherings and large demonstrations still take place all the time. The movement lives. But what sociopolitical-economic context birthed it? Why is the movement-media interplay so salient – inextricable even? And why in the hell should OWS be conceptualized as *heterotopia* in contradistinction to the contemporary capitalist dystopia constantly represented as the indefatigable, immutable utopia of our time?

26 Downing, John: The independent media center movement and the anarchist socialist tradition. 227.

27 Adbusters: About Adbusters.

28 Adbusters: #OCCUPYWALLSTREET.

29 Schneider, Nathan: From Occupy Wall Street to Occupy Everywhere. 13.

30 Schneider, Nathan: #OccupyWallStreet is more than a hashtag. Para 4.

31 Kim, Richard: The audacity of Occupy Wall Street. 16.

32 NYC General Assembly: Principles of solidarity. NYC General Assembly # Occupy Wall Street. Para 1.

33 Occupy Directory. Occupy Directory.

34 OccupyWallSt.org: Another world is possible!

35 Democracy Now: Occupy Wall Street evicted in late night raid; lawyers secure injunction to reopen Zuccotti Park.

Neoliberalism: The False Utopia of the State-Finance Nexus

Occupy cannot be understood apart from the neoliberal project that gave the movement its *raison d'être*. Older modes of broadcast media circumscribed by institutional commercial imperatives and top-down information flows, propagate(d) the ideology of capitalist utopia. In relation, Foucault surmised, "utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society." Neoliberal doctrines obfuscate the dystopian ideological utopia. Lived conditions belie the myth of meritocracy and fallacy of the free market – as if either were noble, in any way egalitarian or even remotely realizable in the first place. Foucault asserts "utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces."³⁶ We liken these sites to Beltway media broadcasts that "present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down." Staid US media represent an orgiastic life world of unlimited opportunity despite this fanciful construction existing almost exclusively within elite mediations, and perhaps in the exclusionary enclaves belonging to a small fraction of the population. To be sure, banksterism abounds. Banksters have had it better than ever living in their bankster's paradise. Reality for a small slice of the population might really seem utopic, provided their orgasmic utopia entails complete lack of empathy for the mass misery induced by neoliberal policies. Displays of elite indifference to the pain inflicted on huge swaths of people by the latest financial crisis, engineered by the state-finance organism, and the cruel consequent effects of what activist and academic Noam Chomsky called "Wall Street gangsterism,"³⁷ suggest that might not be too far from the truth.

Until OWS, neoliberalism was mostly "masked by a lot of rhetoric about individual freedom, liberty, personal responsibility and the virtues of privatisation, the free market and free trade,"³⁸ which offered ideological cover for more "draconian policies designed to restore and consolidate capitalist class power." Accurate accounting of capitalist developments would depict processes of deindustrialization, profit-oriented urbanization, and ceaseless accumulation via displacement and dispossession.³⁹ Candid assessment would assay and assail the capitalist enterprises that spurred the global economic crisis of 2007-2008. It was lacking until underlying power structures, beguiling discourses and empowering technological advancements in networking and communication birthed an "effectively enacted utopia"⁴¹ - the OWS *heterotopia*. Emergent forms of electronic media and non-hierarchical networking made/make the Occupy movement – and another world – possible.

It was technology-supported endless capital accumulation coinciding with multiple deregulatory schemes that led to a series of events triggering the global economic crisis that started around 2007, extended into 2008 and lapsed into 2009 with effects still felt today, portending systemic change, the contours of which remain uncertain. The crisis had myriad causes, some more direct than others. Banks and loan companies lent to consumers to purchase commodities (e.g. credit cards and home mortgages). Investment banks bought the "debt obligations in 'bundles'" worth millions, which were then sorted according to risks that would compromise the flow of interest from which the bundled derivatives were based on.⁴² Those derivatives were sliced and diced to make it easier for financial firms to invest, and some firms offered swaps – a kind of unregulated insurance designed to protect investors if debts go bad. Harvey puts the "mountain of 'toxic' mortgage-backed securities held by banks or marketed to unsuspecting investors all around the world" at the "epicenter of the problem" within this particular interlinked set of events.⁴³ Subprime predatory lending practices – predicated on duplicitous rating evaluations and opaque escalating interest rates – put people in homes with mortgages that they (understandably and inevitably) could not afford, breaking the casino-capitalist camel's back and triggering an economic

36 Foucault, Michel: Of other spaces. 24.

37 OccupyWallSt.org: Noam Chomsky announces solidarity with #occupywallstreet.

38 Harvey, David: The enigma of capital and the crises of capitalism. 10.

39 Harvey, David: Rebel cities: From the right to the city to the urban revolution.

40 Wallerstein, Immanuel: World-systems analysis: An introduction.

41 Foucault, Michel: Of other spaces. 24.

42 Scheer, Richard: The great American stickup.

43 Harvey, David: The enigma of capital and the crises of capitalism. 4.

chain reaction. Lower level investors who had invested in the "highly rated" securitised mortgages, found themselves holding worthless pieces of paper,⁴⁴ and they couldn't meet debt obligations. Major financial institutions were left without the requisite capital, and so public funds were used instead.⁴⁵ Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, a former president and CEO of Goldman Sachs,⁴⁶ along with Timothy Geithner, a "pro-Wall Street Clinton veteran"⁴⁷ and then chairman of the New York Federal Reserve, in collusion with other private bankers and technocrats demanded a \$700 billion bail-out for the "too big to fail" banks.⁴⁸

Capitalism took a decisive turn. Bonuses now near the \$50 million range for major financial players.⁴⁹ Bloomberg reported that bankers took "tens of billions of dollars in emergency loans at the same time they were assuring investors their firms were healthy," and that the Federal Reserve loans gave an estimated \$13 billion by way of below-market rates to banks, undisclosed to congress.⁵⁰ In 2008, a full \$7.7 trillion was funneled "to Wall Street under the table - without one constituent phone call - without worrying about one election - without having to give one explanation."⁵¹ The OWS chant, "Banks got bailed out, we got sold out," sums the situation up succinctly. When there are 413 billionaires in the US⁵² at around the same time as the number of Americans living in poverty – 46.2 million – is the largest in the 52 years since estimates have been available,⁵³ and the average college graduate now owes around \$25,000 in student loans,⁵⁴ hard disparities hit home, reaping apart hegemonic fissures to reveal the facade of capitalist utopia in hitherto unseen and unheard ways. We have approached "what can only be called a *systemic* crisis - an era of history in which the political-economic system must slowly lose legitimacy because the realities it produces contradict the values it proclaims."⁵⁵ The level of collective critical consciousness elevated to the point the countervailing Occupy *heterotopia* had to be established.

OWS Methodology: Heterotopology

Foucault adduced six principles for describing heterotopias. Systematic evaluation using these principles can aid in describing an existing heterotopia. The descriptive method, differentiated from "science because the term is too galvanized now," then "would, in a given society, take as its object of study, analysis, description, and 'reading' (as some like to say nowadays) of these different spaces, of these other places." This "sort of simultaneous and mythic contestation of the space in which we live, this description could be called *heterotopology*." In the section that follows we analyze and describe OWS in its movement-media totality as a *heterotopia* using the six principles enumerated by Foucault.⁵⁶

44 Harvey, David: The enigma of capital and the crises of capitalism. 4.

45 Scheer, Richard: The great American stickup.

46 Harvey, David: The enigma of capital and the crises of capitalism. 5.

47 Scheer, Richard: The great American stickup. 223.

48 Harvey, David: The enigma of capital and the crises of capitalism.

49 Harvey, David: The enigma of capital and the crises of capitalism. 15.

50 Ivry, Bob., Keoun, Bradley., & Kuntz, Phil: Secret fed loan gave banks \$13 billion undisclosed to Congress. Para 2.

51 Hartmann, Thom: \$7.7 trillion to Wall Street – anything to keep the banksters happy! Para 1.

52 Harvey, David: The enigma of capital and the crises of capitalism. 15.

53 U.S. Census Bureau: About Poverty – Highlights.

54 Center for Popular Economics: Economics for the 99%.

55 Alperovitz, Gar: America beyond capitalism: Reclaiming our wealth, our liberty, & our democracy. 3.

56 Foucault, Michel: Of other spaces. 24.

First Principle: Heterotopia Exist in Dialectics of Crisis and Deviation

The first principle of heterotopology, according to Foucault, is "that there is probably not a single culture in the world that fails to constitute heterotopias."⁵⁷ These sites take different/non-universal forms in different cultures. To provide a timely and prominent example, in relation and in opposition to "free" market system utopias reflecting neoliberal globalization, heterotopias of social protest took variant forms around the world in 2011: riots in London, hunger strikes in India, pro-union demonstrations in Madison, Wisc., and the high profile "Arab Spring" uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa. With regard to the latter, Harb (2011) credits social media with facilitating revolutionary transformation in Tunisia and Egypt, but notes the moment had to be right and enough people had to be receptive for events to take place as they did.⁵⁸ Operating "outside the confines of the centralized structures that make other media profitable but limited in their potential to contribute toward democratic media experiences,"⁵⁹ Internet technology is not "inherently transformative of either human communication or social and political relations," but the interaction among those vectors in specific contexts "constitute the matrix within which we can locate the power of the new media to create new spaces for discourse and coordinated action."⁶⁰

Echoing the general view of Occupy, we see extant injustice as systemic. Bank bailouts, bonuses for bankers, and austerity for the masses make iniquity as apparent as ever. New ICTs allow for faster, less filtered information dissemination. Contradictions can no longer be adequately concealed by mass media superstructural violence and ideological inversion of reality. Past research shows establishment US media – and this is a bit of a leap, so hopefully we do not lose anybody here – support the establishment. Traditional media in the US are highly consolidated, concentrated, and conglomerated; major media predominantly and consistently cater to elite interests with coverage, content, focus, frames, select sources and omissions.^{61 62 63} Following the ascendancy of the neoliberal paradigm from the 1970s onward, these defining features and trends have intensified. That intensification of the neoliberal project gave rise to an effectively enacted heterotopia in OWS.

Understanding OWS as a heterotopia requires understanding how heterotopias have been differentiated. Foucault distinguishes between heterotopias of crisis and those of deviation. The former refer to places "reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis"; the latter are spaces for "individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm."⁶⁴ Heterotopias of crisis are, Foucault argues, replacing those of deviation. We see OWS as necessarily embodying both. Neoliberal developments and recent Wall Street tyranny highlight world system crisis. This transitional period, accelerated by unbridled banksterism enabled by emergent ICTs and the epochal procession of monopoly-finance capitalist hegemony, offers new media of resistance. It opens doors for deviation from Orwellian conformity.

Occupy epitomizes (or occupies, as it were) this liminal (crisis) phase of qualitative consciousness elevation. The heterotopia of crisis is also one of deviance, ergo prefigurative of another world that Occupy insists is possible. Of course, OWS did not come out of nowhere, but neither is it some re-hash(tagged) envisage of erstwhile social movements. True, the socialist-anarchist sentiment is there. The idea of dissident encampment is not an OWS invention – it has strong ties to storied histories of sit-down strikes and worker occupations mentioned before. Parallels with past movements are important but so are differences. Salient differences

57 Foucault, Michel: Of other spaces. 24.

58 Harb, Zahera: Arab revolutions and the social media effect.

59 Brooten, Lisa: The power of public reporting. 239.

60 Bennett, Lance: New media power: The Internet and global activism. 26.

61 Bagdikian, Ben: The new media monopoly.

62 Hallin, Daniel: The media, the war in Vietnam, and political support.

63 Herman, Edward S., & Chomsky, Noam: Manufacturing Consent.

64 Foucault, Michel: Of other spaces. 25.

bespeak “new spaces of autonomous construction,” including, we argue, occupation of diverse online platforms constituting a “new landscape that is both physical but also conceptual”⁶⁵— points we develop below, momentarily.

Second Principle: Evolution of Media and a Movement

Foucault's second principle holds “that a society, as its history unfolds, can make an existing heterotopia function in a very different fashion.”⁶⁶ One could conceptualize even pre-existing media systems as heterotopias, given the media's representation, contestation and inversion of other real cultural sites – all criteria of heterotopia laid out by Foucault.⁶⁷ Further, ICTs and social media, generally speaking, compel the major media system to function differently. But calling these media, old and new, ipso facto heterotopias does little to enrich understanding or aid praxis. For that we must assay the evolutionary constructs in and around OWS heterotopia.

Hegemonic-Heterotopic Movement-Media Interaction

First, when reporting on OWS, orthodox media were initially “dismissive, making fun of people involved as if they were just silly kids playing games and so on,”⁶⁸ echoing the deprecatory theme of *trivialization* identified by Gitlin when discussing dominant coverage themes for protest movements.⁶⁹ Yet, mainstream media coverage of the movement has been mixed.⁷⁰ OWS created a space – or spaces – to challenge the mainstream narrative, disassembling the discursive sites that prop up utopian falsehoods. Prior to OWS there was little critical discussion about capitalism or about the pervasive cartel-like control the financial sector exerts over the global economy. The totalizing taboo of systemic critique temporarily lifted, but the power of elusive, illusory utopia persists. Ideological veils can be difficult to divest. Occupy helped make it possible to openly criticize capitalism, inequality, and (especially) the injustices perpetrated by Wall Street plutocrats almost beyond the pale of analysis before, even among many critical intellectual circles. OWS “changed the entire framework of discussion of many issues.”⁷¹ It transformed dominant media discourse, to a degree.

How and why this was done is integral to understanding OWS, and comprehending the movement as unprecedented heterotopia. Unlike social movements past Occupy paid little mind to the mainstream media because the institution remains ensconced in the system of power – a system considered fundamentally flawed by OWS demonstrators. Instead, OWS focused more on generating its own media content via new alternative platforms. As one protester put it, “We do not need the regular media to get this out at all. We are creating our own media. We use social media. We use livestream. We use YouTube.”⁷²

In the sub-section that follows we explore how that prefigurative OWS mindset articulated above constantly reconfigures the modus operandi of media and society in heterotopic praxis.

65 Sitrin, Marina, & Azzellini, Dario: *Occupying Language*. 24.

66 Foucault, Michel: *Of other spaces*. 25.

67 Foucault, Michel: *Of other spaces*. 24.

68 Chomsky, Noam: *Occupy*. 69.

69 Gitlin, Todd: *The Whole World Is Watching*.

70 Chomsky, Noam: *Occupy*. 71.

71 Chomsky, Noam: *Occupy*. 70.

72 Breslin, Kevin: #whilewewatch.

Transfiguration of New Media: The Reflective Power of OWS

The means by which the Occupy movement accomplished what it did are of immeasurable importance, as is comprehending the necessity and transformative nature of the approach. In a documentary about OWS, Democracy Now! producer Sam Alcott claimed the corporate media need “a good *mirror* because they were *missing in action*” when it came to reporting on events leading to the economic crisis. That notion of media-as-mirror ties directly into the discussion of media, social movements and heterotopia⁷³. Foucault calls the mirror “a sort of mixed, joint experience”—both utopia and “heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I *occupy* at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there.” The same could be said for media. The analogy is not new: other researchers have likened media to mirrors.^{74 75} Still, the metaphor is especially apt as regards OWS, and it is a conception that transcends more than one mode of analysis. As Lim says “power can act in unpredictable nonlinear ways in cyberspace as in other cultural sites.”⁷⁶ Downing and Brooten assert too many researchers have “fetishized the Internet” in ways that can only be described as “wildly optimistic.”⁷⁷ On the other hand, emergent media can, and inarguably do, challenge mainstream messages and galvanize social protest.^{78 79} Today's global informational capitalism does feature “wildly optimistic” fetishism, but it is an accelerated commodity fetishism rapidly flowing from hyper-fictitious capital of wanton and unwieldy financial speculation accelerated in the compressed TimeSpace of cybernetic neoliberalism.⁸⁰

The “mixed, joint experience” of the media can compel “me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror.”⁸¹ Media discourses in this mode inculcate myths of meritocracy, achievement ideologies and free market fallacies. Such structures of (mis)representation intimate that *you too* should identify with the status quo and *you too* can enjoy the benefits conferred upon the barons of industry if only you remain docile, passive and alone in your hapless pursuit of wealth and power, so goes the dystopian neoliberal logic of late-stage techno-sutured capitalism-cum-illusion.

Accelerated False Utopian Contradictions Catalyze Evolution

Today's “integrated world capitalism (IWC), structured through emerging global information systems and new media networks,”⁸² comes readymade with contradictions and all manner of possibilities for transforming functions of existing heterotopias.

Decentralized ICT infrastructure is intrinsically imbued with more democratic potential than older media, but that technology does not exist in some utopian dream world; it reifies and reproduces oppressive centre-periphery/core-periphery connexions, amoral appropriations of surplus value, dog-eat-dog worker competition in industrial digital markets, and inequitable power relations antithetical to participatory democracy. Meaning-making discourse through ICTs can come in sanitized, depoliticized, commodified forms via commercialized,

73 Breslin, Kevin: #whilewewatch.

74 Brooten, Lisa: ‘Media as our Mirror.’

75 Couldry, Nick: Beyond the hall of mirrors?.

76 Lim, Merlyna: The Internet, social networks, and reform in Indonesia.

77 Downing, John D., & Brooten, Lisa: ICTs and political movements. 538.

78 Ghannam, Jeffrey: Social media in the Arab World: Leading up to the uprisings of 2011.

79 Harb, Zahera: Arab revolutions and the social media effect.

80 Harvey, David: The conditions of postmodernity.

81 Foucault, Michel: Of other spaces. 26.

82 Peters, Michael. Breaking open the digital commons to fight corporate capitalism. Para 1.

privatized platforms (re)presenting ideologies quite clearly at odds with reality. But ICTs can come to function very differently under the right conditions.

Conditions seem ripe as movement media proliferate online. The OccupyWallSt.org web domain anonymously registered on 14 July became the “main clearinghouse for information about the movement’s progress,” attracting around 50,000 new visitors early on.⁸³ The Occupied Wall Street Journal, Occupied Chicago Tribune, DC Mic Check, Occupied Times of London, Tidal, Occupied Philly Media, and Occupied Stories are only a few of the new media projects expressly affiliated with Occupy (#OWS Info Tent, 2012). Live video streams (e.g. Global Revolution at globalrevolution.tv; and occupystreams.org), the @OccupyWallStNYC twitter account with more than 124,000 followers, and the locale-specific OWS websites – like the Occupy Wall Street site for all the occupations of New York City and the New York City General Assembly working groups website at <http://www.nycga.net> – are mainstays transforming the new media heterotopia.

But the OWS heterotopia transcends dimensional boundaries on several planes. Let us be more concrete. One would not normally associate popular social networking platforms with revolutionary fervor, but in the case of Egypt and Tunisia, social media websites like Facebook and Twitter transformed from mere social/cultural forums to become political platforms.⁸⁴ Direct democracy and horizontal decision-making in OWS take place in general assemblies on the streets and get remediated via those otherwise capital-infused social media venues. Facebook has been the top online outreach forum “for the most publicly facing occupy media outlet,” OccupyWallSt.org, with 25.28% of the total visits from August 1, 2011 to March 24, 2012 coming from the social networking site.⁸⁵ Speaking to a crowd at the US Capitol Grounds in Washington, DC – and, importantly, also addressing folks who view the free Occudoc film online in a hyper-mediated mode – comedian Lee Camp synthesized the double dialectic thusly:

And the revolution is not going to wait until after your pilates lesson, or your fucking hair appointment, tim-tummy-tucker-titty-tilt. And the revolution may not be televised, as Gil-Scott Heron told us, but it will be digitized and posted on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and everywhere where real ideas are told, alright. So the revolution apologizes for shitting all over your apathy. Now pick a side.⁸⁶

Battle lines are indeed being drawn, but it is the powerful who have thus far been the major perpetrators of violence. OWS protesters have faced “aggressive, unnecessary and excessive police force ... pervasive surveillance of peaceful activity,” mass arrests, arbitrary applications of the law, “violent late night raids on peaceful encampments,”⁸⁷ officers wielding their big batons (and definitely not compensating for anything, we are sure) with their “jabbing, hitting and swinging” at protesters, bystanders and journalists⁸⁸ – plus the tactic of repression de rigueur, pepper spray. Images of pepper sprayed victims have gone viral. The mass dissemination – or to put it more appropriately, perhaps, the widespread sharing of videos via social networking sites – permits new forms of hegemonic contestation evincing evolution of mediated OWS heterotopia.

Videos of police brutality – or “riot porn” – generated the most views and website traffic for OccupyWallStreet.org.⁸⁹ Unnecessary use of force is immoral and should be repudiated, but OWS researchers suggest the confirmation of the “riot porn hypothesis” they discovered can be used in the information economy to

83 Schneider, Nathan: #OccupyWallStreet is more than a hashtag.

84 Harb, Zahera: Arab revolutions and the social media effect.

85 OWSAnalytics: Quantitative analysis of phase one of Occupy Wall Street.

86 Trainor Jr., Dennis: American Autumn: An Occudoc

87 Protest and Assembly Rights Project: Suppressing protest: Human rights violations in the U.S. in response to Occupy Wall Street. XI.

88 Protest and Assembly Rights Project: Suppressing protest: Human rights violations in the U.S. in response to Occupy Wall Street. 75.

89 OWSAnalytics: Quantitative analysis of phase one of Occupy Wall Street.

buttress the movement. Schaudenfreude zeitgeist notwithstanding, OWS analysts aver: "OCCUPY FACEBOOK!!!" – but do it subversively.⁹⁰ The strategy comports with Occupy Media Outlets working "to build engaged audiences by siphoning traffic away from Facebook by creating fan pages designed to direct traffic towards our [OWS] media," because without further prefigurative praxis, "Clicking 'Like' Won't Change the World." Brooten says "the power of the Internet lies not in the technology itself, but in its capacity as a tool for those working to mobilize bodies into action in locally based yet globally networked places, to challenge the corporate media's representations of not only what is happening, but also what is possible."⁹¹ What would go further to make another world possible is if the "siphoning" of traffic from sites like Facebook corresponds with a siphoning of people from the "self-cannibalizing system" of "catabolic capitalism ... whose insatiable hunger for profit can only be fed by consuming the society that sustains it."⁹² Evolutionary communication technology can negate necrophilic wizardry of Wall Street finance. Corporate colonization of the mind can be undermined by hyper-mediated social movement heterotopia that, as Lievrouw suggests, can "hack" dominating superstructures of cyber-consciousness. OWS livestream portals posted on Facebook transport people into that performative lifeworld taking place in real time(-space), potentially recon(/pre)figuring systems of being better than before.⁹³ What must be continually made clear is that the next layer of ideology needs to be peeled – meaning people must come to physically (or more directly) participate in participatory democracy in order for the transient heterotopia to continually evolve.

Third Principle: Incompatible Juxtaposition in OWS

Foucault characterizes heterotopia as a "single real place" capable of juxtaposing several spaces that are in themselves incompatible.⁹⁴ He emphasizes the architectural anomalies in a heterotopia, using the example of a theatre (single real place) wherein three dimensional spaces are projected on a two dimensional screen. The Occupy Wall Street website is a space that stations several incompatible spaces within its own overarching domain. For example, OccupyWallSt.org juxtaposes text with pictures and videos, including live streams. Three dimensional motion pictures are embedded on a two dimensional canvas. Further, the website allots room for unreceptive spaces (e.g. text and images) and also for receptive spaces (e.g. chatrooms and blogs). The website has global access and appeal but it also is a space for mobilizing local and neighborhood activism. For instance, the site acts as a wider gateway through which activists from local communities in, say, Phoenix, New Haven or Charlotte, can navigate to their respective portals. Occupied ICT environments extend innate human capacities for individual creativity, communication, understanding, and collaboration. In so doing, mass mobilization against capital and its contradictions in the physical world becomes possible, flowing from elevated empathic awareness. Media and movement co-evolve in synergistic fashion thanks to new cyber-super-"structures of feeling."⁹⁵ Heterotopic mediations are thus paralleled and embodied in precepts of "unity in diversity" and consensus-based decision-making occurring in the "incompatible" but intimately shared (or live-streamed, as it were) physical space of the same Occupied heterotopia.

Fourth Principle: Disrupting Chronology

Foucault approaches heterotopias from a temporal dimension. Temporally, heterotopias open up different "slices of time," i.e. "heterochronies."⁹⁶ If utopian spaces align with a preset, teleological notion and flow of

90 OWSAnalytics: Quantitative analysis of phase one of Occupy Wall Street.

91 Brooten, Lisa: The power of public reporting. 239.

92 Collins, Craig: Cannibalistic capitalism and green resistance.

93 Lievrouw, Leah: Alternative and activist new media.

94 Foucault, Michel: Of Other Spaces. 27.

95 Williams, Raymond: Drama from Ibsen to Brecht.

96 Foucault, Michel: Of Other Spaces. 27.

time, heterotopias must break off from such temporal imagination and praxis. "Intimately related to economic inequality is the matter of time," concerning "democracy as well as liberty," with the former becoming "meaningless if people do not have time to participate" – an axiom obvious "from Aristotle on," as Alperovitz avers.⁹⁷

If capitalism structures time according to the imperatives of valorization and subjugates people's work/life schedule/mode to the capital accumulation process, heterotopias, in their oppositional struggles, have to bring about different concepts of time.

Foucault provides two ruptures of time consciousness that are at variance with convention. One disturbs traditional chronology by extending time eternally. In this form of heterochronies, different time pieces are juxtaposed together in the *same* space. In OWS previous movements are not vertically chronologized but juxtaposed together. The 1968 student rebellion, the 1999 WTO protests, and the 2011 Tunisia and Egypt uprisings are re-enacted through this movement.⁹⁸ Despite their temporal differences, all these movements point to the theme of righting economic wrong and justifying justice. Thus, an anachronic sense of time is brought about in and by OWS. This new temporal consciousness conceives time not in a way of linear development. Instead, by invoking past experiences, the line between past and now is blurred and the two enjoy a simultaneous *present* moment within a particular TimeSpace. More importantly, when framed and imprinted in people's mind, such temporal consciousness can also extend to the future and elicit a "prefigurative politics."⁹⁹ By resuscitating the past and anticipating the future, the heterotopic OWS crystallizes and eternalizes a temporal consciousness that disrupts current notions of normal capitalist development.

The other form of heterochronies intervenes in the preset course of time flow by accelerating time to the point of transience. In OWS flashmob meditations, hour-long marches, and plaza talks amplified by the People's Mic, the spontaneity of collective action is rediscovered and restored. In lieu of planned strategic acts to achieve particular interest, the short gatherings in various OWS locales or through online clicks take place in unscripted manner in response to a congealed neoliberal reality. It is in the very transitoriness that OWS avoids the caveat of being assimilated into the structure of current chronological/social order. The very idleness of sitting, dancing, or singing on the plaza also demonstrates contempt for a time structure attuned to work day routine entrenched in capitalist society. In this sense, the authentically unpremeditated time-consciousness of OWS revolts against an institutionalized order of time.

Foucault also points out that these two dimensions of time consciousness function constitutively of each other and of a particular heterotopia. Indeed, The OWS movement exemplifies the two forms of heterochronies simultaneously. In its festival, transitory, and fleeting gatherings, the various performances in the OWS heterotopic spaces point to a perennial project of practicing and embodying justice.

Fifth Principle: Boundless Boundaries of OWS

Heterotopias have a fluid boundary in relation to people in or out of the heterotopic spaces. The liminality of boundary is illustrated *a limine* by the physical presence of this movement at Zuccotti park, "a privately owned public space."¹⁰⁰ The occupied heterotopic space is both/neither private property and/nor public space. If it were strictly public or private, New York City could have justified an early eviction of the protesters very conveniently on established legal grounds. Due to the ambiguity of such a space, New York City failed to establish grounds to crush OWS initiatives at first and thus provided opportunity for the movement's developmental metamorphosis.

97 Alperovitz, Gar: America beyond capitalism: Reclaiming our wealth, our liberty, & our democracy. 52.

98 Dean, Jodi: Claiming division, naming a wrong.

99 Downing, John: Radical media: Rebellious communication and social movements.

100 Schrader, Stuart, & Wachsmuth, David: Reflections on Occupy Wall Street, the state and space. 245.

Apart from such indeterminate status of the heterotopic space, OWS also (de)establishes an ambiguous membership boundary. Foucault considers that heterotopias grant or deny access only to certain people by imposing visible or invisible limits. Actors can gain access to a heterotopic space by actively tailoring themselves to the heterotopic vision. So, in the viral slogan "We are the 99%," the outrageously rich 1% is excluded from this heterotopic space while the rest are called upon to join the movement. As a calling to the 99%, OWS opens access to, or even urges, the expropriated and those who seek justice to be engaged in the construction of such a space. Yet, on the other hand, not every one of the 99% is *already* in the space. To be included in the heterotopia, an agent needs to actively endorse the project and contribute to it. In the Tumblr collection of images, participants identify themselves with OWS by providing their own versions of expropriation, such as college debt, unemployment, or home foreclosure.¹⁰¹

The multilocality of OWS makes it more inclusive than many movements past. In OWS, the physical sites extend beyond Zuccotti park in cities and towns both in the US and across the world – Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Paris, London, to name a few. And it is the Internet that further opens up new locations and expands the heterotopic space by offering access to everyone identified with its vision – if they are among the roughly 30% of world citizens within the realm of global net penetration.

Yet, Foucault also notes that access to a heterotopic place sometimes can mean exclusion of this very space, as "we think we enter where we are, by the very fact that we enter, excluded."¹⁰² Here lies the heterotopian paradox. As a counter-vision to the neoliberal reality, heterotopic spaces render the opposition and struggles *contained* in this space while exerting little impact on the daily operations of a world order the activists try to break off.¹⁰³ In this sense, entering a heterotopia ensures the stability of current neoliberal order, i.e. exclusion of its own revolutionary ideal.

This paradox also prompts us to reconsider the boundary of OWS in relation to the neoliberal reality. Saldanha faults that heterotopia cannot capture the complexity of space and its relation to a totalized version of society. Sharp et al deny the possibility of "divid[ing] space unproblematically into spaces of domination and spaces of transgression."¹⁰⁴ In this sense, we ask: how can we distinguish the OWS heterotopia and neoliberal realities if they are so enmeshed? One way out of such a dilemma is to consider heterotopias in terms of an idea. Heterotopia is such *an idea of space*, instead of space *per se*, as "transient, contestory, plagued by lapses and ruptured sites."¹⁰⁵ ¹⁰⁶ Thus, heterotopias lie not in Zuccotti or any Occupy locales, online or physical. Their lifeblood flows from the practiced ideas of agents. It is in this sense that the self-identified boundary best illustrates the relation of insider-outsider since it is morphing along with the constitution of the movement heterotopia.

Sixth Principle: Polarization of Wealth and the Unfolding Possibility of Another World

The function of a heterotopia "unfolds between two extreme poles." Heterotopias operate to create space that expose "illusory" spaces, on one hand, and create alternative and "absolutely perfect other places on the other"¹⁰⁷ The Internet, by its structural and spatial nature, is a "fantasy domain which describes the way how we should live."¹⁰⁸ OWS media-in-the-making illustrate these twofold contrasting roles.

101 Dean, Jodi: Claiming division, naming a wrong.

102 Foucault, Michel: Of Other Spaces. 27

103 Saldanha, Arun: Heterotopia and Structuralism.

104 Saldanha, Arun: Heterotopia and Structuralism.2085

105 Genocchio, Benjamin: Discourse, discontinuity, difference: The question of other spaces

106 Saldanha, Arun: Heterotopia and Structuralism.2089

107 Foucault, Michel: Of Other Spaces. 27.

108 Davies, Julia: Escaping to the borderlands. 65.

To wit, a post appearing on the OWS main hub titled "Another World is Possible" contains an image of a pencil sketch embedded in it.¹⁰⁹ The sketch depicts a transformed New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) and Wall Street. The pillars of the NYSE, instead of the American flag, are draped in a cloth banner which says "Free Market. Open Daily. All Seasons." The digitized panorama deploys the art of *détournement* generally, and specifically, to subvert the old order ideology and remediate a possible alternative – a counter-vision, shared in the OWS superstructural "counter-site". The inherently contradictory "Free Market" trope is represented as pun to problematize the mythical Wall Street Weltanschauung that, pre-OWS, performed hi-tech chicanery, ensuring the wealth of the 1% while leaving the 99% "free" to fight for the trickle down.

In the street, in front of the NYSE building, there are two lush and muscular trees – fully green. On one side of the street, "organic" farmer's market is busy with buyer dressed casually, without the dark suits or ties. On the other side, a garden with a blizzard of bright, yellow and cheerful sunflowers. The "another world" depicted in the sketch is romantic, dreamy, idyllic, and "absolutely perfect". Further, the text in the blog post reads: "the 1% can never win; they are (by their own design) hopelessly outnumbered. Another world is not only possible. It is unstoppable."

Conclusion

Foucault invokes the metaphor of the ship to describe heterotopia as "a floating piece of space, a place without a place that exists by itself that is closed on in itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea." Indeed, "the ship is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilizations without ships, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates."¹¹⁰ The ship metaphor, then, rightly applies to a social movement like OWS attempting to prefigure another world through constant struggle, participation and evolution sailing toward emancipation. Movements are transitional forms of transportation, taking people to arguably over-determined, but never pre-determined, destinations of more transitions. ICTs and new media today parallel the decentralized, non-hierarchical form and dynamic democratic process enacted in OWS. Emergent media technologies perform ship-like functions like never before in times of crisis and ever-accelerating TimeSpace, transporting people to other spaces where they can communicate and connect with others. In salient instances cited above, OWS occupied the media dimension of heterotopia in ways that (potentially) alter the processes of collective superstructural consciousness, providing motor force for the movement. Perhaps this paper has also contributed to that effort in some small, similar way, using heterotopology to describe new connexions and point to present prefigurative processes and possible future configurations. We believe looking at OWS as heterotopia clarifies areas for setbacks, consequences, repercussions and reactionary repression from concentrations of power that would prefer people remain passive, obedient and pre-Occupied with free market illusions. If neoliberalism has permeated all spheres of social life, pervading collective consciousness, then OWS should be seen as awakening an alternative way of thinking about things. The networked heterotopia wherein OWS discourses perform "counterpower"¹¹¹ should, as we suggest, be viewed as fertile ground for igniting innate alternative praxis suppressed by normative neoliberal conceptions. Foucault argued elsewhere that emancipatory struggles of movements are more or less about fluctuating assertions of power.¹¹² Contrary to the Foucaultian view, those capacities stem from impermanent yet relatively fixed intrinsic faculties of human nature,^{113 114 115} as does the impetus to Occupy the heterotopia so as to prefigure another

109 OccupyWallSt.org: Another world is possible!

110 Foucault, Michel: *Of Other Spaces*. 27.

111 Castells, Manuel: *A network theory of power*.

112 Chomsky, Noam, & Foucault, Michel: *The Chomsky-Foucault debate on human nature*.

113 Chomsky, Noam, & Foucault, Michel: *The Chomsky-Foucault debate on human nature*.

114 Chomsky, Noam, & McGilvray: *The science of language: Interviews with James McGilvray*.

115 Chomsky, Noam: *Language and politics*.

(more just) world that OWS in concert with our analysis of it as heterotopia suggests is possible, although not in any way pre-destined. Here we hope to have laid early theoretical foundation for elevating consciousness, deepening and extending the OWS heterotopia to new scholarly spheres – online, offline and in the mind. Our labor and the essence of the OWS heterotopia cannot be evaluated by the same standards used to assess movements, media and scholarship that sailed in a different era. The significance of the Occupy heterotopia, its media and maiden voyage will probably only be apparent if the ship successfully transverses treacherous neoliberal waters to make it to a place – a new world – characterized by alternative modes of being and perceiving.

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D.E. Wittkower:

The Vital Non-Action of Occupation, Offline and Online

Abstract:

Using an Arendtian framework, I argue that we can understand distinctive and effective elements of the #OWS movements as forms of non-action related to prior strategies of non-violence, the propaganda of the deed, and coalitions of affinity rather than identity. This understanding allows us to see that, while the use of social media in the movement does not provide the same affordances for building and maintaining power as physical occupation, and while online community clearly cannot substitute for physical community in many relevant and consequential ways, Facebook does nonetheless provide a platform well suited to maintaining power through these distinctive forms of non-action.

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 - „Friend is a Verb,“ APA Newsletter on Philosophy and Computers, forthcoming Fall 2012.

The Occupy movement is subject to frequent criticism regarding its forms of non-action, both from those who support the movement and from more hostile critics. These forms of non-action are signature characteristics of the movement: 1. Occupation of and encampment in public spaces; 2. Seemingly non-political activities such as drum circles, yoga, and meditation; 3. Relative disinterest in electoral politics; and 4. The refusal to have a defined agenda, platform, or list of demands or desired outcomes. The use of social media and the dismantling of encampments seems to have moved the movement even further from action into non-action and trivial practices of "raising awareness" about an unfocused array of concerns. Using Hannah Arendt's understanding of power, I argue that these elements of #OWS are a productive absence, and represent a novel and effective structure of forming and maintaining political power online and offline.

Power and Violence

In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt defines power as "what keeps the public realm, the potential space of appearance between acting and speaking men, in existence," and comments that it is always "a power potential and not an unchangeable, measurable, and reliable entity like force or strength."¹ This allows her to give an account of non-violent action through passive resistance that articulates the inverse relation between force and power:

*"Popular revolt against materially strong rulers ... may engender an almost irresistible power even if it foregoes the use of violence in the face of materially vastly superior forces. To call this "passive resistance" is certainly an ironic idea; it is one of the most active and efficient ways of action ever devised, because it cannot be countered by fighting, where there may be defeat or victory, but only by mass slaughter in which even the victor is defeated, cheated of his prize, since nobody can rule over dead men."*²

In the contemporary American context, thankfully, protesters do not face mass slaughter, but the same analysis applies, although not because the population in question is dead after the application of violence. Since the beginning of the occupy movement, protesters have seen abusive but non-lethal applications of state violence, including the use of rubber bullets, pepper spray, and simple excessive use of force in arrests. These unexpected eruptions of violence demonstrate the power of the #OWS movement through the vehemence of state reaction against it, and this demonstration is all the more effective through occupiers' general refusal to descend to fighting, where the state may become victorious. Here, rule is undermined through the fact of unilateral violence. As Arendt says in *On Violence*, "Violence appears where power is in jeopardy, but left to its own course it ends in power's disappearance. This implies that it is not correct to think of the opposite of violence as nonviolence; to speak of non-violent power is actually redundant."³

Non-violent passive resistance, of course, began long before #OWS, and these dynamics of power and violence are not new. What is new and distinctive in the occupation movement is that non-violence has been extended into *non-action*. To be sure, occupations march, shout slogans in the street, pamphlet, engage in civil disobedience, and so forth—but occupations also *occupy*, which we might define incompletely as the public demonstration of the existence of a public, and an assertion of rights of assembly and speech. The refusal to have a singular and exclusive platform, list of demands, or vertical hierarchy allows the non-action of occupation to demonstrate that state violence against protesters is not an action taken against a particular element in society or a particular political agenda, but rather the allergy of the state to the power of the people as such. By refusing to have any particular, clear, unifying claim or outcome, occupation is able to make its distinctive case all the more forcefully: that the idea of power to the people, outside of the structures of monied interests, is itself a threat to contemporary American pseudo-democracy. By eliciting violence through the performance of the minimal prerequisites of democratic society, in the absence of any other essential content, occupation

1 Arendt, Hannah: *The Human Condition*. 200.

2 Arendt, Hannah: *The Human Condition*. 200–201.

3 Arendt, Hannah: *On Violence*. 56.

demonstrates that, to adapt Irigaray, ours is a democracy which is not one; defined in terms foreign to its own nature, in which the people are "only a more or less obliging prop."⁴

Power and the City

Hannah Arendt also claims that

"The only indispensable material factor in the generation of power is the living together of people. Only where we live so close together that the potentialities of action are always present can power remain with them. ...What keeps people together after the fleeting moment of action has passed (what we today call "organization") and what, at the same time, they keep alive through remaining together is power."⁵

In the fracturing of society under late capitalism, the potentialities of action have become increasingly abstract. In American culture, New York City is emblematic of this fracturing, which takes place along lines of class, race, sexuality, and language—emblematic because of the great diversity of the city, the perceived "coldness" and disconnection of its residents, and the great but absent possibility of solidarity and power in such a huge concentration of human lives lived in proximity to one another. The Zuccotti Park occupation, a performance of the political meaning of cities through voluntary and cooperative cohabitation, gained symbolic force through its presence in this city, and in particular through its location in the coldest and most inhumanly bureaucratic part of New York: the financial district; Wall Street. Where the actions taken are not explicitly political in nature—as in the processes of cohabitation; providing food, shelter, and medical care; or singing, drum circles, yoga, and meditation—they are political by implication, for they create and bring vitality to the community which lies dormant, and whose power lies sleeping.

Occupation encampments are pop-up cities that demonstrate in microcosmic actuality the power that lies dormant and all-but-forgotten within the permanent macrocosmic cities that are their hosts. The danger represented by occupations takes place through the mere demonstration of potential power, where power is itself a mere potential for action. Political action in occupation is two orders removed; doubly potential: occupation as a form of cohabitation that makes action possible creates power in the absence of action, the implicit and explicit claim of which is that such power, such potential for action, is potentially there in the host cities as well. Were the host cities able to organize into a people holding power, broad and transformative social action would be possible, and the mere possibility of this kind of action is sufficiently dangerous to motivate severe and violent raids and crackdowns, massively disproportionate to and placed in sharp contrast by the inactivity of occupation. Occupations provide a proof of concept of solidarity under American late capitalism; this is their intent, and power structures that range against social solidarity have taken pre-emptive action in a way and to a degree that reflects an at least unconscious awareness of this intent. The efficacy of the non-action of occupation is that solidarity can be expressed in the absence of action and message; what can be expressed in silence cannot itself be silenced—or, as those in the movement have phrased it, "You cannot arrest an idea."

Mikhail Bakunin wrote that "[a]ll of us must now embark on stormy revolutionary seas, and from this very moment we must spread our principles, not with words *but with deeds, for this is the most popular, the most potent, and the most irresistible form of propaganda.*"⁶ This call for a propaganda of the deed has been taken up in a number of forms, certainly not all of them violent, but the most shocking and infamous form of adoption of the idea was in the wave of murders and assassinations committed by anarchists from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. The intent of these attacks was to lay bare that the powerlessness of those subject to the rule of royals and government did not flow from anything other than the failure to say "no." Where anarchists once took to shooting people wielding force in order to show that they are still subject to the power of people, occupation as a propaganda of the non-deed takes place at a level more fundamental: not by showing

4 Irigaray, Luce: *This Sex Which is Not One*. 25.

5 Arendt, Hannah: *The Human Condition*. 201.

6 Bakunin, Mikhail: *Bakunin on Anarchism*. 195–6.

that we can rise against our masters, but by showing that direct action is possible; that the people as such can still have politics.

The Virtualized Occupation

These dynamics are in an interesting tension with the occupation movement's use of ICTs. Various occupations have used ICTs in different ways, but Facebook seems often to play a prominent role, especially in those occupations whose encampments have been destroyed. Facebook becomes a virtual space where occupation may continue in a different form—where occupiers, even at a distance, can continue to “live together” in a sense relevant to Arendt's—but it is far from clear that many and the most important political potentials and meanings are preserved as occupation shifts online. Can we have a city of bits (Mitchell 1995) that preserves Arendt's understanding of the political meaning of the city, or is our online cohabitation irredeemably refracted and diffused?

In discussions of friendship online, several scholars (e.g. Condella 2010, McFall 2012), have taken the position that social media may be able to maintain friendships but are insufficient to support online-only genuine friendships. Perhaps the case may be similar here: that social media cannot serve as a location from which power may arise, but can serve as a location where power can be maintained; that online cohabitation can serve the internal but not the external functions of occupation.

It is certainly and obviously the case that a “virtualized” occupation—one whose encampment has been destroyed and which binds occupiers' lives together primarily through online rather than offline interaction and sharing—is no longer subject to crackdowns and raids in the same way as a physical occupation.⁷ This, along with a lack of presence in public locations, means that the occupation is no longer as apparent in the media or in the accidental everyday encounters of city life. With this, many of the external functions of occupation disappear: the virtual occupation does not draw out the public violence of the state through public non-action, and does not present a propaganda of the non-deed through its presence. The pull-orientation of online information, compared to the push of information through physical proximity, results in an opt-in default for awareness.

But while these external functions are not well served in a virtual occupation, internal functions do seem to be served. Through consistent information-sharing of both political and quotidian information, a feeling of lived presence of others may be maintained, opening up possibilities of action. The friend feed can serve as a space where occupiers can find themselves among a community of others who assert the need for intervention and the efficacy of direct action.

In virtualization, occupations have in a sense gone underground: it is not that occupations are “hiding” online, but that the power of occupiers in community with one another now enters public view only at the moment when that power is transformed into action, and at those moments of action occupiers do not appear in the non-action that characterizes and identifies the movement. Where virtual occupations organize to support strikes, the action appears as an action of labor, not of the occupation movement. Virtual occupations often take up issues of housing—homelessness and foreclosures—but these actions do not appear to the public or to the media as occupations. In an example local to me, when virtual occupations, including Occupy Virginia, Occupy Norfolk, Occupy Richmond, Occupy Virginia Beach, and Occupy Charlottesville, organized to protest the state's mandatory ultrasound anti-choice bill,⁸ this was reported as an action taken by feminists and pro-choice

⁷ I take care to emphasize “in the same way” in this claim. As Seda Gürses rightly pointed out to me (personal communication, Sept. 19, 2012), we do not know to what extent virtualized occupations and occupiers in virtual spaces have been subject to electronic and informational analogues of crackdowns and raids. This lack of public knowledge, of course, is what leads to the failure of virtual analogues to have the same political meaning and impact as physical raids on physical occupations, but electronic and virtual state actions against occupiers may certainly be significant and troubling, and the issue is an important one, calling for future investigation.

⁸ Virginia House Bill no. 462 required women seeking an abortion to undergo a medically-unnecessary ultrasound imaging of the fetus, and imposed a 24-hour waiting period following the imaging, with the exceptions of women living at least 100 miles from the facility where the procedure is to be performed. Given that the ultrasound imaging serves no medical purpose, and given that the legislation

activists. The virtualized networks of power of the occupations continue to open possibilities for direct action, but as the inactive power has been virtualized, the occupation itself seems to have disappeared. In reality, though, it is only that their power, when it is realized in action, appears under other flags.

In what, then, does this virtualized non-action consist, such that it is able to maintain the power of occupiers even in the absence of physical occupation? Certainly it includes sharing political images and arguments, and engaging in discussion and debate, but it also includes sharing recipes, discussing family and personal issues, sharing pictures, and generally living lives more or less open to one another. As I have argued elsewhere (Wittkower 2012) social media postings and interactions are not merely informational in nature, but interpersonal and relational as well, and the posting of material can constitute asynchronous shared experiences at a distance.

These forms of sharing, perhaps particularly those which do not themselves have political content, recreate in at least a shadow or placeholder form the experience of cohabitation that binds people together in bonds of understanding and social trust. As made clear in Putnam's *Bowling Alone* among other places, simple activities taken together produce social frameworks for and psychological dispositions to principles action, and studies (e.g. Boase et al. 2006, Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide and Georgetown University's Center for Social Impact Communication 2011) have found that online connection can support the same bonds of trust and support for action. The seeming triviality of practices of Facebook sharing, in this way, is not to the detriment of the power of virtual communities of occupiers, but instead supports power by providing an experience of community that includes elements of life falling outside of organizing for action. It is this non-action, togetherness in these times between events, that allows power to persist rather than to be dissipated when an action is completed.

Another obvious threat of dissipation of power is presented by the multiplicity of political concerns and causes of action espoused and promoted in politics as conducted on Facebook. How, we might ask, is a group to be effective when its members wish to mobilize variously in favor of tax reform; against inequality; in favor of environmental concerns; against corporate welfare; in favor of urban homesteading; against war, in favor of debt forgiveness; against Citizens United; in favor of universal healthcare; against GMOs; in favor of direct democracy; against racism; in favor of women's, gay, and minority rights; and so forth? This concern is further compounded by the prevalence of views considered by the majority of Americans to be conspiracy theories, such as the claim that "9/11 was an inside job" perpetrated by or along with the United States government or its elected officials, and by anti-Zionist views which border on anti-Semitism and sometimes explicitly reference conspiratorial views of international banking conspiracies which have previously served as racist canards.

While extreme views and divisive conspiracy theories do present serious threats to maintaining power in the movement, for the most part the diversity of causes and concerns have aided in maintaining power through one of the same dynamics of non-action discussed above: by refusing to allow the movement to be "about" a single thing, power is not channelled into any particular action, outcome, or concern, allowing the core "empty" position of occupation—power to the people—to be maintained and upheld all the more strongly through this diversity of concerns. The dynamic is one discussed by Haraway in her "Cyborg Manifesto." She notes how in the American civil rights movement, the experiences of black women tended to be excluded as a distraction from issues of race, while at the same time black women's experiences tended to be excluded from the feminist movement as a similar distraction from women's issues, leaving black women in a neither-nor position. Haraway contrasts this with the political language of "women of color": an affinity identification which does not require women of color to have similar backgrounds, physical characteristics, or experiences in order to be part of the same group of common support and action. The kaleidoscopic array of causes propounded by virtual occupations supports maintenance of power through an inclusive affinity structure: by refusing to sideline concerns

seems to have been based on model legislation produced by a model bill written by Americans United for Life, an anti-abortion law and policy organization, the bill was widely regarded as a paternalistic attempt to discourage women from exercising their right to obtain an abortion. Of particular concern was the fact that, since most women seeking an abortion are early enough in pregnancy to require the ultrasound to be performed transvaginally, the bill required an unwanted, medically-unnecessary, invasive, and potentially-painful procedure that was compared to „state-required rape“ by its opponents. In response to the protests, the bill was rewritten to allow women to opt-out of transvaginal ultrasound in favor of an external, transabdominal ultrasound, and was signed into law in this form.

as “distractions from action,” nobody’s experiences are excluded and the movement is able to retain its openness and identity as a cause of common causes rather than a cause exclusive of other causes.

Through this Arendtian analysis of power, we see that the occupation movement has used various forms of non-action—ranging from the refusal to have an agenda to the seemingly non-political actions of living in community with others—in order to maintain power rather than to allow it suffer dissipation between moments of direct action. This analysis allows us to see what is lost through the virtualization, but also to see how the affordances of Facebook are able to support power in the movement through forms of online non-action in community. While we are right to question claims about the inherent pro-democratic and revolutionary nature of social media, and to take care not to overemphasize the role that Facebook has played in the occupation movement, we can see that Facebook is remarkably well-suited to maintaining inactive power of the kind distinctive of occupation.

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Peter Karl Fleissner:

Opportunities of Change: An Economist's Perspective

Abstract:

As contemporary scientific images of the economy by mainstream economists neglect historical changes, a method is needed to deal with the opportunities and possibilities of qualitative change, in particular in a period of evident crises. This paper sketches a methodology of reflecting the economy as an evolutionary/revolutionary process. There are two main reasons for that: The first is that scholars should think of reality in a more appropriate way, taking the fact into account that qualitative changes of the type of the economic reproduction process happened in the past and there is no reason that they will not also happen in future, the second, that new political movements demand a better life for all, not only for one per cent of the people.

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Introduction

The textbooks of the Anglo-Saxon world present the economy as interplay of utility- or profit-maximizing individuals. Usually they neglect its social and historical character. But seen with Marx's eyes the economy is basically an exercise in mutuality. People are producing for other people and getting something back in exchange. This relationship is described with the concept of value in its twofold form, as use value and exchange value. Competition between private producers in the market is a precondition to establish exchange value. It is the concept of "commodity" where both aspects of value are integrated. The market price we observe is a (sometimes modified) expression of the exchange value of a commodity in money terms. Money represents a general equivalent of social necessary labour (although in a different dimension, in monetary units instead of labour time). From here price - as we observe it empirically - can be interpreted as expression of the basic reciprocity between human beings, based on mutuality, of a fundamental interdependence of people although anonymously connected via markets where they sell and buy their products of work. As we will see later any long-term exclusion of people or any massive interruption of reciprocity drives the economy into crisis. Economic sustainability - implying the decent survival for all - is no longer granted.

Marx proposed to start the reconstruction of the economy on the level of essence, on a rather abstract level. Otherwise, we could not see the basic relationships within people. Marx kept up Adam Smith's idea that there is a basic relation of wealth to human labour. This reference keeps the link between the economy and the work of human beings, which is cut in mainstream economics.

The final goal of this investigation should be an enriched model of contemporary capitalism where the various steps of development can still be seen, but are no longer the dominant ones. The new layers influence the former ones and shed light of specific colour on them.

To illustrate this idea one can take Marx himself by example. In Volume 1 of "Das Kapital" he analysed in detail the various forms of value and established the methodological basis of the production process of capital with the commodity as its basic element. In the first 150 pages he introduced the measure of value by social necessary labour needed for the production of a commodity, which in fact would mean an economy of competitive small commodity producers working with their own means of production and without wage labour. He assumed competitive commodity markets, but no capitalist production. Later on he introduced the notion of fixed and variable capital, but we have to wait for Volume 2 where we find Engels selection of Marx's notes on the so-called transformation problem, which describes the modification of values under the influence of capitalist competition. Marx was first in discovering this modification process, of which Adam Smith was not yet aware. As idealized result of the transformation labour values are rescaled into prices of production. Their quantitative result is the sum of cost price expanded by the rate of profit, while the rates of profit in each sector of the economy are equalized and are also equal to the average rate. So we see on the methodological level that Marx was aware of the influence of capitalist competition - a new feature added to the former description - has on the quantitative expression of value.

More recent investigations¹ based on stochastic processes and random variables show theoretically and empirically that the rates of profit in an economy do not converge towards the average rate as Marx has thought, but keep up to be different according to a power distribution.

Nevertheless, Marx's prices of production represent idealized equilibrium prices under capitalist competition, which might be used to compare them with actual prices.

1 Farjoun, Emmanuel and Moshé Machover: Laws of Chaos: a probabilistic approach to political economy.

Year	Labour Values (classic)	Labour Values (material)	Prod Prices (Marx)	ProdPrices Bortkiewicz without FixKap	ProdPrices Bortkiewicz with FixKap
2006	0.819	0.710	0.832	0.941	0.862
2003	0.883	0.802	0.901	0.952	-

Table 1: Correlations between observed prices, labour values and prices of production for Austria 2003 and 2006²

What can we learn from this example? By adding capitalist competition to an economy of small commodity-producers changes of the former prices are induced. Table 1 shows the results of the correlations between actual prices and ideal prices in the Austrian economy with 57 branches of production computed by various methods for the years 2003 and 2006. One can see that production prices show a slightly higher correlation with observed data than labour values.

In physics we have a nice example to illustrate this approach. Galileo Galilei has shown that gravitation accelerates all objects at the same rate, but if we test this proposition empirically, we find that a feather and a metal sphere will fall down with different speed. To explain the real movements of the feather we have to add further laws, like aerodynamics or theories of friction etc. We use a similar methodological framework and apply it to an existing economy.

It is seductive to repeat the evolutionary stages of development of the object in history by the steps of the research process. But this is not always possible. Historical developments interfere with changes of the logical structure of the object. In a book review on Marx's "Critique of Political Economy" in 1859 Engels interpreted Marx's analysis of capitalistic development as a logical analysis, which is "in fact nothing else as the historic development, without historic forms and disturbing contingencies." It is "a corrected mirror image, but corrected by laws, which are provided by history itself."³ Contemporary scholars prefer to speak of a logic-systematic approach instead of an image of historical development. We will follow this interpretation.

2 The differences in the computation of labour values stem from different assumptions about the role of services, in the first case as value producing, in the second without adding to the surplus product.

3 „Die Kritik der Ökonomie, selbst nach gewonnener Methode, konnte noch auf zweierlei Weise angelegt werden: historisch oder logisch. Da in der Geschichte, wie in ihrer literarischen Abspiegelung, die Entwicklung im ganzen und großen auch von den einfachsten zu den komplizierteren Verhältnissen fortgeht, so gab die literargeschichtliche Entwicklung der politischen Ökonomie einen natürlichen Leitfadern, an den die Kritik anknüpfen konnte, und im ganzen und großen würden die ökonomischen Kategorien dabei in derselben Reihenfolge erscheinen wie in der logischen Entwicklung. Diese Form hat scheinbar den Vorzug größerer Klarheit, da ja die wirkliche Entwicklung verfolgt wird, in der Tat aber würde sie dadurch höchstens populärer werden. Die Geschichte geht oft sprungweise und im Zickzack und müßte hierbei überall verfolgt werden, wodurch nicht nur viel Material von geringer Wichtigkeit aufgenommen, sondern auch der Gedankengang oft unterbrochen werden müßte; zudem ließe sich die Geschichte der Ökonomie nicht schreiben ohne die der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, und damit würde die Arbeit unendlich, da alle Vorarbeiten fehlen. Die logische Behandlungsweise war also allein am Platz. Diese aber ist in der Tat nichts anderes als die historische, nur entkleidet der historischen Form und der störenden Zufälligkeiten. Womit diese Geschichte anfängt, damit muß der Gedankengang ebenfalls anfangen, und sein weiterer Fortgang wird nichts sein als das Spiegelbild, in abstrakter und theoretisch konsequenter Form, des historischen Verlaufs; ein korrigiertes Spiegelbild, aber korrigiert nach Gesetzen, die der wirkliche geschichtliche Verlauf selbst an die Hand gibt, indem jedes Moment auf dem Entwicklungspunkt seiner vollen Reife, seiner Klassizität betrachtet werden kann.“ Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels: Zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie [Rezension]. 468-477, 474/475.

How to reconstruct the economy

To keep pace with the changes in economic history in the last century we cannot stop at Marx' enlightening insights he wrote down in Das Kapital. We have to include additional features to make his description of the economy more realistic. For good reasons I follow Marx' method starting from very abstract layers and continue by including more recent developments inducing qualitative changes in the economy. Figure 1 illustrates the idea of a multi-level construction of the economy. It should be read from the bottom (most abstract) to the top (least abstract).

Use values

Layer 1 (see lower left corner of fig. 1) represents the material/energy basis of any economy in history. This basis is even necessary for any life on earth, plants or animal communities. The physical/energetic aspects of goods are important – given the chronic shortage of certain materials nowadays, peak oil, non-renewable resources, solid, liquid, gaseous or radioactive waste etc.

On the level of use-values we abstract from markets, from labour, from prices, from wages, from capital, from money, from power relations, from governance etc. We abstract from anything, social development and the interaction of people have added over history. On the other hand we see that layer 1 cannot represent any real economy in history, because any specific historic production was always connected with specific relations of production. Therefore, level 1 just shows the logical-systematic structure of the economic system.

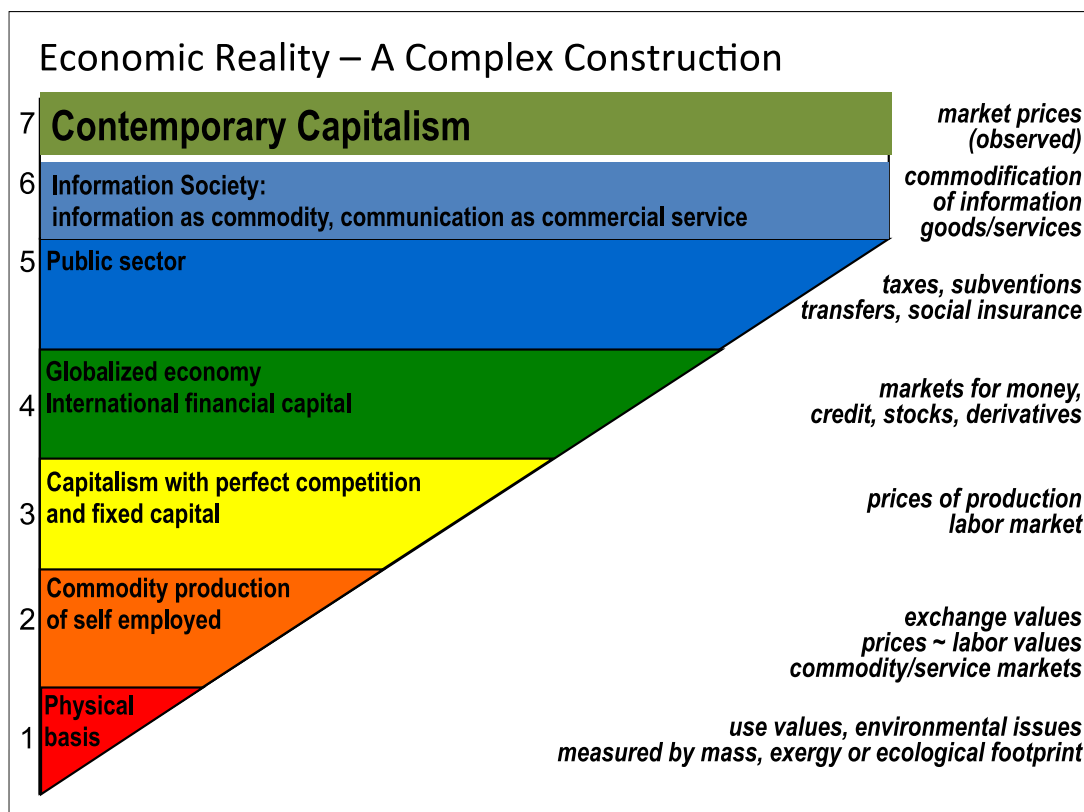


Figure 1: The reconstruction of the economy

Commodity Production

What classical economists like Karl Marx in *Das Kapital*, volume one, and Adam Smith have added to goods is their origin (fig. 1, layer 2). Commodities are born out of work. The prices of goods are assumed to be proportional to socially necessary labour expended (exchange values). We interpret the first part of *Das Kapital*, volume 1, as a description of an economy where markets are established as a consequence of the division of labour. Competition is there and makes the individual contributions of work to the economy comparable to the social average.

Of course, the first layer is a necessary precondition for the second one. Without use-values no reproduction of human beings is possible. Layer 2 shows that without labour no use-value can be brought into existence.

Besides the static representation of the economy in figure 1 there is another way of graphical description based on feedback loops. From this perspective one can understand the dynamics of the second layer as the reproduction of the life of working people (see fig. 2). By selling their products on the market they get money back and are able to buy consumer goods for their own reproduction.

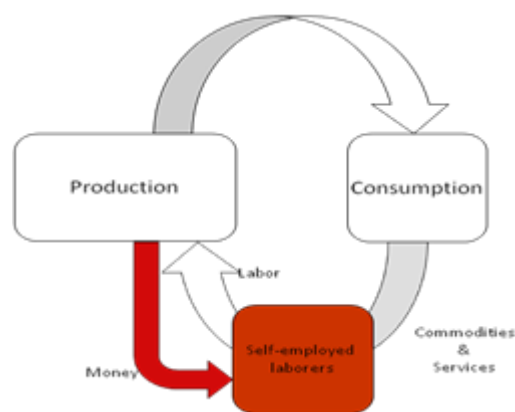


Figure 2: Feedback representation of physical reproduction

Competitive Capitalism

The third layer in figure 1 brings capitalists into the picture. A second feedback-loop is created (see figure 3). Part of the wealth created by workers is now directed to capitalists. The (former) self-employed producers become now workers and earn wages or salaries. They have access to income only by way of the labour market, which brought a qualitative change compared to layer 2.

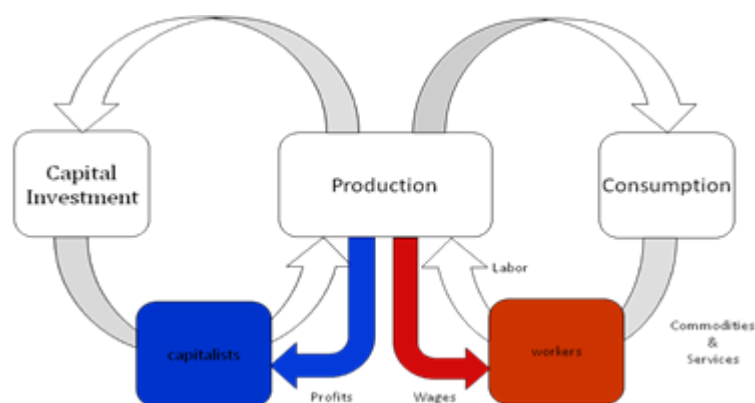


Figure 3: Two feedback loops: Capitalists and Workers

The second feedback-loop (left side) in figure 3 is qualitatively different from the first one. While consumption of workers depends mainly on the levels technology and distribution of wealth have reached, capitalists are in a position to increase their capital by accumulation. Marxists call the groups represented here classes. They speak of exploitation of the workers by capitalists, because capitalists as owners of the means of production pay workers and employees a wage, which is less than the value of the products workers create.

Finance Capitalism

In the beginning of the 20th century capitalist development reached a new level which was not foreseen by Marx and Engels. The basis for this change was the second revolution of the productive forces, "the electro-technical revolution", as the German historian Jürgen Kuczynski has called it.⁴ Large scale investment in a new kind of technology led to higher concentration (growth of individual capital) and centralisation (various individual capitals become united) of capital. The Vienna born economist Rudolf Hilferding called this kind of capital "Finance Capital" (Finanzkapital). Hilferding wrote 1910:

"The dependence of industry on the banks is therefore a consequence of property relationships. An ever-increasing part of the capital of industry does not belong to the industrialists who use it. They are able to dispose over capital only through the banks, which represent the owners. On the other side, the banks have to invest an ever-increasing part of their capital in industry and in this way they become to a greater and greater extent industrial capitalists. I call bank capital, that is, capital in money form, which is actually transformed in this way into industrial capital, finance capital."⁵

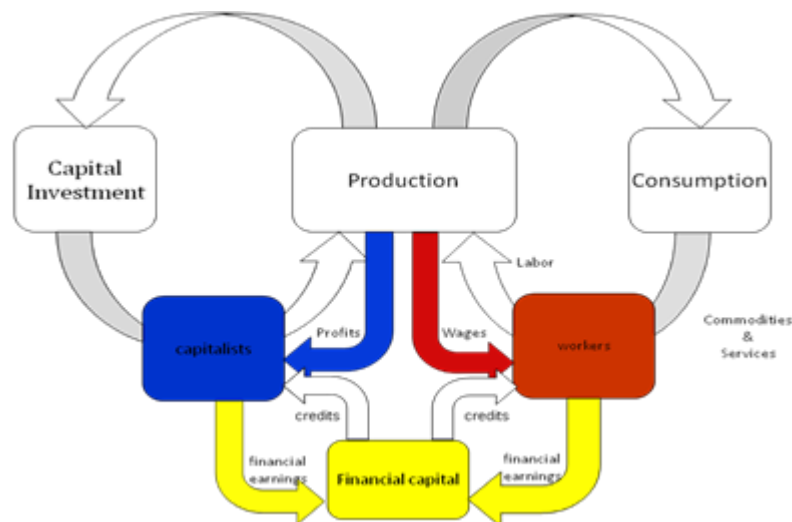


Figure 4: Finance Capitalism

Finance capital represents the fusion of the capitals of banks and industries on the one hand; on the other it is an indication of the degree of control of the production process and on the degree of centralisation and concentration by banks. Under the hegemony of finance capital industrial capitalism transformed into **finance capitalism** (see fig. 1, layer 4, and fig 4.). This development meant socialization (Vergesellschaftung) of a certain degree, not for the whole society, but restricted to capital owners.

There remains the question if the private way of financing by capitalists was the only one. A new way of financing could have been found. From a system's theoretic point of view such moments in history can be seen

⁴ Busch, Ulrich: Geldkapital, Finanzkapital und Finanzindustrie. 104-117.

⁵ Hilferding, Rudolf: Das Finanzkapital. 283.

as branching points for future development. More than one option for further evolution becomes possible. The future opens up. The opportunities of change increase considerably. Hilferding favoured a new kind of dominance, not by oligarchy, but by the masses of the proletariat:

„The tendency of finance capital is to establish social control of production, but it is an antagonistic form of socialization, since the control of social production remains vested in an oligarchy. The struggle to dispossess this oligarchy constitutes the ultimate phase of the class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat.”¹⁶

At that time this option did not become reality. But were there also other opportunities of financing? I think, in principle yes, but the probability for it was very low. Capital could have been also been collected from the working masses, not from banks or wealthy capitalists. This could have led the development into a different direction.

State Monopoly Capitalism and its Alternatives

During the first decades of the 20th century a qualitative change of the capitalist system began with the new role of the state. Already in the middle of the 19th century saw Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto the state as an instrument of the capitalist class: *„The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.”* But at the same moment they identified an opportunity for change by changing its content. To initiate a change of the system they requested the working class to conquer the state. After the state has changed its capitalist character it would be possible to start with a communist society: *“.....the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class to win the battle of democracy... The proletariat will use its political supremacy ... to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State.”¹⁷*

But it is still a debated question what kind of state they had in mind. In their 1850 „Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League“ Marx and Engels described its organisational form in more detail:

„Alongside the new official governments they must simultaneously establish their own revolutionary workers' governments, either in the form of local executive committees and councils or through workers' clubs or committees, so that the bourgeois-democratic governments not only immediately lost the support of the workers but find themselves from the very beginning supervised and threatened by authorities behind which stand the whole mass of the workers.”¹⁸

The ideas of Marx and Engels to transform the state by a revolution had to wait for Lenin. He did a lot of theoretical work before he could succeed. In 1917 he coined the term **„state monopoly capitalism”**, indicating that the state plays a more important role in the economy (see fig.1, layer 5), in particular for waging wars:

“Monopoly capitalism is developing into state monopoly capitalism. In a number of countries regulation of production and distribution by society is being introduced by force of circumstances.”¹⁹

Referring to Engels Lenin had the idea that the bourgeois state has already started organizing production according to plan contrasting the anarchy of production in early capitalism. Lenin had in mind that the more the capitalist state is able to coordinate the economy, the more mature this type of capitalism will be for a

6 op. cit.

7 <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm>

8 <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/communist-league/1850-ad1.htm>

9 Lenin, Vladimir Iljitsch: Speech in favour of the resolution on the current situation April 29 (May 12). <http://www.marx2mao.com/PDFs/Lenin%20CW-Vol.%2024.pdf> p. 305

transition to socialism. Looking back we know that Lenin tried to establish a new regime with the slogan:

"Communism - that is Soviet power plus electrification of the whole country".

But after Lenin's death state bureaucracy in the Soviet Union was not transformed to meet the interests of the proletarian masses with highest priority but merged with Stalin's autocratic interests. The state did not promote the interests of capitalists any longer, but the interests of a new oligarchy of the "nomenclature". Some researchers characterized the socialist countries in hindsight as a "state-dictatorship" or a "party-dictatorship". Not to repeat such negative developments, one should learn for the future that any bureaucracy has to be institutionally controlled by the people as directly as possible.

In contrast to the socialist scenario of the state in Russia the German state was occupied by the National Socialists who have also exploited the opportunity to change its content. WWII with more than 64 million deaths and the holocaust were the terrible consequences. Starting with January 1933 when Hitler became Reichkanzler the Nazis created a fascist dictatorship guided by the "Führer"principle. With the attack on Poland 1939 they started a war of conquest developing into a world war. Six million Jews were murdered, 500.000 Sinti and Roma, countless members of ethnic minorities and political opponents were executed. While the Soviets transformed large scale enterprises and private property in agricultural production into state or community property, under fascism the capitalist structure of the economy remained in place.

The transformation processes around the state did not come to an end yet. Even today the majority of democratic states with capitalist economies are permanently under the danger of being undermined by authoritarian tendencies, even more so in times of economic crisis.

Finance Market Capitalism driven by Information Society

Since the beginning of the scientific-technical revolution around the middle of the 20th century the productive forces took a new direction. The mechanisation trend of the industrial revolution was complemented by automation. This became possible by the invention of a new technical device, the „information processing machinery“¹⁰. While the "working machine" characterized the industrial revolution,¹¹ automation was the result of the interaction of the working machine and the information processing machinery.

10 Adler, Frank: Zu einigen Grundmerkmalen der wissenschaftlich-technischen Revolution. 13.

11 "All fully developed machinery consists of three essentially different parts, the motor mechanism, the transmitting mechanism, and finally the tool or working machine. The motor mechanism is that which puts the whole in motion. It either generates its own motive power, like the steam-engine, the caloric engine, the electromagnetic machine, &c., or it receives its impulse from some already existing natural force, like the water-wheel from a head of water, the wind-mill from wind, &c. The transmitting mechanism, composed of fly-wheels, shafting, toothed wheels, pullies, straps, ropes, bands, pinions, and gearing of the most varied kinds, regulates the motion, changes its form. where necessary, as for instance, from linear to circular, and divides and distributes it among the working machines. These two first parts of the whole mechanism are there, solely for putting the working machines in motion, by means of which motion the subject of labour is seized upon and modified as desired. The tool or working machine is that part of the machinery with which the industrial revolution of the 18th century started." Marx, Karl: Das Kapital. Vol 1, Chapter 15.

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch15.htm#S1>

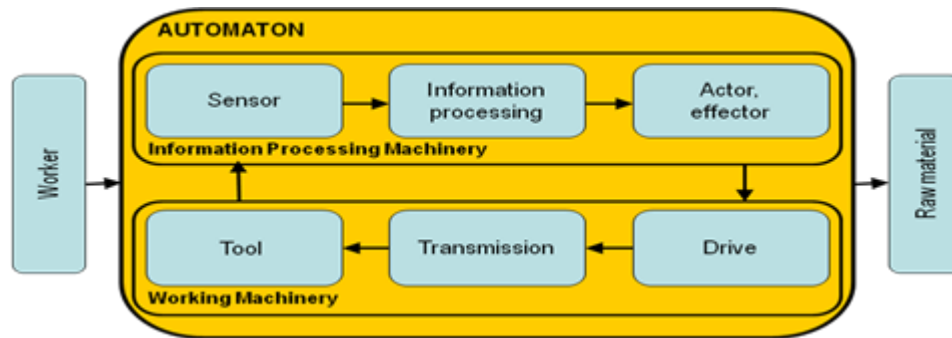


Figure 5: Basic scheme of the Automaton – the interaction of working machinery and information processing machinery

During the last fifty years the information processing machinery spread world wide as stand-alone machinery (e.g. pocket computer, personal computer, laptop, tablet etc.). More recently, it was interconnected via electronic networks. The expansion of Internet and mobile communication has allowed for a tremendous reduction of transaction costs. The creation, distribution, diffusion, use, integration and manipulation of information, and – as a consequence - decision making, communication, administration and organisation has become much cheaper than before. As a response the number of users of the Internet and of mobile phones grew exponentially and provided a new basis for doing business globally. In particular, neoliberal globalization with the growing importance of financial capital and financial markets would not have been possible without these new gadgets. The German economist Ulrich Busch speaks therefore of a new development of finance capitalism, **“finance market capitalism”** (“Finanzmarktkapitalismus”, see fig. 1, layer 6).¹² Since the 1980ies finance capitalism, which Hilferding had observed, increased its importance and its power by new institutions and also its range. It is no longer restricted to a single country, it forms an international network. The contemporary finance industry consist not only of banks, but also of insurance companies, private pension funding, and all the activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance including funds and fund management, holding companies and rating agencies.¹³

A recent study¹⁴ analysed the control relationship between the companies on a global level. They used a database with “about 37 million economic actors, both physical persons and firms located in 194 countries, and roughly 13 million directed and weighted ownership links (equity relations)”. They focussed on transnational companies (TNCs) and identified „a list of 43060 TNCs located in 116 different countries, with 5675 TNCs quoted in stock markets.”¹⁵ They looked for the degree of control companies exerted on others. Finally they identified 50 companies controlling 40% of the global value of firms. All fifty are part of the finance industry or very close to it. None of them is a classical production company.

Seen from an economic point of view information society as it is now is a society mainly controlled by finance market capitalism, acting on a global basis. As we can learn from the public debt crisis in Euroland the nation state is increasingly under the threat of blackmail by rating agencies. It is not impossible that Euroland will break apart. But there is also a politically different perspective, as we will describe in the following.

12 Busch, Ulrich: Geldkapital, Finanzkapital und Finanzindustrie. 113.

13 The financial industry consists of the code numbers starting with 65, 66 and 67. The code numbers 7414 (Business and management consultancy activities) and 7415 (Management activities of holding companies) can be seen as very close to the finance industry. For a complete list of the 2006 NACE code of the European Union, see http://www.ellispub.com/eclo/help/nacecodes_old.htm

14 Stefania Vitali, James B. Glattfelder, Stefano Battiston, The Network of Global Corporate Control. <http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0025995> ;

15 <http://www.biomedsearch.com/attachments/00/22/04/62/22046252/pone.0025995.s001.pdf>, 3.

A democratic turn?

Information technologies are not only a playground for enterprises. While the workers are controlled at their electronic workplaces and citizens are surveyed by video cameras at many corners of the streets, information technology shows also a large democratic potential. Falling transaction costs do not only mean an advantage for enterprises, but also for the citizen. Groups of people can cheaply exchange their opinion, they can publish information blocked by other media, they can invite for manifestations (maybe faster than the police can check). We see the bloggers are able to influence public opinion; even proposals for Laws on intellectual property rights (ACTA) could not be passed because of electronic opposition. Wikileaks played an important role to increase public awareness and added transparency to unpublished state activities. Denial of service attacks brings flourishing firms into difficulties. In short, there is increasing potential for opposition as we already could see in the Arab Spring (or Arab Revolution) at the end of 2010, a revolutionary wave of demonstrations, protests and civil uprisings in some states of northern Africa and Middle East. Frequently protesters shared techniques of civil resistance, often supported by electronic media, for that reason frequently called social media. Although we should not overestimate their role e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and blogs have played in the dramatic events - revolutionary conscience and resistance are the most important preconditions – organising meetings and manifestations by electronic means is helpful. Movements like Occupy Wall Street, Indignados, and manifestations in the capitals of Europe are impressive examples of the use of electronic media. It is not impossible that with the help of these social media new political players come into being, strengthening non-governmental organisations and bottom-up initiatives. For the moment, the resistance is limited to protests against existing political measures. New concepts transforming society, economy and culture and new institutions to exert power in a democratic way are still missing. But one should be optimistic: the financial crisis will increase the pressure to generate innovative activities.

Concluding remarks

To summarize the main ideas of this paper: New technological or institutional developments emerge from existing structures in society. They form new layers on top of the economy and open up new political and economic opportunities, particularly through new types of dominating interests and kinds of property (see figure 6). In history we have seen that the content of the new layer tends to dominate all the former ones.

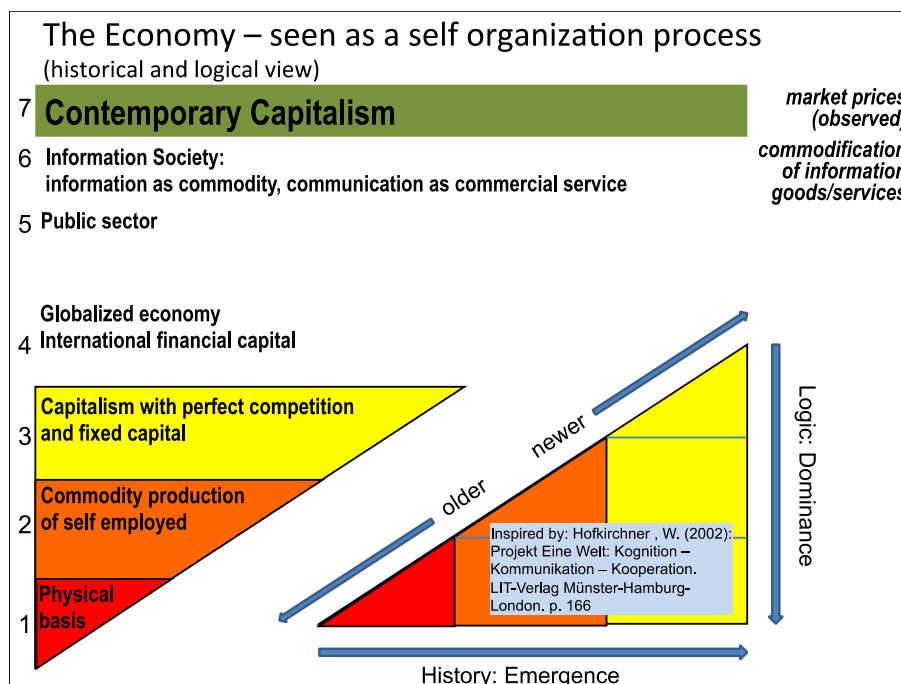


Figure 6: Emergence and dominance in the economic transformation process

My claim is that economists and other social scientists should actively search for such developments and elaborate possible branching points of development. This will give them the opportunity in their scholarly work to go beyond the past. And they need not stop in the present. They have the possibility also to address the future. The scholars could assess potential pathways and trajectories and feed their results back to the public. This could enable a new interaction of scientist with other groups of society.

A new type of economy should be socially and environmentally sustainable. It should restore the mutuality which is hidden behind the value concept and should bring into practice that our survival will finally depend on cooperation and not on competition.

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Tommaso Gravante:

Netactivismo en las protestas y procesos de cambio social. Caso de estudio: alzamiento popular en Oaxaca, México

Abstract:

In this paper we propose an analysis of net-activism practices, and how they influence the cultural change process of protestors in the citizen riot of Oaxaca (Mexico) in 2006. The approach adopted in the research is "bottom-up", hence just analyzing the movement itself. This aspect is both methodological and theoretical. In the analysis of the net-activism's practice, we focus on the emotive dimension of protestors. The analysis of the emotive components allow us to explicate the initial motivations of collective actions, and how new media are linked with citizen empowerment.

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Oaxaca: cuando el pueblo toma la palabra

Desde mediados de 2006, en la ciudad de Oaxaca la protesta de la sección local del sindicato de maestros (Sección XXII-CNTE) cobró en pocos días la dimensión de una amplia y profunda insurrección popular, con un alto sentido antiautoritario. Durante varios meses la gente común y corriente se auto-organizó para protestar en contra de las políticas represivas y clientelares del Gobernador del Estado Ulises Ruiz; y, por más de seis meses las personas de a pie se apropiaron de la ciudad y de sus barrios periférico, instituyendo sus propias barricadas de defensa, sus espacios de discusión y comunicación así como sus propios modos de construir formas de vida. Las demandas por lo cual surgió el movimiento a lo largo del conflicto se transformaron, con el desarrollo de las relaciones sociales, en valores que se manifestaron en una forma propia de ver el mundo.

Este nuevo imaginario colectivo se construyó a través de las propias necesidades y desde las palabras de la gente, que frente a las prácticas de des-calificación y de distorsión de la realidad operada por los medios tradicionales buscaron, también, sus propios medios de comunicación para hablarse entre ellos. Tanto la apropiación y uso de las nuevas tecnologías de la información como la toma de las emisoras de radios y televisión por parte de simples ciudadanos, fueron determinantes en la organización y en la construcción de la identidad del movimiento popular. En pocos meses desde el comienzo del conflicto se crearon más de veinte páginas webs que contribuyeron a romper el cerco mediático de los medios oficiales y captar la atención internacional. Disponer de medios propios y reflexionar sobre un posible proceso de democratización de la comunicación fue una prerrogativa del movimiento a lo largo de todo el conflicto, además estos medios no eran únicamente medios alternativos de comunicación e información sino era el movimiento mismo hablando y escuchándose.

Propósitos y metodología de la investigación

Recuperando las experiencias individuales en los medios alternativos que han sido determinantes en la organización y en la construcción de la identidad del movimiento popular, nos proponemos ver cómo la apropiación y uso de los medios de comunicación se convierte en otro modo de hacer política. Además, con un enfoque desde abajo en el estudio del movimiento mismo, exploraremos los modos en los que la apropiación y uso alternativo de los medios alternativos influye en los procesos de empoderamiento y en las transformaciones sociales desde abajo.

La elección de acercarnos a este caso de estudio mediante un enfoque cualitativo no ha sido algo puramente técnico, sino que explicita nuestra forma de comprender la realidad. En nuestro caso ésta se acerca a una concepción del conocimiento de la realidad a través de categorías subjetivas que permiten construir la realidad a través de un conocimiento contextualizado. Además, centrando nuestro análisis en la experiencia biográfica y en las emociones, no podíamos sino utilizar técnicas de investigación cualitativas, ya que hay cosas, como los valores y las emociones, que son inconmensurables y pueden ser apreciados sólo en su dimensión cualitativa.

El punto de partida del presente artículo es el trabajo de campo realizado en Oaxaca en los años 2010 y 2011, en el cual después de un año de observación etnográfica, hemos desarrollados más de veinte entrevistas en profundidad a los protagonistas de las experiencias mediáticas. Coherentemente con el enfoque desde abajo hemos entrevistado gente común y corriente, como amas de casas, estudiantes, desempleado, etc. y no leaders o mediactivistas expertos. En nuestra investigación hemos diseñado unas entrevistas semi-estructuradas que incluían estrategias propias de entrevistas más biográficas, individuales, no directivas, no estandarizadas, abiertas, guiadas y en profundidad¹. De acuerdo con el enfoque biográfico y la perspectiva narrativa, decidimos utilizar la *episodic interview*² en la que se pide a la persona entrevistada contar episodios de su experiencia.

1 Bogdan, Robert and Taylor, Steve: Introducción a los métodos cualitativos de investigación. 100-131

2 Flick, Uwe: Episodic Interviewing. 75-92; and Flick, Uwe: Introducción a la investigación cualitativa.

Este método permite reconocer y analizar el conocimiento narrativo-episódico utilizando narraciones, permitiendo interpretar, comprender y atribuir significados a la experiencia de apropiación mediática vividas por los protagonistas; siendo especialmente útil en el estudio del cambio, porque permite describir el antes y el después respecto a un punto de ruptura, como ha sido el conflicto de Oaxaca; y por último ofrece un acceso directo al es un procedimiento que se vincula directamente con el ámbito emocional.

Nuestra propuesta no ha tratado solamente de rescatar la voz de los marginados o los "sin historia", sino captar los síntomas de esas diferentes construcciones conceptuales y de las interpenetraciones e interacciones que se han dado a lo largo del proceso de empoderamiento.

Prácticas de apropiación y cambio social

En el momento de estudiar los procesos de apropiación de las Nuevas Tecnologías de la Información y las Comunicaciones (NTIC), en primer lugar, es necesario hacer un descentramiento del concepto de apropiación desde las herramientas hacia las personas. Es decir, es necesario interpretar estos procesos como una cuestión de mediaciones más que de medios, como una cuestión de cultura y, por tanto, no sólo de conocimiento sino de re-conocimiento, de resistencia y de apropiación desde los usos³. En otras palabras concebir la apropiación y los usos de las tecnologías como procesos culturales. Reiteramos otra vez, que introduciendo el análisis del espacio cultural no queremos introducir

"un tema más en un espacio aparte, sino focalizar el *lugar en que se articula* el sentido que los procesos económicos y políticos tienen para una sociedad".⁴

En este sentido, el acercamiento a los procesos de apropiación consiste en detectar los mecanismos por los cuales los individuos se vuelven sujetos que manifiestan formas de autonomía en un conjunto muy amplio de prácticas de la vida cotidiana⁵, también cuando nos insertamos en un contexto de protesta social. Sólo en este caso, en nuestra opinión, se pueden apreciar los procesos de reelaboración y redefinición de valores, creencias e identidades que llevan a las personas a tomar conciencia de aspectos de la realidad que hasta aquel momento no habían considerado, a cambiar su percepción de la realidad y, finalmente, a actuar en consecuencia. Y también ver cómo la experiencia del medio alternativo transforma la organización espacial y temporal de la vida social⁶, creando nuevas formas de acción e interacción y nuevos modos de ejercer el poder.

Choque moral, motivación a la acción y emociones

Los diversos niveles de complejidad a la hora de analizar el proceso de apropiación de las NTIC, junto a los resultados de los análisis del trabajo de campo, nos han llevado a considerar el fuerte impacto emotivo que caracteriza estas experiencias de conflicto. Nuestro objetivo ha sido considerar la dimensión emotiva en los diferentes procesos que se dan a lo largo de la experiencia mediática (motivación a la acción, motivación al aprendizaje, procesos de autoestima, nuevas relaciones y nuevos proyectos, desarrollo de un concepto de una comunicación comunitaria, etc.), y observar cómo las emociones interactúan con nuestros procesos cognitivos y cómo nos motivan en la acción política⁷. Uno de los primeros procesos que alimentan la motivación a la acción es el choque moral.

El choque moral, o *moral shock*, ocurre cuando un evento inesperado o un conjunto de informaciones aumenta el sentimiento de ultraje en una persona que se inclina hacia la acción política, que tenga o no conocidos en el

3 Martín-Barbero; Jesús: De los medios a las mediaciones. Comunicación, cultura y hegemonía. 10.

4 *ibid.*: 178.

5 De Certeau, Michel: La invención de lo cotidiano.

6 Thompson, John B.: Los media y la modernidad. Una teoría de los medios de comunicación.

7 Goodwin, Jeff, Jasper, James and Francesca Polletta: *Passionate Politics. Emotions and Social Movements.*

movimiento⁸. Este tipo de proceso implica un elemento cognitivo, ya que 'la información o el evento ayuda a las personas a pensar en sus valores básicos y cómo el mundo diverge de esos valores⁹; además, el choque moral es procesado a través de las emociones experimentadas por los sujetos como pueden ser los vínculos afectivos o la sensibilidad hacia algunos temas que producen el choque mismo. En Oaxaca, los sentimientos de indignación y rabia a causa del violento desalojo del 14 de junio de 2006 estuvieron entre los elementos detonantes en el proceso inicial de apropiación. La rabia y la indignación por el desalojo violento de los maestros se suma y se alimenta también de un discurso oculto presente en la sociedad oaxaqueña. Como comentó un entrevistado: 'lo que nos agarró para pensar fue la represión'¹⁰.

El choque moral es muy importante porque de él depende la motivación a la acción, la radicalización de la protesta¹¹, la participación, y en cierta medida el cambio cultural; considerando que el choque moral es el proceso que lleva a entender que 'el mundo no es como lo pensabas'¹² y que aunque no los cambie, clarifica y activa los valores subyacentes de la gente. Como hemos visto, el choque moral, además de ser un evento inesperado, puede ser un conjunto de informaciones que aumenta el sentimiento de ultraje. En Oaxaca los medios de comunicación oficiales contribuyeron a alimentar el sentido de ultraje e indignación apoyando abiertamente las políticas represivas del Gobernador y contribuyeron a fortalecer los vínculos afectivos y las emociones morales como la solidaridad. En nuestro caso, la motivación a la acción es alimentada tanto por sentimientos como la indignación o el sentimiento de injusticia por no haber sido incluidos en el proceso de toma de decisiones, así como por la rabia o la esperanza¹³. A esto debemos añadir el orgullo que va creciendo durante el proceso de movilización que motiva aún más a los participantes y que fortalece los vínculos entre los miembros, tanto de la experiencia mediática como de la comunidad involucrada en la lucha¹⁴ y que se manifiesta, también, en la necesidad de apropiarse de un medio de comunicación para 'dar voz a la gente'¹⁵.

Finalmente, coincidimos con Collins¹⁶ en que en los momentos críticos las dinámicas son antes de todo emocionales. Estas no dependen mucho de un cálculo de costes y beneficios (que es imposible calcular en esas situaciones críticas) sino del emerger de una dimensión emotiva colectiva. En la insurgencia de Oaxaca se dieron muchos momentos críticos, pero la carga emocional simbólica vivida por los protagonistas no fue solamente transitoria sino que resonó desde una movilización a otra, de una megamarcha a otra, ya que la dimensión emotiva atraviesa tanto el tiempo como las generaciones¹⁷. En Oaxaca, la dimensión emotiva vivida en 2006, fue tan alta que ahora después de seis años las diferentes componentes sociales siguen codificando los símbolos del movimiento –emblemas, canciones, eslóganes, etc.– con el objetivo de evocar el espíritu de aquel momento.

Tácticas de apropiación y prácticas de autonomía

Si en el párrafo precedente hemos visto la importancia de las emociones en la motivación a la acción, en el presente apartado iremos desglosando los elementos que se han dado después del choque moral en el proceso de apropiación de los medios de comunicación.

8 Jasper, James: *The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and around Social Movements*. 409.

9 *ibid.*

10 Entrevistado de la página web Oaxaca Libre.

11 Gould, Deborah B.: *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight against AIDS*.

12 Jasper, James: *The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and around Social Movements*. 409.

13 Goodwin, Jeff, Jasper, James and Francesca Polletta: *Passionate Politics. Emotions and Social Movements*.

14 Wood, Elisabeth Jean: *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*.

15 Entrevistada de la página web Frida Guerrero.

16 Collins, Randall: *Social movement and focus of emotional attention*. 41.

17 *ibid.*: 43.

Como hemos ya explicitado, para entender el proceso de apropiación es necesario considerar la subjetividad en la construcción social de las experiencias del usuario; por esta razón la apropiación de Internet no debe ser vista como un simple cúmulo de tareas sino que hay que tener en cuenta la situación y la realidad diversa y heterogénea del contexto donde opera el sujeto social. La apropiación entonces no sigue una lógica única sino que se mueve entre diversos niveles según los individuos e intereses, mientras que sus significaciones sociales están asociadas directamente, además de a la utilización de las herramientas, a una expansión de su uso y a una conformación de prácticas y procedimientos cotidianos. Por lo tanto, la apropiación tiene lugar cuando las personas conocen las herramientas, las valoran y aprenden a usarlas para satisfacer sus necesidades e intereses (probablemente las de su grupo social) y le dan sentido de pertenencia. Superando así dificultades tanto de recursos como de conocimiento. En Oaxaca, el proceso de apropiación no se da desde una dimensión técnica sino por los lazos presentes en la comunidad, y gracias a la solidaridad que se desarrolló a lo largo de la protesta se compartió el conocimiento entre quien no sabía y quien ya poseía una alta alfabetización digital.

La apropiación de los medios en Oaxaca además de estar vinculada con la naturaleza de los medios técnicos y con la posesión de las habilidades, capacidades y recursos necesarios para producir y decodificar los mensajes transmitidos, se vinculó de manera más determinante con los contextos sociales e históricos en los cuales se dio la apropiación misma. Por ende, tanto el conocimiento como la comunicación han sido interpretados como bienes comunes y, por esto, sujetos a ser compartidos sin restricciones. Entonces, consideramos que el acceso a las NTIC no se puede reducir a saber usar el ordenador o conectarse a Internet sino que también incluye comprender la tecnología, sus posibilidades (y límites) y desarrollar una lectura crítica del medio y una reelaboración del concepto de comunicación, como comentó un testimonio: 'nos dimos cuenta que sólo si se pueden contar historias se puede tener sentido en hacer un medio'¹⁸.

Esto lleva a que la herramienta tecnológica se transforma en un objeto relacional y de resignificación de las prácticas diarias de los sujetos involucrados en la práctica mediática, generando, en el proceso de apropiación y re-codificación de las tecnologías, tanto usos diversos como otros nuevos no planteados; si a esto añadimos la reflexión de De Certeau¹⁹ en la que las mil maneras de hacer/deshacer no designan solamente actividades sino también cambios significativos que se manifiestan en prácticas culturales, comprendemos como estas prácticas se manifestaron tanto en la dimensión organizativa del medio como en la producción de la noticia. De hecho, la cultura comunitaria, expresión de la tradición indígena y de la práctica cotidiana, como en el caso de Oaxaca, es tomada como referencia en este proceso de apropiación de los medios de comunicación.

Hacia el despliegue de nuevas prácticas

En el presente documento hemos visto cómo el análisis del proceso de apropiación de las NTIC en un contexto de movilización social debe sustentarse mucho más que en comprender las posibilidades de accesibilidad al equipo y a las infraestructuras; o si las personas comprenden el manejo de los equipos, así como las reglas y protocolos de navegación y de comunicación en el ciberespacio; sino que, dicho análisis debe centrarse en reconocer la capacidad de construcción de los individuos de su propia autonomía y libertad.

En función de nuestro análisis, la apropiación y uso de medios alternativos de comunicación en la insurgencia de Oaxaca contribuyó entre otros aspectos al desarrollo de nuevas relaciones sociales y ayudó al emerger de aspectos individuales que hasta aquel momento no se habían considerado y a fortalecer la propia autoestima. También, es evidente que el proceso de apropiación de las NTIC es inseparable del aprendizaje social vivido a lo largo de la insurgencia.

En este sentido el acercamiento a los procesos de apropiación consiste en detectar los mecanismos por los cuales los individuos se vuelven sujetos, mientras el cambio cultural se manifiesta también en diferentes prácticas y bajo diferentes aspectos. De hecho, en nuestros entrevistados el cambio cultural se denota en diferentes prácticas cotidianas que todavía siguen, como los diferentes tanguis culturales, los cursos de

18 Entrevistado de la página web Oaxaca en pie de lucha.

19 De Certeau, Michel: La invención de lo cotidiano.

autodefensa para las mujeres, el surgimiento de nuevas estaciones de radios comunitarias, la creación de bibliotecas populares, pero sobretodo se fundamenta básicamente en la formación de un sujeto que esta desarrollando su propio proceso de autonomía.

Propuestas de salida: hacía la emancipación y la autonomía

En síntesis, en este trabajo hemos visto cómo el análisis de los procesos de apropiación de los medios de comunicación y en particular de las NTIC, en una dimensión de movilización social, puede enfocarse como un proceso identitario y emotivo de construcción subjetiva.

El conflicto social además de ser un punto de ruptura con el orden constituido demuestra ser un laboratorio necesario para el cambio social, en el que los medios alternativos de comunicación se transforman en espacios sociales para una cultura disidente. Pero, sin duda, para comprender los cambios que se dan en toda acción política es necesario prestar atención a los recursos biográficos y emotivos de cada individuo, conocer qué es importante para estas personas, cómo se ven en el mundo y qué lenguaje utilizan para describir los diferentes aspectos de sus sociedades.

Además, con el análisis de los procesos de apropiación hemos querido poner en evidencia que las rupturas epistemológicas pasan a través de las prácticas. Consideramos que las prácticas de las experiencias alternativas que se han desarrollado en las últimas décadas en América Latina han desbordado las definiciones académicas y necesitamos de otro paradigma para acercarnos a estas prácticas de emancipación y autonomía. Efectivamente estamos hablando de un cambio de paradigma en la manera de pensar y hacer las ciencias sociales y no solamente en los estudios sobre los movimientos sociales o las NTIC. Esto conlleva ante todo reconocer el desfase que existe entre realidad y teoría, y la primera como resultado de las prácticas del sujeto. Es decir, es necesario pasar de una "epistemología de la ceguera a una epistemología de la visión"²⁰, que subvierta los regímenes de representación y relevancia y logre hacer visibles conocimientos y sujetos que de otro modo permanecerían ausentes.

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²⁰ Santos, Boaventura de Sousa: Una epistemología del sur: la reinención del conocimiento y la emancipación social. 83.

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Josep M^a Renui:

¿Innovar o “maquillar”? La incorporación de las TICs a los procesos político-administrativos.

Abstract:

What criteria should guide the process of incorporating ICTs into political realm? Are ICTs, *per definitionem*, an instrument that always generates positive effects for political activity? Our reflection aims to influence the necessary and essential process of analysis prior to the introduction of ICT in the field of political processes, focusing primarily on the delimitation of its effects. In this sense it highlights the need to assess the added value of introducing a technological solution in the political process prior to do it, what will validate or not its desirability. There is, in this sense, the excessive use of "make-up" technology of political processes, that is, the absence of real & practical innovation.

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La incorporación de las TICs al proceso político y democrático (e-politics & e-democracy).197

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Una de las cuestiones sobre las que existiría un cierto acuerdo generalizado respecto de las características del proceso de implementación de las nuevas tecnologías de la información y las comunicaciones (TICs) entre analistas y responsables de las Administraciones Públicas es la disparidad de criterios existentes.

En este sentido, y a riesgo de simplificar en demasía el análisis, nos hallaríamos frente a dos grandes estrategias: por un lado la búsqueda de la innovación como estandarte de un proceso de modernización administrativa y, por el otro, la mera adición de procesos y/o herramientas tecnológicas a prácticas burocráticas tradicionales. No hacemos referencia a los habituales procesos de *benchmarking*, que permiten conocer nuevas soluciones y adaptarlas a la propia realidad, sino que pretendemos hacer especial hincapié en las diferencias existentes entre aquellas concepciones de las TICs como oportunidad y aquellas que únicamente se suman a la *moda* del momento. En otras palabras, tras la ya no tan reciente experiencia electoral norteamericana una gran mayoría de partidos y políticos en nuestro país ha *descubierto* el potencial de las TICs, lanzándose a la creación de canales televisivos en línea, la apertura de blogs de diseño o una inusitada competición por sumar "amigos" en las redes sociales como Facebook o Twitter (Grossman:1996).

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Pues bien, ¿cuál debiera ser el planteamiento correcto para la incorporación de las TICs a los procesos políticos? Habitualmente se describe este proceso mediante el recurso analítico a diferentes modelos de etapas o fases, compartiendo casi todos ellos su excesiva *tecnificación* (Criado y Ramilo:2001). Así frente al generalizado desconocimiento técnico de los responsables políticos y administrativos aparece como más útil acercarse al dicho proceso a partir de las actividades y de los condicionantes organizativos que deberán guiar la introducción de las TICs a los diferentes procesos político-administrativos.

Desde esta óptica, la fase o etapa inicial se caracteriza por centrarse en la *Información*, esto es, el objetivo central es poner a disposición del ciudadano ingentes volúmenes de información en línea para su consulta y difusión. Ello ha llevado a "volcar" en la red todas las informaciones relacionadas con la prestación de los servicios por parte de las Administraciones Públicas, a menudo sin una labor previa de filtrado de la información mediante la aplicación de criterios para la segmentación de dichos contenidos. Como bien puede colegirse, generalmente el resultado ha sido la generación de un efecto de *desinformación* en el ciudadano, unido a carencias en la usabilidad de algunas de dichas webs poco implicadas en garantizar una buena accesibilidad por parte de los usuarios.

Si bien esta primera etapa se asume habitualmente como superada con excesiva ligereza, el siguiente paso debiera ser la *automatización* de los procedimientos y servicios existentes. Es decir, la mejora de la efectividad de los procedimientos de prestación de servicios a los ciudadanos mediante la introducción de soluciones y aplicativos para la asistencia a los ciudadanos. Los ejemplos de los tradicionales "call-centers" o de los sistemas de asistencia en línea a través de los "chat" o de los servicios de telefonía por internet (VoIP) por un lado así como la apertura de procesos de tramitación en línea (e-tramitación) son ejemplos de prácticas generalizadas.

Este escenario, que supone ya un salto cualitativo significativo nos aboca a uno de los grandes retos, tanto por lo dificultoso del mismo como por el abandono que sufre. Éste no es otro que la necesidad de enfrentarnos a una labor de *reingeniería de procesos*, esto es, una labor de remodelación de los procedimientos político-administrativos. Reto a superar mediante la integración de diferentes departamentos de la Administración y, muy especialmente, la redefinición de los procesos desde una doble óptica: del ciudadano y del uso eficiente de las TICs. Y es precisamente en esta tercera fase o etapa donde nos encontramos con la decisión estratégica a la que nos referíamos al empezar esta aportación: ¿innovar o maquillar? En otras palabras, se pone sobre la mesa del responsable político-administrativo la decisión de responder a los viejos retos llevando a cabo nuevas actuaciones analizando la información disponible mediante los nuevos canales tecnológicos para, así, crear conocimiento o, por lo contrario, mantener las mismas dinámicas procedimentales incorporando únicamente las TICs para satisfacción de las memorias de actividades o para el recuento estadístico (Criado y Ramilo:2001).

Y es aquí donde, precisamente, nos enfrentamos con un escollo de difícil solución. Nos parece obvio que estas fases implican la plena asunción que la introducción de las TICs en la Administración Pública debe ir más allá de un simple proceso de *maquillaje tecnológico*. Es decir, de manera demasiado generalizada la introducción de las TICs a los procesos políticos y administrativos termina convirtiéndose en algo similar a una *moda pasajera*, sin voluntad real de permanencia. En buena medida esta decisión está condicionada por el hecho que el contexto político-institucional actual en el que opera la Administración Pública (la sociedad del conocimiento) es altamente similar a las bases estructurales tradicionales propias de la sociedad industrial. Las estructuras formales de la política no se han acomodado aún al nuevo entorno tecnológico y es precisamente esta razón la que explica uno de los principales motivos que la actividad política presente dificultades para gestionar y representar adecuadamente las demandas de los ciudadanos. Las tensiones aparecen en el momento en que los procesos políticos, a diferencia del resto de sectores de la actividad social, no evolucionan al mismo ritmo en la transformación de dichas estructuras institucionales. Aunque actualmente es cada vez más habitual el uso de las TICs en los ámbitos de la cultura, el ocio, las finanzas, la educación, las relaciones interpersonales, la información, etc.... las prácticas políticas aún se encuentran ancladas en el principio "ex situ" de la representación política, basadas en la pasividad y reactividad de la participación política. Por contra el nuevo entorno político que se vislumbra a partir de las TICs se caracteriza por una participación "in situ", construida con los ladrillos de la proactividad y la interacción, persiguiendo la generación de efectos directos e inmediatos sobre la realidad.

Relación/acción política	Medios convencionales	TICs
Estructura	Representativa, "ex situ"	Individual y colectiva, "in situ"
Características	Pasiva, Reactiva	Proactiva, Interactiva
Impacto	Indirecto	Directo, Inmediato
Modelo	Democracia 1.0	Democracia 2.0

Fuente: Adaptación de Viklas Nath (2000): Digital Governance (<http://www.digitalgovernance.org>)

No obstante, es pertinente destacar que la demandada innovación tecnológica no puede plantearse como un factor intrínsecamente positivo, sino más bien como un factor que únicamente aportará valor añadido si se utiliza de manera funcional en un contexto igualmente innovador (Grossman:1996). En otras palabras, el proceso de introducción de las TICs debe partir del hecho que éstas son herramientas para alcanzar determinados objetivos, y en ningún caso los objetivos en sí mismos.

Obviamente no disponemos aún de la receta concreta de cómo deba concretarse dicha estrategia innovadora aunque somos de la opinión que debería pasar por una plataforma multicanal de interacción entre los ciudadanos y la Administración. Algunos de los elementos que allí se combinaran debieran ser, por un lado, la mejora de los procesos de *minería de datos*, la estructuración de las webs siguiendo criterios semánticos así como de los estándares de "lectura fácil" en segundo lugar y, *last but not least*, la interconexión de las bases de datos relativas a cada ciudadano a fin de configurar una verdadera *carpeta del ciudadano* individualizada.

Es por ello que deben seguirse explorando las posibilidades que presentan las múltiples soluciones tecnológicas a nuestra disposición para potenciar los procesos de mejora de la Administración Pública, siguiendo criterios de eficacia, eficiencia, transparencia, proximidad y participación. Todo este proceso, no obstante, deberá de tener como máxima para su correcta implementación la garantía, entre otras, de la accesibilidad de todos los ciudadanos y su capacitación funcional, el acceso a la información, la promoción de la *e-participación* en el diseño, implementación y evaluación de las políticas públicas así como muy especialmente un nuevo diseño de la gestión interna de las Administraciones Públicas o, si se prefiere, su modernización.

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Se configuran así dos grandes problemáticas a las que aún no tenemos, como sociedad, respuestas satisfactorias. Por un lado la ya mencionada tensión entre la sociedad de la información y las “viejas” estructuras sociales, puesto que la aparición de un nuevo modelo de sociedad del conocimiento requiere también de nuevos modelos de organización político-institucional. Es decir, la utilización del entramado político-organizativo tradicional fundado casi en exclusiva sobre la base de la relación de representación política entra en tensión frente a la capacidad –cada vez más creciente- de los ciudadanos de erigirse en los principales actores de la arena pública. En este sentido la explotación de las potencialidades de las tecnologías de la denominada *Web 2.0* (wikis, twitter, blogs, facebook, etc...) consiguen condicionar la agenda política esencialmente gracias a su inmediatez y a la interacción social en la que se basan (McCaughey y Ayers:2003). Los efectos de estas acciones, pensadas y ejecutadas *desde y en la red*, no sólo deben evaluarse según su éxito o fracaso sino que lo deben ser en tanto que acciones efectivamente innovadoras o bien como simples *adaptaciones o maquillajes* de viejas prácticas sin ningún valor añadido.

La segunda problemática va más allá de las medidas a adoptar a corto plazo (y de nuestro interés aquí) puesto que se centra en la necesidad de superar el actual modelo de la democracia representativa para consolidar y generalizar las prácticas de democracia participativa fundadas sobre el uso intensivo y extensivo de las TICs. En el fondo, la situación en la que nos hallamos adquiere características ciertamente paradójicas, puesto que en esencia estamos tratando de superar los viejos retos aún vigentes de la *gobernanza* depositando todas nuestras esperanzas en el uso de nuevas herramientas tecnológicas. De cualquier forma, y común a ambas problemáticas, las dificultades a las que todas las sociedades deben enfrentarse para una exitosa implementación de las TICs en los procesos políticos aparecen con fuerza. El centro de las preocupaciones lo ocupa de manera obvia, la posibilidad (o evidencia, desafortunadamente) de la exclusión social, que sobrevuela sobre cualquiera de las estrategias de implementación de las TICs.

Debilidades	<p>Necesidad de adquisición de competencias específicas (<i>alfabetización digital</i>) + despliegue tecnológico <i>(inversión en infraestructuras)</i></p>	Amenazas	<p>Brecha digital/Exclusión social <i>(colectivos especialmente sensibles: gente mayor y población inmigrante)</i></p>
Fortalezas	<p>Colectivos sociales potencialmente favorables <i>(alta familiaridad para la población juvenil)</i></p>	Oportunidades	<p>Mejora de la gobernanza + Modernización de la Administración</p>

Fuente: Elaboración del autor.

A partir del escenario descrito los objetivos a perseguir se vehiculan en tres grandes ámbitos: a) la mejora de la gobernanza, abriendo nuevos canales a la participación de los ciudadanos en el diseño de políticas públicas; b) la mejora de la calidad en la prestación de servicios públicos y, c) las medidas encaminadas a facilitar el acceso, la interacción, la transacción y la prestación de servicios de la Administración Pública a través de medios telemáticos.

Así las cosas ¿qué debemos tener en cuenta? Por un lado aparece como un imperativo ineludible el que la citada introducción de las TICs no se convierta en un proceso excluyente para una parte significativa de la población, sino que tenga como principal objetivo la (e)inclusión de todos los ciudadanos. Para lograrla las TICs deben entenderse como mecanismos complementarios para la apertura de nuevos canales para la participación de los ciudadanos, la gestión de los asuntos públicos y la optimización de los recursos de las Administraciones públicas. En este sentido cada vez son más las voces que apuntan la necesidad de ir más allá del uso de

Internet como el principal canal entre las Administraciones Públicas y los ciudadanos (*Government to Citizen - G2C*). Se propone en este sentido el desarrollo de una estrategia multi-plataforma para la provisión de dichos *e-servicios* así como el recurso a la solución tecnológica con mayor penetración actualmente: el teléfono móvil. Las ventajas de esta *m-democracia* tienen que ver con el estado de las infraestructuras, en tanto que las redes de telefonía móvil se hallan ya desplegadas en el territorio y favorecen una penetración social cercana al 90% de usuarios únicos; su usabilidad, en tanto que la telefonía móvil presenta una mayor familiaridad en su uso debido a su alta similitud funcional con el teléfono tradicional; y el bajo umbral de inhibición para los nuevos usuarios sin discriminación de edad.

Centrándonos en el ámbito de la participación ciudadana, es evidente que uno de los temas más recurrentes en las democracias consolidadas como la nuestra es la necesidad de abordar el debate sobre la introducción de mecanismos de democracia participativa. Se dirá, realmente con gran parte de razón, que el funcionamiento de la democracia representativa precisa de elementos correctores en los que los ciudadanos puedan expresar sus opiniones, sus proyectos y también decidir sobre aspectos puntuales, más allá de la cita periódica con las urnas (Reniu:2008). Este escenario cobra especial relevancia al considerar dos variables: por un lado centrar nuestra unidad de análisis en lo local, donde cada uno de nosotros tenemos una percepción directa e inmediata de los problemas, las necesidades y las prioridades reales de las decisiones a tomar y de las políticas a impulsar. Por otro lado la expansión de las TICs a los ámbitos de lo político se convierte en el gran argumento para reclamar esa mayor participación, tomando como ejemplo sus enormes potencialidades. En este sentido es absolutamente indispensable tener muy claro que, al plantearnos procesos de participación ciudadana mediante el uso de dichas tecnologías, éstas no son más que un instrumento. Dicha exigencia parte de la constatación que a menudo parte de la clase política –y de los mismos ciudadanos- genera expectativas desmesuradas sobre el uso de las TICs, perfilando un entorno idílico donde sólo con un *click* cada uno de nosotros decidirá diariamente sobre todas las cuestiones objeto de nuestro interés, revolucionando completamente los mecanismos existentes para el gobierno de la *cosa pública*. Nada más alejado de la realidad, puesto que ni las TICs crean *per se* espacios de participación, ni son garantía alguna de una mejor participación (tanto cuantitativa como cualitativamente) ni, por supuesto, subvierten el proceso democrático de gobierno.

Es por ello que cualquier proceso de implementación de las TICs en programas de participación ciudadana deba tener como preludeo el análisis de la necesidad real de crear dichos espacios de participación junto con la inexcusable referencia a los objetivos que se persiguen (Reniu:2008). Aunque la receta es compleja, las diferentes experiencias parecen indicar que el éxito de las experiencias de participación ciudadana mediante las TICs se deberá en gran medida a la combinación de los siguientes elementos: a) una delimitación concreta y precisa del objeto que motiva el proceso participativo; b) la generación de un amplio consenso social y político sobre el proceso; c) la elección de un mecanismo de participación con cualidades *inclusivas* o que, en su defecto, contemple diferentes canales de participación.

Además, y aunque parezca un argumento obvio y simplista, debe tenerse muy presente que *a participar se aprende participando*, con lo que la decisión política de llevar a cabo procesos de participación ciudadana deberá considerarse como un proceso de aprendizaje, en el que los mejores resultados aparecerán en el medio y largo plazo. Esto es especialmente cierto cuando consideramos que el comportamiento participativo no depende, única y exclusivamente, de la apertura de dichos espacios ni de la plataforma tecnológica empleada. Así la utilización de las TICs puede y debe ser una excelente oportunidad para incentivar la participación de los ciudadanos, ofreciéndoles la posibilidad de expresar sus opiniones, sugerencias y críticas, así como también tomar decisiones sobre aspectos puntuales pero de especial relevancia en su entorno.

El principal peligro de ello es diseñar estrategias participativas –como así ha sucedido en algunos casos en nuestro país- única y exclusivamente pensadas para su desarrollo en un entorno virtual. Quizás como muestra de la excelencia tecnológica o quizás como recurso político propagandístico, lo cierto es que algunas experiencias han *migrado* totalmente a contextos virtuales en los que una parte significativa de la población a quien iba destinada la participación no podía acceder (Reniu:2008). Se señaló antes la necesidad de desplegar procesos participativos inclusivos, esto es, que permitan que todos los colectivos puedan acceder y tomar parte en los mismos, independientemente de sus conocimientos o capacidades tecnológicas. Ello puede lograrse a través de la combinación de diferentes estrategias. En primer lugar resulta especialmente útil el considerar la implementación gradual de las soluciones tecnológicas, de forma que éstas coexistan con los mecanismos

tradicionales para la recepción de sugerencias, ideas, opiniones o también para la expresión directa de la voluntad del ciudadano mediante el voto. En segundo lugar, y muy vinculado a la anterior estrategia así como con el objetivo de la generación de consensos sociales y políticos, resulta especialmente útil la colaboración del mundo asociativo puesto que no sólo permite una mayor difusión de la actividad participativa sino que también puede actuar como centro receptor de dicha participación. Y en tercer lugar, debe considerarse la utilización de diferentes plataformas tecnológicas para la participación, puesto que las TICs no sólo son Internet sino que contamos también con una herramienta con una mayor penetración ciudadana: la telefonía móvil.

En resumen, tal y como hemos pretendido apuntar, la prometedora relación entre las TICs y la participación ciudadana pasa por una planificación racional, sensata, comedida y, sobretodo realista de los procesos. Si bien estas soluciones tecnológicas aparecen como apetitosas novedades, lo cierto es que su errónea utilización puede dar lugar a disfunciones en la relación entre los ciudadanos y los responsables políticos. Además, la opción de algunas experiencias españolas y europeas por la virtualidad de Internet supone contar con un escenario final totalmente sesgado, puesto que más de la mitad de la población –en el mejor de los casos- no tiene acceso a dicho entorno ni interés en el mismo. Tal y como se ha venido realizando en diversas convocatorias, las TICs no pueden sustituir la participación presencial, personal, de los ciudadanos. Si queremos que la relación entre las tecnologías y la participación ciudadana siga siendo prometedora deberemos aprender a incorporarlas de manera gradual, como herramientas adicionales que permiten complementar aquellas lagunas que los mecanismos tradicionales no son capaces de colmar, como por ejemplo la participación de los ciudadanos más jóvenes. Pero en cualquier caso, no le pidamos a las TICs que por sí solas nos solucionen nuestros problemas.

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Robert Rattle:

ICTs, Values and Social Change: The Case of Canadian Democracy

Abstract:

Internet and communication technologies (ICTs) are revolutionising how people communicate and connect. While these have catalyzed calls for increasing societal change, social messages, not the technologies, motivate these actions. This paper will use the case study of Canada and the application of ICTs to argue why they are no less likely to support social change in modern economies than any previous technology. Drawing on examples of federal policy changes in Canada, the paper will argue ICTs and social media can be used to suppress democracy, undermine science and expand social impacts, even where they are intended to specifically address those problems. The paper will then discuss the roles of values in social change to argue that ICTs and social media are influenced by larger societal forces and that these are often better predictors of outcomes than the application of any one technology for social change.

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Introduction

The paper discusses the actions of a western democratic country to affect the use of ICTs in its efforts to expand inequalities, restrict social and environmental protections and weaken democratic participation, demonstrating the capacity to use ICTs to suppress democracy distinct from most enquiries that typically examine actions in less stable political environments. The country examined in this case is Canada - arguably considered a strong western democracy - by considering the pro-authoritarian position of the Canadian federal government in recent years. While many positive applications of ICTs exist that offer evidence of community empowerment, this paper will demonstrate the ability of governments in modern democracies to employ anti-democratic activities if they so choose to support specific ideological beliefs. In this context, ICTs may readily be employed to maintain and even strengthen the status quo despite widespread misconceptions about the empowering nature of ICTs to generate social change. The paper will then discuss the roles of values in social change to argue that ICTs and social media are influenced by larger societal forces and that these are often better predictors of outcomes from social change efforts.

Canada - A Modern Democracy?

Canada has established a strong public broadcaster (the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation or CBC), a well respected central statistical agency (Statistics Canada or Stats Can), and a reputation for environmental and social practices - such as the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and Agency - that have placed Canada in a well respected international light and leadership role among its many successes as an advanced economy. The names of Maurice Strong, David Suzuki, Stephen Lewis and many well-known and respected media practitioners (not to mention Marshall McLuhan) are recognised internationally within and outside their circles of influence. These, among many other institutions, have been chief in establishing Canada as a strong democratic nation by virtue of their information and communication properties.

These developments have both reflected and reinforced Canadian values of empathy, cooperation, sustainability, freedoms of expression, strong democratic participation in community life, an important role for the state, and sustainably sharing our combined wealth of natural resources and human capital to make the planet a better place for all.

Yet despite these successes, current federal policies are eroding, dismantling and eliminating a remarkably long list of social and environmental gains made through the last century in Canada. Of particular concern is the escalating war on knowledge (Rabson, 2012; Smith 2012), less science in policy decision making (Goldenberg, 2012), increasing barriers to informed debate (indeed, any debate at all (CBC, 2009; Horter 2012; Reynolds, 2012)) and reduced freedoms of expression. One Canadian Blogger for the Dogwood Institute relates these changes to new media and communication strategies, suggesting that: Prime Minister "Harper knows the news cycle ...will burn through the story quickly and move on.... if he maintains strict message discipline amongst his caucus, silences public servants and limits information..." (Horter, 2012). How is this unfolding in Canada?

Public Broadcasting

The CBC has seen its budget slashed radically. In the March 2012 budget, the federal government removed \$115 million in funding over three years from the CBC, an amount that equals 10% of the Broadcasters dwindling budget (Canada, 2012; CBC, 2012a). This contributed to the prompt elimination of analogue television services (one month earlier than the one year extension granted by the Canadian Radio and Television Commission) impacting 1.7% - arguably the most vulnerable television viewers - of the Canadian population. The result of budgetary cutbacks to the public broadcaster has had other effects as well, including an ongoing creep of commercialism into the broadcasting programs and platforms of Canadian public broadcasters. "CBC/Radio-Canada will increase its revenues by better leveraging existing television advertising by maximizing the return on its most popular shows. We'll also aggressively pursue digital advertising revenues" (CBC, 2012). These steps have been accompanied by the consolidation of regional services into fewer and larger distribution domains, markedly eroding local content and quality (Hurtig, 2011). The original requirement to move to digital

transmission in Canada, as in other countries, has been to free transmission space to expand other digital services (CRTC, 2011). "CBC/Radio-Canada is being forced to shut off, sell, or scrap more than 600 transmission sites currently used to give rural Canadians free access to the CBC" (Open Media, nd). Yet as public broadcasters are increasing their levels of commercialisation, and shutting down most digital transmitters, private broadcasters are maintaining their analogue transmission capabilities in areas exempted from the switch. "Big Telecom companies want to swoop in and monopolize rural Canada's digital future" (Open Media, nd). The business case for CBC simply could not be made in any of these markets given budgetary cutbacks. That has left commercial interests as the sole providers of analogue services in these exempted markets. Moscoe and McKercher (2006) attribute these losses to global convergence in pursuit of 'friction-free' capitalism. This specific pursuit is wholly consistent with the values of right leaning politics that advance the notion that free market forces and economic hegemony combined with limited government 'interference' will generate the greatest social good.

The CBC, like all public broadcasters, balanced commercial media interests. However, more than mere convergence, with a deteriorating role for CBC in Canadian media, the messages are increasingly concentrated, driven by financial interests and conservative values, shifting media from public interest towards market interests. "It's notable that Canadian newspapers invariably refer to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives as "left-wing" or "left-leaning," but they never call the C.D. Howe Institute "right-wing," and rarely describe the far-right Fraser Institute as what it is. Meanwhile, the right-wing Institute for Research on Public Policy is supposedly a "non-partisan think-tank" and, incredibly, the National Citizen's Coalition is also a "non-partisan organization." " writes Mel Hurtig (2011). A 2006 Canadian Senate Report (Senate, 2006) noted that "No real democracy can function without a healthy, diverse and independent news media to inform people about the way their society works. The argument is that, in a democracy, government should foster healthy and independent news media." The reduced ability of CBC to deliver on its mandate is effectively the loss of democracy in Canada in terms of the role of the media. "The results are fewer diverse sources of local information and less public dialogue, which undermines the health of our democracy." (Hurtig, 2011) Despite the one-to-many and many-to-many communications possible from ICTs, their messages are simply being drowned out by the louder corporate messages supported by these federal government policies, undermining community empowerment and advocating the status quo for social conditions.

Scientific Information

Similarly, Statistics Canada - the central government agency that holds considerable data and information statistics, including advanced methodologies and the personnel and resources to administer complex national surveys and data collection activities - lost, in the same federal 2012 budget, 7.5%, or \$33.9 million, of its funding which places the jobs of 50% of its workforce at risk (Chase, 2012; Curry and Grant, 2012; Galloway, 2012; Grant, 2012). This action followed on the heels of the elimination of the mandatory nature of the Long Form Census - Canada's most comprehensive source of national social statistical data used by a wide variety of groups from academics conducting research to better inform policy decision making to social services personnel on the front lines dealing with poverty and crime.

The federal government cited privacy and security concerns supposedly expressed by Canadians (despite a compliance rate nearing 100%), as the reason for this significant change to the Long Form Census. With this change, the federal government expects a compliance rate of 50% at best, placing at risk the validity of future data collected (CPHA, 2010). Despite the dramatic change based largely on expressed privacy concerns, the same federal government then swiftly introduced Bill C-30, commonly referred to as the Internet Surveillance legislation, that allows, among other things, law enforcement personnel to access, preserve and secretly maintain surveillance data without court oversight, enable real-time surveillance among networks, and provide customer information without court oversight (Geist, 2012). The Ontario Privacy Commissioner described the legislation as representing "one of the most invasive threats to our privacy and freedom that I have ever encountered in my 25 years" (OPC, 2012). Despite an avalanche of public outrage and concern over the proposed Bill (including emails, blog sites and social media campaign), political shuffling may yet result in its enactment, and there remain strong assertions from the federal government that this will indeed be the ultimate result (Geist,

2012a & 2012b). ICTs provided that avalanche of public and professional dissension, yet the federal government appears poised to use a much more extensive variety of strategies to overcome and ignore that dissension that include, and go far beyond, ICTs alone, dwarfing any efforts of armchair activists.

In the same March 2012 budget, funding for the First Nations Statistical Council, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy and the National Welfare Council were also eliminated. The National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy, established in 1988, is the only national organization with a direct mandate from Parliament to engage Canadians on the topic of sustainable development. Similarly, the National Council of Welfare provided valuable information on issues of poverty for over four decades. Likewise, the First Nations Statistical Institute is a valuable key portal for first-nations communities to access and store data securely and confidentially. In other words, these three cuts alone harm the most vulnerable of Canadians; those with the least political, financial or social power, along with the ability of Canadians to make sound science-based environmental policy decisions. At the same time, the Community Access Program - a federal program to enable vulnerable populations to access the Internet and all Canadians to access it effectively - was also eliminated, saving almost \$8 million annually. If this seems like federal penny pinching austerity measures at the expense of the most vulnerable, it is. In 2000, personal tax cuts amounted to \$38 billion dollars, and the current federal government increased those cuts to include \$18 billion more for corporations, and \$19 billion more lost revenues by reducing the federal tax on goods and services (Jackson, 2012; Hennessey, 2012). In other words, the wealthy have become more wealthy and powerful, while the vulnerable have seen their resources systematically eliminated and eroded (Brennan, 2012). These moves alone provide a systematic political basis to secure social support for the values manifest in modern market economies (Naiman, 1997; Labonte and Schrecker, 2007). At the same time, public discourse on these matters has been effectively eliminated, slowly eroding and making invisible dissension. These measures greatly reduce the effectiveness of communications media to contribute to the communication, discourse, and distribution of the roles of key social institutions. In so doing, these measures also undermine the ability of Canadians to discuss and reflect upon, and develop evidence-based policies that represent longstanding social values. Discourse about the differential roles of private versus public institutions in key elements of Canadians' social lives have been effectively eclipsed and handed over to the private sector to manage or manipulate as the case may be, creating "a shift to business oriented professionals as managers of health and social service agencies" (Dunlop, 2006). Those most vested in maintaining the status quo in terms of national productivity and the division of labour are now in charge of ensuring a low level of class consciousness in Canada as the "rationale for prioritizing market determinism" (Beresford, 2005).

These actions crystallise trends that suffocate the distributive and empowering nature of ICTs, eclipsing social change through policy actions that undermine the potential of ICTs.

Environmental and Social Justice

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency also lost 75% of its budget in the last two years. This has been accompanied by a new Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (2012) that narrows the scope of projects to be assessed, shifts the responsibility away from federal authorities, transforms the triggering process to one of a discretionary nature, changes other processes that make its application less effective, introduces new powers of delegation, substitution and equivalency, and provides a much more restricted role for public participation (Ecojustice, 2012). It no longer matters how well connected Canadians might be - their voices have now been severed from the principal environmental assessment decision making process in Canada.

ENGOS and social groups are not only watching their funding eliminated (Ramos and Ron, 2012), they are watching their steps more closely. Increasing compliance activities to clamp down on the political activities of charities has sent a chill among those in the third sector in Canada, warning against any possible actions that may be considered beyond their bounds of tax laws (national or international) or status obligations (Canada, 2012; Hamilton, 2012; McCarthy, 2012). This move has stifled innovation and creativity in the NGO environmental sector in Canada.

Similarly, since "2006, there has been a gradual tightening of media protocols for federal scientists and other government workers. Researchers ... are now required to direct inquiries to a media-relations office ... journalists have documented several instances in which prominent researchers have been prevented from discussing published, peer-reviewed literature. Policy directives and e-mails ... reveal a confused and Byzantine approach to the press, prioritizing message control and showing little understanding of the importance of the free flow of scientific knowledge" (Nature, 2012). Commentators have likened these actions to a 'war on science' (Suzuki, 2012). Despite the potential for social media and ICTs to contribute to community and national action alike in a timely and effective manner, current federal policies preclude that potential from ever gaining traction.

Regardless the specific mandates of federal agencies, they all performed vital social roles by collecting, analysing, reporting, and communicating important data and information that enabled an informed public and policy discourse throughout Canada. Canadian society has lost key opportunities to develop, communicate and convey critical information consistent with key Canadian values to and from the masses. At a time when ICTs could efficiently facilitate these communications, the institutional and governance structures to enable this potential has been systematically dismantled, ambushed and re-oriented. The ability of ICTs to provide multi-directional communications has been largely reduced from federal processes and policies, leaving a void to be filled by the sensationalistic decline of literacy and the triumph of spectacle (Hedges, 2010). The values of Canadian society have been eclipsed by market interests of individualism, greed, dominance and control, potentially discouraging social change in many cases. The steady erosion and loss of information and data, media for communications pathways, and resources for participation in federal activities has effectively eroded democratic participation regardless of the potential for ICTs to contribute to and strengthen these democratic institutions in Canada. In a strong western democracy well equipped with advanced communications media, substantial barriers are being established to counter, confuse or eclipse the free flow of specific forms of information, forms that reflect Canadian values of empathy, cooperation, sustainability, freedoms of expression, strong democratic participation in community life, an important role for the state, and sustainably sharing our combined wealth of natural resources and human capital to make the planet a better place for all. This loss is being replaced by an increasing ability to communicate values of global market integration and economic competition as private interests flood the void left by public institutions.

This is not to suggest, however, that counter-revolutionary strategies come solely from more or less conventional socio-political approaches: digital media offer an enormous scope of opportunities to counter revolution and change on their own. Corcoran (2012) for instance, raises some interesting questions about Google searches, and by extension, the role of private telecommunication infrastructure in online discourse. Noting the advertisements that appear on Google searches when one performs a search using that platform for 'Robert Howarth' - a Cornell University professor who was the chief author of a paper that was critical of hydraulic fracturing - Corcoran questions the role(s) of search engines to maintain the status quo. "Every time Professor Howarth's name was placed into a Google search engine, the first thing that appeared was an ad from ANGA [America's Natural Gas Alliance], devoted strictly to hampering the credibility of Howarth's research" (Corcoran, 2012). Similarly, in Canada, a search for 'Gasland' - a film critical of hydraulic fracturing in Canada - introduces the prominent advertisement for the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers promoting the benefits of fracking and providing considerable industry literature about the economic importance of fossil fuel development in Canada. A search for 'life cycle costs of renewable energy' in Canada led (for this author) to an article on Phys.org (formerly Physorg.com, a "leading web-based science, research and technology news service") to an embedded advertisement for the Canadian Nuclear Association - a member of an industry which is coming under increasing pressure having had a considerable contract cancelled by a provincial government in recent months, is combating significant public opposition to the deep repository burial of high level nuclear waste in the Canadian Shield, and have watched global investments drop in the aftermath of the Fukushima incident in Japan - promoting nuclear energy generation.

Likewise, the use of many social media platforms and blog sites by social and environmental organisations employ networks whose business platform indirectly and often directly conflict with the goals of those organisations. One blog post about the report "Commitment Issues: Tar sands extraction invalidates Canada's obligations to the UNFCCC and undermines global climate change negotiations" by the Canadian Youth Delegation - the voice of the Canadian youth climate movement at international United Nations climate conferences -

sprouted an advertisement for an SUV on the day the report was released - in other words, on the day when a high volume of visitors read the blog post.

It remains to be seen how social media and digital communications will unfold in the coming years. Despite the enormous potential to motivate change, counter forces are powerful, they extend far beyond the digital media, and there remains low awareness of class consciousness or the diverse strategic challenges confronting those in search of social change through ICTs.

Social change - New ICTs and Values

The messages that society projects defines how people behave, the structures we develop to satisfy our needs and wants, and the values and beliefs we set our fundamental operating principles upon (Stern, 2000; Stern et al, 1997), yet it is often the message we hear and discuss that are mostly paid attention to. In other words, as McLuhan (1964) stated, "...the medium is the message", implying that we tend to focus on the obvious at the expense of understanding structural factors that are more subtle, assumed and change slowly over time. However, the information in these messages is never static: they conform to and reinforce prevailing values, beliefs and worldviews, and are constantly in flux by the messages society receives from the world around us.

The messages ICTs are projecting today posit a more participatory governance, greater equalities and even sustainability, more widely and fairly distributing both the natural and social wealth of nations. Thus the source of much euphoria about their potential to engage social change.

Human behaviour is almost infinitely malleable, conforming to the dominant messages of society, and the infrastructures and choices that support the values and beliefs from which key messages crystallise (Mead, 1963; Naiman, 1997). Throughout the majority of human society, those messages established powerful beliefs, cultural practices and structures that prevented the 'Joneses' from getting ahead (Erdal and Whiten, 1996; Lenski and Lenski, 1978; Kaplan and Hill, 1985; Hawkes, O'Connell, & Blurton-Jones, 1991). Those messages were reflected in values that held constraints to greed, competition, hoarding, control and leadership which were consistently reflected through deep understandings and appreciations of the natural world and its limits, and, equally, the importance of close social bonding, trust, equality, egalitarianism, sharing and cooperation. In these environments, cultural norms, practices and technologies evolved to ensure an equitable distribution of social wealth and a sustainable scale of the society (Gowdy, 1994; Livingston, 1994). ICTs can and do reflect all these values.

Today, however, the dominant social messages - transmitted, absorbed, opined, reinforced and affirmed through the largely privately owned ICT infrastructures - encourage getting ahead of the Joneses (Conca, 2001; Prodnick, 2012; Schröter, 2012;). These messages reflect beliefs in the mechanistic predictable functioning and control of the natural world, social relations and economic structures. Structures that support competition, greed, individual self-interest, materialism, inequality and hierarchies are rewarded (Daly and Cobb, 1994; Jackson, 2005; Manzerolle and Kjosen, 2012; McGuigan, 2012). This has led to the perverse behaviour of economic growth as its own objective, resulting in accelerated material and energy demands (Daly, 1996; Jackson and Marks, 1999; Victor, 2009) along with increased social disparities between and across nations (Marmot et al, 1991; Marmot and Mustard, 1994; Marmot and Wilkinson, 2006; Raphael, 2007 & 2002; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009).

Federal policy decisions affecting media, communications and the use of ICTs in Canada merely reflect robust forces resisting the potential for ICTs to contribute to meaningful social change. With the support of firmly established social mechanisms and institutional structures, a dominant class appropriates for its own benefit a disproportionate amount of social wealth. Simultaneously, materially affluent nations expropriate a similarly disproportionate amount of natural wealth to perpetuate fundamentally unsustainable (both in a material and social sense) lifestyles (CSDH, 2008). ICTs merely project, reflect and reinforce these structures.

Paradoxically, it seems, the development of ICTs continue to focus on specific technologies, efficiencies and industries to stimulate economic growth and material expansionism, social exclusion, class divisions and wealth

inequalities to more or less perpetuate the status quo (Aouragh, 2012; De Paoli and Storni, 2011; Garland and Harper, 2012; Heinonen, Jokinen and Jari, 2001; Heiskannn and Mikko, 2003; Lash, 2002). Despite calls and messages for societal change, and the widespread application of ICTs for democratic social change in Canada, these messages and applications are dwarfed by dominant messages and choices that reinforce prevailing institutional structures of growth, class hierarchies and inequalities, and mechanistic reductionism supported by a wide variety of policies and practices. Dominant values continue to permeate society, and these values are applied to manipulate what choices society is afforded to exploit through new ICT potentials.

It is the potential for ICTs to enable social change that have, to some extent, generated euphoria for ICTs to engage revolution and social change at local, national and global levels. Yet if the social structures and underlying values of society do not reflect deep social change, existing socio-political environments and established institutional structures function as an anchor that restrain the application of ICTs for social change.

To a similar extent, it is the perpetuation of existing structures that has generated this euphoria as businesses and industries beholden to the expansion of social media and other products and services of ICTs tend to over emphasize the benefits of ICTs and social media to achieve their own self-interested needs (Geels and Smit, 2000; Greiner, Radermacher, & Rose, 1996; Heinonen, Jokinen, & Kaivooja, 2001). As Upton Sinclair astutely noted, "It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends upon his not understanding it!" (Sinclair, 1935)

At the same time, very little attention is directed at the societal normalising ideals – the values and institutional structures - emerging from these new communication tools. This omission may have obscured an essential function of ICTs to unleash their anticipated transformational powers for social change - neglecting the message of the medium. That message - for participatory governance, equalities and more equal wealth and power distributions, sustainability, and cooperation and sharing - has been eclipsed by the competitive, individualistic, materialistic control beliefs that define prevailing global socio-economic structures. Despite the potential for ICTs to contribute to social change, the lack of attention to their higher order normalising features has made implementing this potential tenuous and often counterproductive. The results have often been the shading and distancing (Princen, 1997) of adverse consequences in more tightly coupled human-environment relationships vulnerable to increasingly intense systemic shocks (Homer-Dixon, 2000; 2006).

Social change and revolution may not be fully appreciated or engaged without understanding the role of society's values, beliefs and social structures (Sussman, 2012). ICTs greatest contribution to social change may therefore be derived from their transformative effects projecting the values and the messages necessary for desirable social change onto critical institutions and structures.

The true power of ICTs for social change and revolution cannot be viewed as a tool or set of tools or practices - the conventional mechanistic approach - such as social media per se. The transformational power of ICTs will be in the societal changes and processes they enable, and the power of those changes to demand the requisite transformations that motivate, advance and drive social change. But that change is more dependent upon social structures as they shape the ways in which the technology will, and in many cases, may be applied. ICTs have not yet achieved the escape velocity required for social change to exceed the gravitational forces exerted by global market values, hierarchies and competition.

Conclusion

Value structures and institutional arrangements tend to govern the ways in which technology will be applied. These factors also function to moderate those who would wish to or posit revolution and social change such as a more democratic nature to ICTs and social media. The political climate in Canada manifests a specific set of values inconsistent with deviation from market ideologies. ICTs serve all social actors, favouring those who have the greatest capacities to project their ideologies and values, and privileging prevailing structures. Those who have demonstrated a strong propensity to use all tools available at their disposal to maintain and strengthen their position generally subscribe to the values expressed by that social structure and believe only

minor adjustments to the torque of events is required to ensure equality and sustainability. ICTs, by themselves, are unlikely to change the conditions that generate this social behaviour.

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Natalia Grincheva:

Psychotechnologies of Digital Diplomacy

Abstract:

The study outlines the problematic framework of the emerging field of digital diplomacy in the social, cultural, and economic dimensions through a close reading of Stiegler's philosophical concept of the techno-culture. The research intends to raise important questions regarding international communications in a new light of phenomenology of collective individuation. Stiegler's philosophical conception of contemporary politics under the condition of globalized cultural and economic capitalism is one way to explain the dramatic changes in diplomatic relations taking place on the global arena at the beginning of the new century. Stiegler's techno-cultural project has significant implications for digital diplomacy as a practical discipline and can be successfully utilized to improve its future development based on the more productive engagement with social, economic, and political issues in a theoretical context. The study tries to deepen the understanding of the political and economic mechanisms in the international communication and diplomatic activities complicated and challenged with the advance of digital technologies in the global capitalism system.

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Introduction

In the complex processes of economic and cultural globalization, many countries (especially in Western economically developed societies) try to preserve their cultural diversity and strive to make their national heritage and contemporary cultures more accessible to people around the world. Digital diplomacy has become a new and increasingly popular political strategy that aims to provide open access to cultural content and create a new way of interaction with global audiences. In recent years, many national cultural industries have been engaged in developing digital platforms for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. These national cultural assets decoded in digital networks serve to develop political sites specifically designed to communicate cultural citizenship through various forms of cultural inclusion and participation (Paschalidis 2010, 179).

Diplomacy has traditionally served to manage relations among states and other parties by advising and shaping foreign policy, which eventually coordinates and secures specific states' interests in the international arena. With the advance of new media communication tools, diplomacy, and specifically cultural diplomacy, is increasingly adopting new dimensions and developing a genuine "communicative action" (Plavsak 2002, 110). Digital diplomacy, also known as diplomacy 2.0 or e-diplomacy, incorporates the inclusive nature of traditional public or cultural diplomacy and in many ways is a derivative of the above-mentioned definition. Therefore, digital diplomacy mainly refers to the diplomatic practices through digital and networked technologies, including the Internet, mobile devices, and social media channels (Potter 2002).

Though in last decade digital diplomacy has been the focus of close attention from political leaders and cultural practitioners, there is still a lack of academic engagement with this subject in a more critical and theoretical context. However, it is imperative to better understand how these technologies of externalizing cultural memory, national heritage, and identity, as well as human values, work within a larger political context in global communications. This paper aims to elaborate the theoretical underpinnings of digital diplomacy through employing the conceptual framework of collective individuation and psychotechnologies developed by French critical philosopher Bernard Stiegler.

In his series *Technics and Time*, Stiegler demonstrated that human agency is always in need of technical extension and support to sustain oneself and realize individual and collective goals. As such, "technical prosthesis" has always been critical for humans, making possible its ever becoming (Stiegler 1998, 188). Most importantly, the cultural phenomenon of human memory influencing the construction of future development becomes possible only with the advent of techniques and tools. These tools serve as external virtual drives of human experiences and knowledge memory that shape the future, inherited from those past lives of which it is the crystallized exteriorization. Exteriorization as the formation of the techno-cultural context of human sociality is always in reciprocal, co-constitutive relationship to interiorization, which is the process of individual consciousness formation (Stiegler 1998, 163).

Stiegler's conception of memory exteriorization is crucial for the present study because it helps to analyze audio-visual and digital technologies in its major influence on human consciousness being formed from the outside. These technologies, according to Stiegler, have a strong potential to impact human cognitive processes constituting consciousness outside of real life experiences. Technical audio-visual and digital objects and tools build future experiences in contemporary society, out of which the principles for memory selectively emerge to preserve the primary moments in an ongoing real-time montage of the present. In line with Walter Benjamin's concern about the political implications of the technological advance in cultural sphere, Stiegler in his work demonstrates how tele and digital technologies revolutionised communication techniques, employed by governments and commercial industries to manipulate and control audiences on national and transnational levels. Digital, electronic dimensions of modern exteriorization technology, as Stiegler emphasizes, is resultant in erosion of national collective memory being programmed under the contradictory economic and cultural globalization forces in a political struggle for manipulating human consciousness.

Phenomenology of Collective Memory: Transindividuation Processes in the Information Society

To better explain the political processes of psychotechnologies in relation to digital diplomacy, it is important to define such notions as individuation and collective individuation or transindividuation (used in this paper interchangeably). These notions first introduced by Gilbert Simondon (1989) are critical initial points for understanding larger concepts of political and economic powers that are analyzed in this paper in light of digital diplomacy. The notion of individuation is constructed on the premise that an "individual" is never given in advance but produced or come into being in the course of multiple ongoing processes. Individuation occurs as a complex interaction of multidimensional processes, some of which can also take place transindividually, or on a group level (Simondon 1989, 128). Transindividuation is a foundation of another layer of environment created through collective meanings. In transindividuation, senses are perceived and transmitted through members of communities, modified and shaped by each one through human communication, thus making collective and subjective life possible.

Before explaining transindividuation, there is the need to refer to another concept from Simondon, transduction. Transduction accounts for a mediating process between the world and a living being, which develops a psychic individuation. Such an "exchange of energies" with a world to which any individuation is fully integrated produces a subject, a psychic being separated from the world, but interacting with it as a whole other phase of being by itself (Simondon 1989, 24-25).

One of the most important points of transduction theory that is being challenged and further questioned in the realm of digital technologies is Simondon's claim that "transduction is any transfer of information through a material medium. It applies to processes of differentiation and crystallization of all sorts, from the growth of an embryo, to the learning of a concept, to the spread of what today are called "memes" through a society" (Shaviro 2006). However, with the development of new media information technologies and a global reach of the Internet, humanity has been increasingly infected with the ideas of information's immateriality (Hayles 2004). Digital technologies have created an unlimited storage capacity to preserve, share, and exchange digitally decoded human heritage and any sort of information accumulated by the present and past generations. Thus, information often seems independent of materiality, but transduction, as Simondon points out, is never independent of its material medium. Therefore, in accordance with McLuhan's famous thesis "media is the message" (1967), Simondon also asserts that the medium and message intersect. The shape of the information transmitted within a medium is in important ways transformed through the qualities and potential of the medium.

The digital medium, specifically the Internet, is a type of medium that in many ways redefines the principles of mass communications and provides a techno-geographical milieu of connected minds where the circulation of information shapes the consciousness of people through a transduction bypassing physical boundaries. Stalder also confirms that with the advance of the Internet, network technology culture has been transformed from an object-oriented to exchange-oriented culture, which is understood as a continuous process (Stalder 2005). The exchange-oriented culture corresponds nicely to Manuel Castells' perspective on the growth of a networked society, where culture consists not so much of content, but of processes; and where the Internet is "an open-ended network of cultural meanings that can not only coexist, but also interact and modify each other on the basis of this exchange" (Castells, 2004, 40).

Stiegler, discussing the processes of globalization and virtualization of contemporary culture, indicates that "...an increase in digital networking will produce a new kind of temporal object: one that is delinearizable and inseparable, produced by hypervideo technologies" (Stiegler 2011, 3). He sees the future of humanity in light of the increased technotization of human consciousness:

there will doubtless be an *increase in the amount of time spent in front of screens* of all kinds, which will be then re-conceptualized and redefined in their functions (becoming terminals of tele-action), their various applications expanding into the thousands, most notably at the professional level; these processes will pursue, at an increasingly complex level and with increasing ease and sensitivity, the industrial *temporalization of consciousness* (Stiegler 2011, 3).

By temporal objects, Stiegler means films, radio, television programs, and other media products which reach out daily "to millions, hundreds of millions of consciousnesses" (Stiegler 2009, 106). These temporal objects, as Stiegler explains, represent the pursuit of life by means other than life (Stiegler 1998, 17). Stiegler introduces the notion of the temporal object in regard to his theoretical concept of the collective memory. Stiegler's exploration of the technologies of human consciousness manipulation, or tele-technologies as he called them, started from his detailed analysis of audiovisual media, such as cinema, and progressed to the study of digital technologies in his most recent works. However, his framework of tele-technologies, in the broadest sense, serves as a playground for exploration of the "industrialization of memory."

The industrialization of human memory, which includes culture and identity, is now operationalized through the production and wide distribution of industrial temporal objects. The results of industrialization or exteriorization of human memory in temporal objects create technical collective memory, which plays a crucial role in shaping all aspects of life in society, because it contains collective experiences from which anybody can draw and thus, project into the future and transform existence.

According to Stiegler, collective memory is a specific form of actualization of the present rather than the conjunction of a human being with an image of the past. The present moment is being actualized via the flow of time and space captured through temporal objects that are the result of a highly selective process of cultural contextualization and are extremely political by nature (Stiegler, 1998, 68). As Stiegler explains, the qualities of temporal objects are able to attract predetermined ways of viewing the past and reconstructing the present. They are the carrier of collective knowledge, experiences, and ideas that people have had. However, their structure of inheritance and transmission is not biological and genetic but external, which exists in addition to the genetic, like a surrounding layer. Stiegler emphasizes the individual ontogeneses, which exists beyond the central nervous system and is formed through culture, as collective knowledge, in interaction with technical artifacts (Stiegler, 1998, 72).

The mechanisms that are in place in the reconstruction of human experiences through interaction with temporal objects can be explained by the ability of these objects to represent the past of others while being in the present of an individual in a particular time and space. In this way, temporal objects give access to a past that one has not lived, the past as the "already there" or in Heidegger's terms, the Dasein, only accessible through techniques. As a result, history, traditions, communities are instrumentalized and can be transmitted to human minds to build a collective memory (Stiegler, 1998, 85). In regard to cross-cultural interaction in a broad realm of political international communication, human culture serves as the medium of invention and propagation of collective memory.

Traditionally, collective memory has been understood as "becoming-together" in space with the material cultural objects: in museums, in public heritage sites, in films, in the nonstop stream of images, and in sounds surrounding people in their daily activities. As a result, television, cinema, and digital media enable billions of people around the globe share many key milestones, even though the perspectives of different cultural societies toward these images and ideas significantly differ. In a large measure, a collective memory is being produced on a global scale, and that collective memory serves as a common guideline to all those who live in the interior of a given social and historical configuration.

From an international relations and diplomatic perspective, Stiegler's emphasis on the power of particular cultural objects to dominate in the global context is imperative. Stiegler illustrates his idea of cultural domination through the case of the successful film industry in Hollywood being increasingly representative across countries and thus spreading the American lifestyle around the world. Stiegler argues that the U.S. film industry was able to dominate globally not because of the U.S. industrial power but because the United States needed to fully employ cinematic potential to produce effective stories to invent the country itself. In the case with the United States, the process of unification of a nation depended not so much on sharing a common historical past, but rather on projecting the desire for a common future. The rise of cinematography and culture was particularly acute in the case of the United States, because the country needed to stimulate individuals composing their common being. This required the constant projection of a model, which is known now as the "American way of life," and that amounts today to the consumerist model transmitted globally (Stiegler 2011, 105).

Conclusion

From a political perspective, this power of temporal objects to reach and manipulate audiences across borders and dominate the cultural niches of other societies has strong implications in diplomatic relations. This framework is imperative because cultural diplomacy has traditionally been "an instrument ... and a way of interacting with the outside world" (Gienow-Hecht, Donfried 2010, 11). Cultural diplomacy implies the use of the art of diplomacy in promoting culture, resulting in greater awareness of each other's cultural backgrounds. Such awareness leads to interaction among various players, states, and individuals. Traditionally (and before the rapid advance of tele-technologies) it was achieved through organization of events or a series of cultural activities among countries, employing the instrumentality of "culture" in promoting a country's interests in economic, political, and strategic fields. Though defined as "the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples to foster mutual understanding" (Cummins 2003), cultural diplomacy has served in many historical examples as a powerful tool of cultural propaganda and manipulation.

In regard to digital diplomacy, Stiegler's framework is particularly relevant to excitement in the diplomatic and international communication fields about the advance of the new media channels of trans-cultural interactions. The digital technologies provided means even faster and more efficient distribution of cultural content that can reach and manipulate millions of consciousnesses around the globe in milliseconds; "While broadcast networks are still necessarily national for technical and performance-transmission reasons, the *digital network is global*" (Stiegler 2011, 126).

As Hart confirms, "the increased speed of digital devices and innovations in computer networks and digital compression technologies make it both easier and less expensive to deliver words, music, symbols, and images (in fact, anything that can be digitized) to consumers around the world" (Hart 2010, 56). The hegemony of Hollywood increased even further with the development of new media and the domination of the Internet, which enabled simultaneous watching of live events by hundreds of millions of people.

Stiegler's techno-cultural project has significant implications for digital diplomacy as a practical discipline and can be successfully utilized to improve its future development based on the more productive engagement with social, economic, and political issues in a theoretical context. The technological advance of the information society, envisioned by many enthusiastic supporters of digital revolution as a huge progress in the postmodern struggle for democracy, brings about new challenges and threats to cultural development and cultural exchanges in the local, national, and international contexts. Close attention to the political questions raised by Stiegler in his series *Technics and Time* can help academics and practitioners from the digital diplomacy field to focus and address the most important moments of social cultural formations of contemporary networked society in a globalized community.

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Gwyneth Sutherland:

The Digital Battlefield: Controlling the Technology of Revolution

Abstract:

Recent conflicts and revolutions have foregrounded a new battlefield where information and communication technology (ICT) will play a crucial role. The producers of ICT frequently use it as a tool for defining and implementing strategies aimed at achieving stability and democracy. While the traditional battlefields remain in upheaval, manoeuvres on the digital terrain do not progress in parallel. This paper will examine the foreign policy implications of the pervasive cultural bias of the ICTs connected to revolution and stabilization efforts describing how this bias shifts power away from the populations using the technology and toward the actors controlling the programs and codes. The ICTs deployed for conflict management and democratization are plagued by cultural bias which disenfranchises users, thereby diminishing the technology's potential for use in participatory actions by removing authorship and contributing to information gatekeeping by the creators of the technology which tend to be European or American.

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Introduction

The debate surrounding the use of ICT to empower democratization efforts and human rights work focuses on the idea of openness. As an extension of the freedom of expression which is vital in a democracy and protected in the UN charter, if individuals are free to convey the details of these events through online platforms then democracy will prevail. Therefore, when developing policies aimed at promoting democracy, access to mobile and online information sharing is a focus, and participation in the information sharing architecture is the goal. Current policies encourage a definition of freedom that equates participation with open access and despotism with censorship and information barriers. This analysis will consider other dimensions to participation such as control of access and format of participation.

ICT has evolved rapidly and emerged from primarily U.S. and western EU cultures; however, the regions where it is applied for democratization efforts differ tremendously by language and culture. Although being concerned with the application of ICT for democratization and conflict management, the expectations, intentions, and goals of the producers of the technology and its users will be explored in a broader theoretical framework in order to contextualize the concept and role of cultural bias. Critical theory and *geosemiotics* will be used to answer questions such as 'how does bias manifest?' and 'why does it persist?' Finally, recent events will illustrate these theories in action.

Two Theories of Power

Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault's work on discourse and language brings together ideas about information and power. While these intellectual rivals challenged each other's theories, in the context of information and communication technology applied in conflict management, their work describes complementary aspects of power dynamics. For example, the producers of the technology and its users are not participants in the same discourse just as a 6-year-old student and the head of the ministry of education are not. The student's role is to learn and the minister's role is to define how learning happens in this system. Each of these philosophers developed and revised their work over decades, and this article does not intend to engage with their work in depth, yet drawing briefly from Habermas and Foucault provides a useful starting point to frame the perpetuation of cultural bias in ICT.

In Information Science, Stahl¹ observes that the Habermasian view is attractive to researchers of democracy and human rights because of its normative directions which encourage fair and open dialogue, but cautions there is no space to address hidden inequalities in the system. Stahl continues by summarizing that Foucault's work offers no solutions; the focus on power disparities (such as sane/insane) provides a path to exploring identity-based power relations. Stahl's cursory treatment of arguably dense material is not uncommon in connection to ICT. As the following sections delineate, the kernels of Habermas's theory appear again and again, diluted to popular notions of democracy by the proponents of open access. In particular, the tantalizing parallel between the internet's democratizing potential and a conception of Habermas's *ideal speech situation*² where universal participation leads to consensus and action.

Foucault articulates power dynamics in more granular shades.³ Particularly with regard to imposed identity, this dimension is exposed through Foucault's framework and invisible in Habermas's because the latter does not give it space in rational discourse. Foucault's lens permits the diagnosis of imperfections; only through this lens do problems such as cultural bias become apparent. And it is perhaps because of the union of political rationality

1 Stahl, Bernd: Whose Discourse? A Comparison of the Foucauldian and Habermasian Concepts of Discourse in Critical IS Research.

2 Habermas, Jürgen: Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action.

3 Foucault, Michel: The subject and power.

in the social sciences and positivism in engineering science that the current discussion is defined by Habermasian notions of participation. Habermas suggests the solution, the ideal toward which we should work. However, his solution insists on certain parameters which must be met in order to achieve equal and universal participation. Proponents of the Habermasian view assert that if barriers to access are removed, then open discourse will proceed. The barriers which are in fact preventing full participation and negotiation of validity among participants are not elements which can be adequately addressed in his framework because they emerged from discourse situations which do not adhere to his parameters. The barrier comes in the form of a biased means of conveyance, the technology, which places limits on the discourse so that validity and consensus can never be reached.

Foucault's work introduces the concept of the mode of power working through dichotomies of identity. These determine an individual's level of participation in the discourse (such as sane and insane).⁴ The dominant group exerts power through naming, through language. In this paper it is extended to users of ICT. Currently, if someone cannot use ICT, s/he would probably be considered illiterate or poor, on the wrong side of the digital divide.⁵ This paper asserts an alternative dichotomy-- users who find themselves cognitively at home in the ICT space and those who enter a cognitively foreign space. More concisely, there is a cognitive in-group and an out-group defined by the mode of power—information control. Pavlenko defines the term 'cognition' as referring to,

*"a variety of phenomena which include but are not limited to perception, attention, categorization, inference, reasoning, and socio-cultural belief systems."*⁶

The cognitive in-group sets the terms of how participants enter the discourse in the Habermasian sense, and therefore how the information we share is represented and codified. Frequently, this group siphons information away from the original authors in a new and homogenized form which fits the prescribed, in-group mode of discourse communication.

Defining Bias in ICT

Friedman and Nissenbaum began by defining bias in,

*"computer systems that systematically and unfairly discriminate against certain individuals or groups of individuals in favor of others. A system discriminates unfairly if it denies an opportunity or a good or it assigns an undesirable outcome... on grounds that are unreasonable or inappropriate."*⁷

ICTs provide users with an opportunity for self-expression, information storing, and engagement with the knowledge economy. Friedman and Nissenbaum further categorize three types of bias: pre-existing, technical, and emergent.⁸

Emergent bias becomes apparent through use because new knowledge, context, or other unanticipated elements enter the system. In this paper, it is hypothesized that significant divergence from the original design intentions leads to emergent bias. Tools that were designed to organize information, share stories, chronicle events in one culture may impede the *ideal speech situation* in another because the ICT tool imposes an emergent bias. To return to Foucauldian dichotomies, the cognitive in-group and out-groups may not share a common conception of how to input data, or even which data to record. As producer nations export ICTs, they

4 ibid.

5 Graham, Mark: Time Machines and Virtual Portals: The Spatialities of the Digital Divide.

6 Pavlenko, Aneta: Eyewitness Memory in Late Bilinguals: Evidence for Discursive Relativity. 259

7 Friedman, Batya and Nissenbaum, Helen: Bias in Computer Systems. 23

8 ibid pp.24-28

have consciously exported along with it particular models for informational control.⁹ Friedman and Nissenbaum explain the mechanism of control in terms of bias,

*"In this manner, centralized computing systems with widespread use can hold users hostage to whatever biases are embedded within the system."*¹⁰

There are nearly 7000 living languages. In the Niger-Congo language family alone, there are 1500 compared to the family to which English belongs which has only 430.¹¹ The most diverse language family is also one of the most under-represented on the internet.¹² Research continues to concentrate on written support for accessibility such as keyboards and coding, as well as breaking barriers to internet access itself,¹³ all fundamentally Habermasian approaches focusing on universal participation. However, without consideration of cultural elements beyond language, the nature of the barrier is invisible. Among 7000 languages, methods for making sense of our world vary enormously. Some cultures have done without nouns or numbers, have a non-linear sense of time,¹⁴ ¹⁵ have categories of words that most European languages have no concept for including smell and sound, not to mention differences such as orality.¹⁶ Cognitive psychology and language studies which inform ICT development have come from a small sample, 30 and at most 300, of usually related languages.¹⁷ The variation of expression among 7000 languages far exceeds the capacity of a single language's prescribed boxes, bars, and scrolling mechanisms in a virtual interface to encapsulate the intended communication of all the rest.

The screen of the computer or mobile device which sets the parameters for how communication can proceed or the way information will be managed assumes the spatial meanings associated with the culture in which it was designed. According to the theory of *geosemiotics* by Scollon and Wong Scollon,¹⁸ meaning-making occurs through active engagement between ourselves and the world. It is a dynamic process simultaneously negotiated as we act and react to the material spaces we encounter. The mono-cultural roots of current interface design elements and their arrangement (e.g. timelines, category selection boxes, maps) can be traced with *geosemiotics*.¹⁹

ICT cannot be used as an effective or trusted tool if it removes authorship by dissolving intentionality, context, or essential cultural communication elements. Returning to the framework of Habermas and Foucault, the participation is not determined simply by access to the discussion space, but also access to defining the form that participation takes. Makoni and Meinhof emphasize that,

*"the real power of the west is not located in its economic muscle and technological might. Rather, it resides in its power to define."*²⁰

9 Burk, Dan: Privacy and Property in the Global Datasphere. 1

10 Friedman, Batya and Nissenbaum, Helen: Bias in Computer Systems. 31

11 Lewis, M. Paul: Ethnologue: Statistical Summaries.

12 Paolillo, John; Pimienta, Daniel; Prado, Daniel: Measuring Linguistic Diversity on the Internet.

13 Olúbòdé-Sàwè, Fúnmi: Digital Communication in Indigenous Languages.

14 Holtzman, Jon: The Local in the Local: Models of Time and Space in Samburu District, Northern Kenya.

15 Mbiti, John: African Religions & Philosophy.

16 Ong, Walter: Orality and Literacy: the Technologizing of the Word.

17 Evans, Nicholas and Levinson, Stephen: The Myth of Language Universals: Language Diversity and Its Importance for Cognitive Science. 6-7

18 Scollon, Ron and Wong Scollon, Suzie: Discourses in Place: Language in the Material World.

19 *ibid.*

20 Makoni, Sinfree and Meinhof, Ulrike: Western Perspectives in Applied Linguistics in Africa. 2

By defining how we communicate and collect information, the west has created a form of colonialism. ^{21 22}

The User Experience

For societies working to rebuild civil and governmental structures, post-conflict, expressing and exploring identity is vital. This action is now melded with technology. In interviews from a 2011 Arab bloggers meeting in Tunisia, respondents commenting on the use of ICT emphasized their desire to convey their reality, their 'on-the-ground' perspective.²³ They were communicating an *identity*. This sentiment was also expressed in a BBC interview with a Libyan man who shared,

"We've been fighting for our identity for so many years, as well as to know who we are, to tell people who we are."²⁴

Identity may be the most vulnerable commodity as mono-cultural technology takes hold in the newest online communities. Statistics from the International Telecommunications Union show a dramatic increase of mobile web browsing from January 2011 to January 2012 in Africa with a jump from 6.33% to 19.17%. This rise surpasses Asia at 14.32%, which includes China, the country that has more mobile phone users than the population of Spain. Another important indicator is the predicted 3G coverage increase in the Middle East/Africa region from 7% in 2009 to 35% in 2014. This increase is the largest among the developing regions. For comparison, Western Europe is estimated to grow from 39% to 92% and Eastern Europe from 9% to 40%.²⁵ To maintain lines of communication and transaction with economic partners, projects cannot go forward without bolstering connectivity.

Producer Culture

This seamless transition from economic statistics to the natural conclusion that the internet is a tool of democracy hinges on the two meanings of free-- Water freely flows down a river; People freely express themselves in a democracy. Equating the protection of the free flow of information with the protection of oppressed populations in places such as Iran²⁶, is a ruse by technology producing cultures, a play to the public's fear.

The OECD adopted policy guidelines while the White House crafted the International Strategy for Cyberspace beginning with the subtitle 'Prosperity, Security and Openness in Networked World.'²⁷ Influenced by these actions, the EU drafted its Cyber Security Directive.²⁸ Within these documents, the priority and bulk of language is economic. Freedom from tyranny is not the reason for forming a triangle between the military, civil service, and police on an international scale. Protecting democratic freedom is auxiliary, a rhetorical veil for press releases. These policies are not about human rights; they are about shielding corporations from liability and regulating just enough to protect intellectual property rights as prescribed by the U.S.. Language such as, "the

21 Ess, Charles and Sudweeks, Fay: On the Edge: Cultural Barriers and Catalysts to IT Diffusion among Remote and Marginalized Communities. 3

22 Paolillo, John; Pimienta, Daniel; Prado, Daniel: Measuring Linguistic Diversity on the Internet.

23 BBC Radio 5 Outriders: Arabic Bloggers Meeting, Outriders.

24 Head, Jonathan: Search for Libyan Political Identity.

25 mobiThinking: Global Mobile Statistics 2012.

26 Kornbluh, Karen and Weitzner, Daniel: Foreign Policy of the Internet.

27 Hathaway, Melissa: Securing Our Digital Future.

28 BBC News: UK Decides to Opt in to EU-wide Cyber Security.

internet is at risk,"²⁹ "looming threat,"³⁰ and "naked power grab led by Russia and China"³¹ are misdirection. The real threats that concern technology producers are competition for dominance, sustainable intranets, or limitations on interoperability by countries designing for domestic users. How would it affect intelligence gathering or targeted marketing if a region chose another technology platform, or if it stagnated post-conflict failing to contribute streams of data to the web? If countries remain 'data silent' or connect to the internet in a less accessible manner, it would be disadvantageous to western political and economic interests.

Returning to the two meanings of 'free,' when the organization responsible for protecting human rights (UN-HRC) recommended creating more coherent international norms to ensure freedom of expression on the internet, the response by lawmakers in the U.S. was indignation that there might be limitations imposed on the internet.³² Here the two meanings of 'free' diverge. The UN recommended continuing to protect the same freedom of expression that is guaranteed in article 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (presciently described as 'any media') on the internet.³³ The American technology producers aimed to protect the free flow of information, the source of economic power, from regulation. If these two things were truly equivalent, they would be in agreement.

The Technology of Revolution

In the 21st century, material support for pro-democracy activists includes empowering them with the technology for change. The U.S. State Department has begun an initiative called TechCamp.³⁴ Indonesia was selected as one program site, not because of its socio-political challenges or potential diplomatic partnership with the U.S., but because,

*"it ha[d] the second largest number of Facebook members, after the United States. This strong social media understanding gives a stronger platform for innovation in mobile and web applications. Several corporate partners have signed on...."*³⁵

Rather than developing tools that meet the needs of the population, the camp fostered an expansion of U.S. style technology platforms, extending the market base in a critical region between India and China. With this move, the cognitive in-group could facilitate a large populations' participation in the dominant discourse space while maneuvering to inhibit alternative modes of discourse in another example of U.S. technology displacing indigenous systems. It is this type of installed technology that is lauded as innovative when it is regurgitated by local developers.³⁶ ³⁷ Praise for democracy in action may in fact be praise for a battlefield victory, an expansion of U.S.-style technology.

The Africa4All Parliamentary Initiative was developed in partnership between five participating African nations and the European Gov2U non-profit organization.³⁸ ³⁹Its aim is delivering open, democratic dialogue with universal participation through the help of ICT tools. By relying on the Habermasian concept of democracy, the

29 Kornbluh, Karen and Weitzner, Daniel: Foreign Policy of the Internet.

30 Krigman, Eliza: Concerns Spread as U.N. Poises for Internet Regulation.

31 *ibid.*

32 *ibid.*

33 UN: United Nations Webcast - Panel on Right to Freedom of Expression.

34 U.S. Department of State: eDiplomacy & Innovation Teams Bring Together Technologists, Civil Society and Private Sector.

35 *ibid.*

36 Burk, Dan: Privacy and Property in the Global Datasphere.

37 The Stream

38 Africa4All: <http://www.africa4all.net/index.php>

39 Gov2U: <http://www.gov2u.org/index.php/who-we-are>

barriers to participation such as the discourse platform itself, may not be apparent. In this project, action area categories, survey formats, and text-based communication persist in the manner of the cognitive in-group. Beyond language access, this e-governance ICT application remains incongruous to context and user communication preferences.

During a 2011 interview, *The Register* maintained,

*"The best defense is, apparently, not to speak English, as the language barrier can give local content providers the vital advantage they need before Google et al take over,"*⁴⁰

a sentiment expressed by the Secretary General of the International Telecommunications Union, Dr. Hamadoun Touré. This is the sort of strategy actors must engage in in order to shift power between cognitive in-groups and out-groups; battlefield victories are determined by information control, the economic and political advantage.

Conclusion

Through gatekeeping, controlling information and communication data, European and American actors seek to determine the boundaries of the new digital battlefield. Couched in the language of Habermas, frontiers are defined in terms of the struggle between democratic freedom and autocratic censorship; recasting the scene as one between producers and users, the power dynamics resemble a more Foucauldian dichotomy in which the dominant group, the producers, determines interaction in political discourse. In the 21st century, the dichotomy is one referred to as the digital divide. It is the supposition of this paper that this dichotomy is, in fact, between a cognitive in-group and out-group based around cognitive dimensions distinctive to each culture. Current ICT interface design exhibits cognitive elements that reflect American and European cultural norms. With the spread of the internet and ICT, only language has been seen as a barrier to participation and has therefore been the focus of research and policy initiatives. This approach assumes a universal user. However, language is only one element of the cognitive experience; the universal user does not exist. The in-group/out-group dichotomy persists through the cultural bias imposed by the producer culture to protect the form and flow of information. By applying this neo-colonial strategy to information gathering, European and American producer cultures are not simply positioning themselves on the new battlefield to the best advantage, they are determining the shape of the field by commanding the programs and codes through which the information flows.

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Rainer E. Zimmermann:

An Integral Perspective of Social Action: Imagining, Assessing, Choosing (Onto-epistemology of Networks)

Abstract:

Starting from a formal and abstract perspective, the concept of networks is introduced with a view to possible connections to other fields of the sciences and to practical applications. The structural hierarchy of forms is identified expressing the conceptual organization of our observable world. In the case of social networks, it can be shown that they exhibit a characteristic type of self-reference, a result of their special relationship to the conditions of the human modes of cognition and communication. As to a possible derivation of strategic attitudes, it can be shown that a re-vitalization of the ancient concept of *kalokagathía* could turn out to be helpful in tackling present everyday problems. Hence, choosing the perspective of an explicit *network paradigm* entails a new reconciliation of aesthetics and ethics, respectively, including multifarious implications for a suitable foundation of praxis within pertinent crisis management.

Dedicated to the memory of Jon Lord.

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 - System des transzendentalen Materialismus, Mentis, Paderborn, 2004
 - New Ethics Proved in Geometrical Order. Spinozist Reflexions on Evolutionary Systems. Emergent Publications, Lichtfield Park, AZ, USA, 2011

Introduction

The concept of *network* shows up as one of the universal concepts common both in the scientific discourse as well as in the colloquial language of everyday's discourse, respectively.¹ In the latter case, as is usually true for most of the colloquial concepts utilized in a somewhat non-systematic manner, cause and effect are often mixed up: Indeed, as it turns out, and as we will show in this lecture course in some more detail, the concept of network is an instrument of *representational techniques* in the first place – rather than something that would be existing independently within the world. In other words: Networks are means of representation and mapping, and they are thus modes of human cognition that employs them for modelling purposes, but they are not properties of nature itself, i.e. structures that would also exist, if nobody would be around capable of observing them. While the scientific discourse is dealing with the conceptualization of phenomena on all levels of complexity, the discourse of everyday life is dealing with social aspects of the world (i.e. with the highest known level of complexity) only, though in a somewhat non-epistemic and at most fuzzy and approximate manner. This is the reason for the former being explicitly abstract as compared with the latter. Note that therefore, the word *concrete* utilized as the opposite of the word *abstract* signifies nothing but the cognitive conditions of human modality as visualized in common (i.e. non-scientific) terms.

In order to illuminate this relationship in more detail, we will start here (in section 2) with introducing the concept of network in a purely abstract manner and in formal terms. We will see that this turns out to be helpful for stressing the universality of the concept. It will also help to clarify the interrelationship among other concepts such as those of *space* (and *time* as to that) and *system*. We will discuss then (in section 3) the universality of the concepts themselves by displaying the various, hierarchically ordered levels of complexity within observable nature. When we arrive (in section 4) at the highest level (of social systems), it is time to note the explicit *self-reference* of the concepts discussed so far. This will help to solve most of the questions raised above when mentioning the mixing up of cause and effect as to the concept of network.

This discussion deals mainly with an onto-epistemological view (in the sense of Sandkühler) to the questions raised here. In a sense, it is the *anthropological perspective* onto which the conceptualization of scientific methods is actually grounded. Consequently, our conclusions will unfold a field of possibilities with a view to adequate human reflexion and action which might turn out to be useful in order to eventually develop strategic procedures that prove relevant for a succeeding daily life by bringing together the latter's aesthetical as well as ethical aspects. We thus find that the ancient philosophical concept of *kalokagathía* gains a renewed significance after all.

Abstract Networks

Essentially, a *network* is simply a set of *nodes* and *links* such that there is a characteristic structure of connections among the nodes. This can be easily drawn in the following manner (thanks to wikipedia indeed!²):

1 For a general overview see in detail Rainer E. Zimmermann: System des transzendentalen Materialismus, Mentis, Paderborn, 2004. My first paper on the topic is possibly id.: Netzwerkstrukturen und die Emergenz des Neuen. In: Johannes Ehrhardt (ed.), Netzwerk-Dimensionen, Datacom, Bergheim, 1992, 70-85.

2 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graph_theory (2012-07-12)

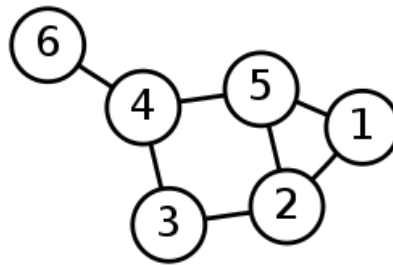


Figure 1: Example of representation of a simple network

Obviously, nodes 1 through 6 are connected here according to a number of given links. Note that what we see in the drawing is in fact, a *representation of the network* rather than the network itself. Hence, what we deal with is actually a *mathematical graph*, and as such we define this as a set of *vertices* and *edges*. Instead of doubling the work by doing so, this procedure of differing between the concrete object and its representation has the advantage of simplifying the usually complex phenomenology in order to derive sufficiently general results about properties of these configurations. So what the abstraction that goes hand in hand with representation actually achieves is a kind of *universalization*. We see this clearly by observing that we have not at all defined the *meaning* of nodes and links so far. Up to now, we simply deal with a *formal* type of representation.

Connection in nature usually implies *interaction*. This is the reason for visualizing links in a network as expression for interactions among nodes. The idea is that the dynamics of an observable phenomenology is inherent in a diagram which is static itself. Thanks to the advent of computer graphics we are nowadays in a position to actually model dynamical phenomena by simulating them as a kind of movie. Nevertheless, in principle, the main point of the diagrammatic graphism is to express what cannot be expressed by a drawing alone: *motion*. It is the link in a network, or the edge of its representation, that stands for this motion. One of the consequences is that we usually deal with diagrams whose vertices are just points and whose edges are directed lines (commonly indicated by the head of an arrow). This is because the vertices are visualized as *agents that operate onto other agents by means of their respective interaction*. So what we can formally do is to characterize the type of agent and the type of interaction. This is usually done in terms of numbers that codify (label or colour) a given quality of types. But we have to differ between *internal* and *external* types of interaction. This can be seen utilizing a famous example from mathematics: Graph theory was practically invented by Leonard Euler who in 1736 published a paper on the bridges of the city of Königsberg as displayed in the following (oncemore thanks to wikipedia!³):

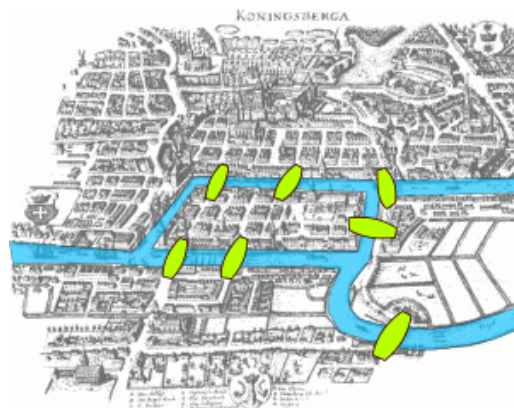


Figure 2: Representation of Euler's problem on the bridges of Königsberg

³ Ibid.

Euler's idea was to ask whether it is possible to find a round trip through the city such that a person would have to cross each of the seven bridges only once. What Euler did was to abstract the city by shrinking the locations to points and expressing the bridges as links between points. So what we have then is a network with four nodes and seven links represented by a graph with four vertices and seven edges. Euler showed that nodes with an odd number of links must be either starting or end points of the journey. A continuous path that goes through all the bridges can have only one starting and one end point. Hence, such a path cannot exist on a graph that has more than two vertices with an odd number of edges. As the Königsberg graph has four such vertices, there *cannot* be a path of the desired kind. (Indeed, the people of Königsberg built a new bridge in 1875 that increased the number of edges of two of the vertices (in the sketch above the top and the bottom part of locations) to four. And that actually solved the problem.)

We learn two things here: First of all, we find that graph theory is actually dealing with *topology*. This is because the problem discussed above deals with connections of spatial parts. Indeed, if we visualize the whole city as an urban space, then the connections of this space constitute its topology. This is also why Euler thus inspired the *analysis situs* of Leibniz, forerunner of modern topology. And in fact, topological problems of this sort are not mere theoretical problems, but have explicit practical applications, for instance in the field of transport of goods and/or persons under an economic perspective.

But second, we recognize here the difference of internal and external interactions: The city map is a graphic layout that describes the interaction among nodes only in so far as this interaction can be *potentially* utilized, *if necessary*. That is, the bridges of Königsberg (visualized within a given network of streets) can be used by persons to their own purposes. But without persons, they represent nothing but a potential that *can* be eventually actualized. In other words: The nodes (vertices) do not represent *active* agents, and the operation of one agent onto the other is not active, but entailed by the topology of the space and thus *passive* only. This is why we differentiate interactions here as *internal* (if caused by active agents) and *external* (if caused by different active agents that utilize passive agents). Obviously, this difference also implies a difference of representations: namely whether they are utilized in order to map *potentialities* (as in the case of geographic maps e.g.) or *actualities* (as in the case of dynamic processes, e.g. concerning the communication between persons). It is straightforward to realize that in any case the diagrams serve the purpose of conceptualizing potential or actual processes.

A network of active interaction can be expressed for instance, in terms of a communication network that defines a *small world model* common for a large class of phenomena in the fields of communication, epidemics, information exchange and so on. (One has always to sort out where the active agent is operating and what is the passive layout as space of interactions.) The following diagram is displaying a small world that is established by acquaintances of persons. The idea is to display first-order interactions (persons who know persons personally) and mediated higher-order interactions (persons who know persons who know persons). Obviously, because the number of people on this planet is smaller than the range of possible higher-order interactions, one can show that all people are connected to each other via a line of six other persons on this chain of acquaintances. In other words, the world is small in the sense that interactions of this type cover the whole set of people on Earth up to sixth-order contact. (In fact, the secret lies partially in the possible shortcuts that are encountered when two persons meet who live in different continents, because the acquaintances of one person are to the other of second order without making it necessary for that person to actually ever visit the continent of the other person.)

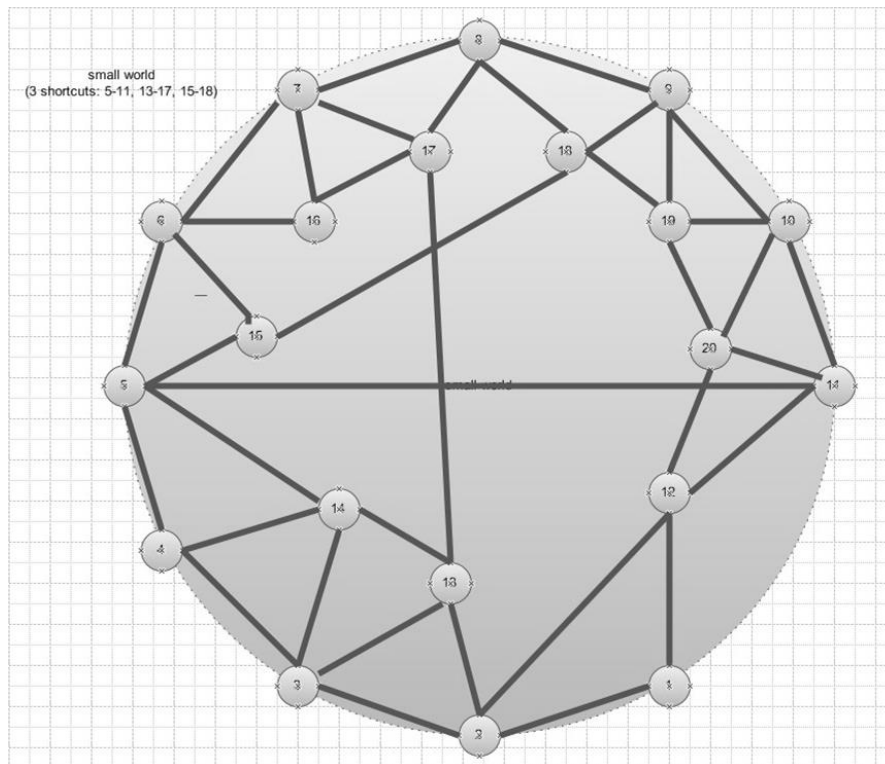


Figure 3: "Small World" Network⁴

We can easily see that similar networks are quite abundant: They can describe co-authorship of scientific articles (Erdős-Rényi), networks of lending money, the spreading of infectious diseases (percolation) and so on. Within this variety of networks, it is important to differ between those which are *randomly scaled* and those which are *scale-free*. One can show that if we start with N nodes and connect every pair of nodes with probability p , then we create a graph with approximately $pN(N - 1)/2$ edges distributed randomly.⁵ The generated network is strongly homogeneous then (most nodes have approximately the same number of links). If we consider the degree distribution of a network $P(k)$: which is the probability that a randomly selected node has exactly k links – then we find that the degrees in a random graph follow a Poisson distribution with a peak at $\langle k \rangle$. However, for a very large class of networks, we find instead that $P(k) \sim k^{-\gamma}$, i.e. the degree distribution possesses what we call a *power-law tail*. (Mostly then, $0 < \gamma < 1$, and the associated phase space dimension is thus *fractal*.) Such networks are strongly inhomogeneous: most nodes have one or two links, while a few nodes (called *hubs*) have a larger number of links that guarantee the network's overall connectivity. Hence, there is a major *topological* difference between random and scale-free networks. Examples of the latter include the www, metabolic and protein networks, language as well as networks of sexual reproduction.

Before looking more closely to the variety of networks two further remarks are in order as to representational techniques: The first concerns the fact that in mathematical terms, directed graphs (and thus linked networks) can be visualized as *categories* whose objects are the vertices (nodes) and whose morphisms are the edges (links). Note that as compared with sets, categories can be thought of as a dynamical generalization of sets, because while the latter are static and consist always of the same elements by which they are defined, the former express motion (evolution or change) of objects by means of their morphisms. While sets are mapped onto each other by mapping the elements of one set to elements of the other, categories are mapped onto

⁴ Illustration taken from: Bordalier Institute (Peter Winiwarter): www.bordalierinstitute.com

⁵ Here and elsewhere we follow the ground-breaking Stefan Bornholdt, Heinz Georg Schuster (eds.): *Handbook of Graphs and Networks*, Wiley-VCH, Weinheim, 2003. For a more general viewpoint see Albert-László Barabasi: *Linked. The New Science of Networks*. Perseus, Cambridge (Mass.), 2002.

each other by mapping objects to objects and morphisms to morphisms. Mappings of sets are called *functions*. Mappings of categories are called *functors*. Usually, the set of functors is itself a category. Categories must fulfil the requirements of a different set of axioms as compared with sets, especially as to identity mappings and the composition of mappings. The complete formal apparatus of categories can thus be applied to networks which turns out to be quite helpful, for instance in the case of interpreting the network in terms of its *adjacency matrix* which expresses the characteristic of the relevant links such as their degree, or in the case of determining shortest paths within the network or hubs, relevant properties that define the robustness of networks.

The second point concerns the intrinsic isomorphism of networks and cellular automata: The latter is a computer programme that unfolds given cellular structures according to a set of simple rules. The updating can be accelerated so as to perform a movie of its evolution. The most famous (and at the same time the most simple) automaton of this kind is "Conway's game of life" that can achieve considerable complexity when starting with simple initial forms and following three equally simple rules that define the state of a cell with respect to the states of the neighboring cells. The cells can be quadratic or hexagonal or whatsoever. Usually, the geometric shape of the cell relates to the action undertaken, because mathematically, this can be described by a significant group action whose matrix representation (i.e. a collection of characteristic numbers) can be utilized in order to label (or colour) the underlying graph of the network. If one shrinks a cell to its central point and replaces the neighboring boundaries by links, the isomorphism to networks is quite apparent. In a sense, cellular automata can be visualized as practical applications of networks and their graphs.

Levels of Complexity

Now, the available time is too short⁶ so that we cannot dwell in more detail on the various phenomena that can be modelled in terms of networks. But it should have become apparent that all these phenomena can be classified according to their *degree of complexity*. In a sense, complexity turns out to be a *quantitative* measure of networks, because it essentially relates the number of possible connections in a network to the number of actualized connections. This number defines the actual *state* of the network. This more intuitive and combinatorial measure of complexity can be easily related to other more formal measures such as Kolmogorov's definition of complexity. Note however the following: If the quotient in question is $c = a/p$ (actualized over possible connections between nodes), then it can be normed such that the result is between 0 and 1, respectively, in a straightforward manner: If *all* possible connections are actualized, then obviously, $c = 1$. If *no* possible connection is actualized, then $c = 0$. The usual value will be somewhere in between. The rest of non-actualized (but possible) connections is respectively, $r = (p - a)/p$ such that $c + r = 1$. We call r the network's *redundancy*. The latter is not quite a superfluous or useless property, but much to the contrary, is important for the network's stability, because it defines a kind of space of free play within which the network has still some freedom to develop further.

What we have then, is essentially a *hierarchy* of structures in several big steps that originates from large state transitions of networks, *when the quantity of connections spontaneously turns into new qualities*: We have thus the physical level, the chemical level, the biological level, and so forth. All these levels are sub-structured somehow: Life for instance, can be visualized with a view to the molecular level, the cellular level, the organic level, and the population level, respectively. But the important point is here that all what there is consists of "the same stuff" (essentially *matter*, that is what can be visualized as that sort of *energy that has acquired mass*). In fact, the specific situation of physical energy is always accompanied by an equally specific situation of *information*. Information that is actualized in material forms is called *structure* then. Hence, the respective levels of the mentioned hierarchy are determined by a quantitative measure of complexity that is expressed in terms of characteristic qualitative properties of forms.

Within this hierarchy, the most fundamental level of discussion is the level of the physics of quantum gravity on which the basic categories of physics, i.e. space and time, as well as matter, can be represented by quantized

⁶ Note that this paper is the written version of a talk delivered to a summer school at the university of León in September 2012.

entities. This is done in terms of the *spin network*, a purely combinatorial structure originally introduced by Roger Penrose (fig. 4).

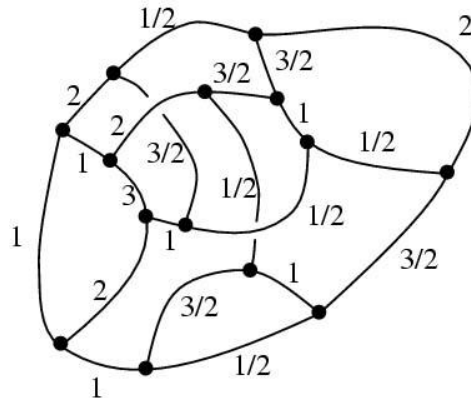


Figure 4: Spin Network⁷

The nodes of this network are active agents here, operators in fact that act upon their neighbours by exchanging spin numbers (normalized quantities of spin angular momentum which are expressed here in units of Planck's constant \hbar). Hence, these agents can be visualized as abstract particles that operate by means of a computational algorithm according to given combinatorial rules. The decisive insight of Penrose is that a progressive condensation of portions of this spin network can be understood as the onset of physical classicity such that the dimensions of Euklidean space emerge spontaneously by a superposition of many layers of this network. Hence, if arranged in a hexagonal network accompanied by an equivalent triangulation of the underlying space of representation, the segments of this "field of spatial possibilities" represent the smallest portion of space in terms of its area and volume. As it turns out, this area is proportional to the square of the Planck length, while the volume is proportional to the third power of the Planck length. This is given by

$$\ell_P = \sqrt{\frac{\hbar G}{c^3}} \approx 1.616\ 199(97) \times 10^{-35} \text{ m}$$

and defines the limit of physics in representing the smallest possible length scale at which a *theory of everything* is expected to be valid, presently conjectured as a future theory of quantum gravity. What we call "space" (and time as to that) is nothing but a multiple (superposition) of quantized portions of this fundamental type.

In fact, Lee Smolin has shown earlier that each hexagon in the spin network can be visualized as the cooperative result of six interacting loops that merge in the process. A *loop* is essentially the most fundamental agent in physics consisting of a parallel transportation device for a gauge field in microscopic terms, and it can be shown that this agent satisfies Stuart Kauffman's condition that it be able to perform at least one thermodynamic work cycle. (This is why this field is actually called *loop quantum gravity*.) As we would expect from what has been said before, after merging, one loop is represented by one vertex in the graph. Six vertices constitute one hexagon in the spin network. Hence, loops are agents that exist primordially before any space fragments are being formed. They are thus truly pre-geometric. (Look at the following for illustration.)

⁷ The diagram is taken from John Baez: Quantization of Area. The Plot Thickens. Available at: <http://math.ucr.edu/home/baez/area.pdf>.

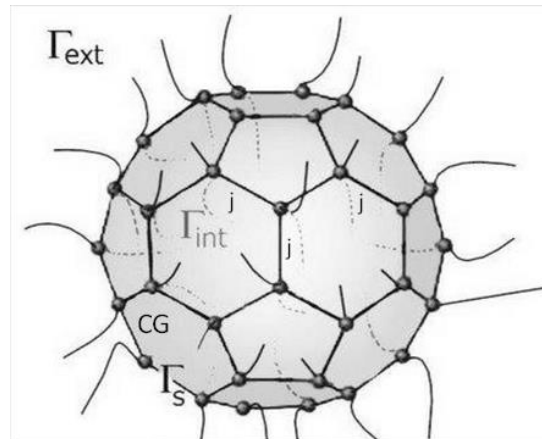
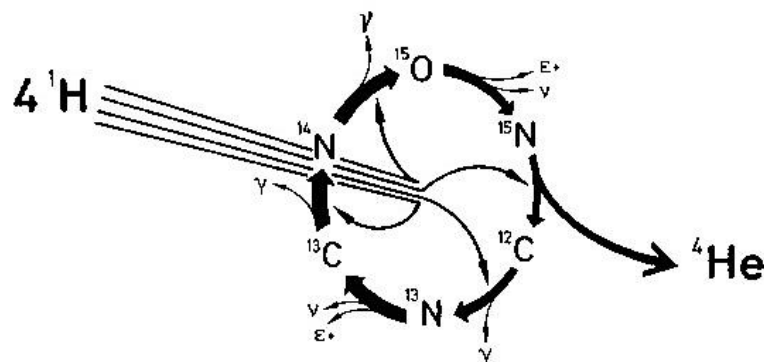


Figure 5: A quantized black hole⁸

In other words, the physicist shows up as a somewhat “short-sighted” observer who is not sensitive for the detailed quantum structure of the world, but only for its classical *average* phenomenology. The physical universe can thus be visualized as a quantum computer that emerges in the cooperation of loops in groups of six and that computes (i.e. organizes and interprets) spin numbers all the time which is the most fundamental type of information about the physical world. But human beings who are part of the same universe (and are to the universe therefore what a sub-routine is to a master programme) cannot actually cognitively perceive the universe *as it is*, but they can only observe it *according to their mode of being* which is determined by the cognitive capacity that is developed within their own biology – itself the outcome of the underlying physics after all.

Note that the aspect of computation can be made quite explicit, because, as it turns out, the spin numbers encountered in the spin network above can at the same time be identified with the matrix representation of the group $SL(2, C)$ which is the special linear group of 2×2 matrices with complex entries (responsible for what we call *spinors* in Dirac’s quantum physics). As John Baez has pointed out some time ago, the fact that this group has complex entries consisting of real and imaginary parts leads to the conclusion that the information processing underlying the exchange of spin numbers in the network can be visualized as *quantum* rather than *classical* computation, because it is not *cbits* that are processed here, but *quantum bits* (qubits). Hence, the idea that the universe can be visualized as a quantum computer. The same is more or less true for the other levels of the hierarchy: Thus chemical networks show up as superpositions of physical networks, biological networks as superpositions of chemical networks, and so on. Look first at a comparatively simple cycle which is transforming hydrogen into helium within the interior core of massive stars⁹:



⁸ The illustration is taken from M.H. Ansari: Gauge Invariance: www.gaugeinvariance.blogspot.com.

⁹ We utilize here and in the following again material of the Bordalier institute.

Figure 6: *Carbon cycle*, responsible –at least in part– for the energy production of massive stars, as proposed by Bethe and Weizsäcker. ^{12}C , ^{13}N , ^{13}C , ^{14}N , ^{15}O , and ^{15}N are steadily reconstituted by cyclic reaction. The cyclic scheme as a whole represents a catalyst which converts four ^1H atoms to one ^4He atom, with the release of energy in form of γ -quanta, positrons (e^+) and neutrinos (ν).¹⁰

The cyclic organization of directed interactions are quite common for natural processes. Probably, they are the pre-condition for the possibility of creating higher-order structures from lower-order structures. Hence, cycles belong to the foundation of the evolving increase of complexity. Things become even more complex: figure 7 shows the *yeast protein interaction network*. On the one hand, this is most interesting because of its scale-free structure that is common for self-organized criticality. On the other hand, it is this structure which is universal for all living organisms. (Note the clear display of hubs in the network's structure.)

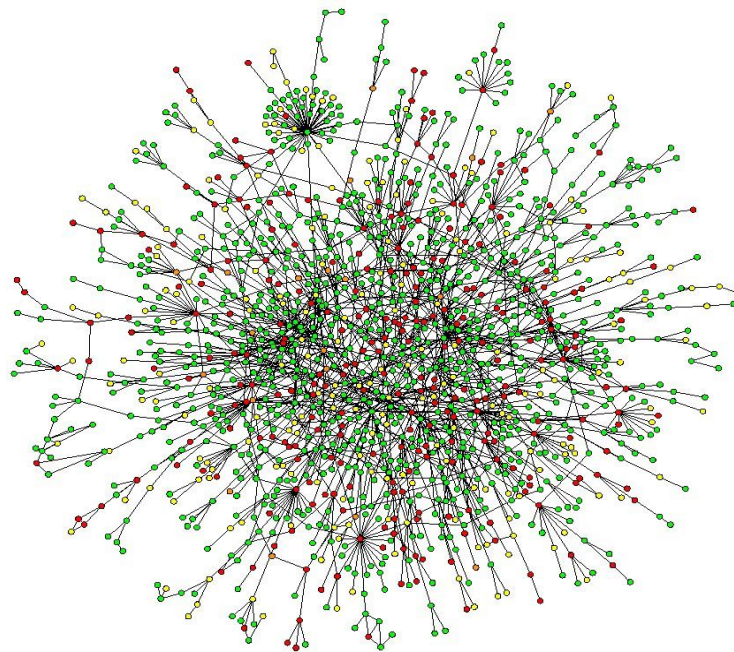


Figure 7: The yeast protein interaction network¹¹

From the micro-structure of living beings to their macro-structure within the evolution on this very planet: Note in figure 8 the large space of free play as to possible variations of forms. Nevertheless, the network is essentially unbroken and well-connected. On the large scale structure of the planetary biosphere, very many species show up, but the outcome appears to be more or less homogeneous. It may be that humans define an explicit "hub" within the network, but if this is the case, then they do so on the social level which is beyond the scope of this diagram. Note however, that initially, "sociality" (or, *language* rather) is a new *biological*/selective feature, and in the beginning, it is far from clear whether it will become dominant or not in the long run.

The point is that the *organizational structure* turns out to be *invariant*: We have agents (operators) that act upon their neighbours within networks connected by links that can be represented in terms of mathematical graphs. The phenomena can be classified then according to the internal and external qualities of interactions equivalent with links. Obviously, on the more fundamental levels (for instance within physics), the agents are genuinely active, because they do not only interact with their neighbours, but by doing so, also *co-create their mutual environment*, i.e. they define the layout on which they actually unfold in the first place. Speaking of agents, one can easily utilize the terminology of *game theory* in order to cover the interactions involved: There are the players, the space of free play (= arena), the rules. In evolutionary terms, there are also winners and losers. Under a philosophical perspective, we can visualize these fundamental agents acting like players in a

¹⁰ Illustration taken from the Webpage of Bordalier Institute, www.bordalierinstitute.com.

¹¹ Ibid.

game as a kind of *primordial subjectivity*. In a sense, we can speak of *proto-consciousness* here such that these fundamental interactions are in fact *actions according to decision rules*, though not in a human sense, but on a very elementary level instead. Hence, on this lowest level of organization, the available agents have nevertheless their *choice*. And thus there is (proto-) *meaning* already.

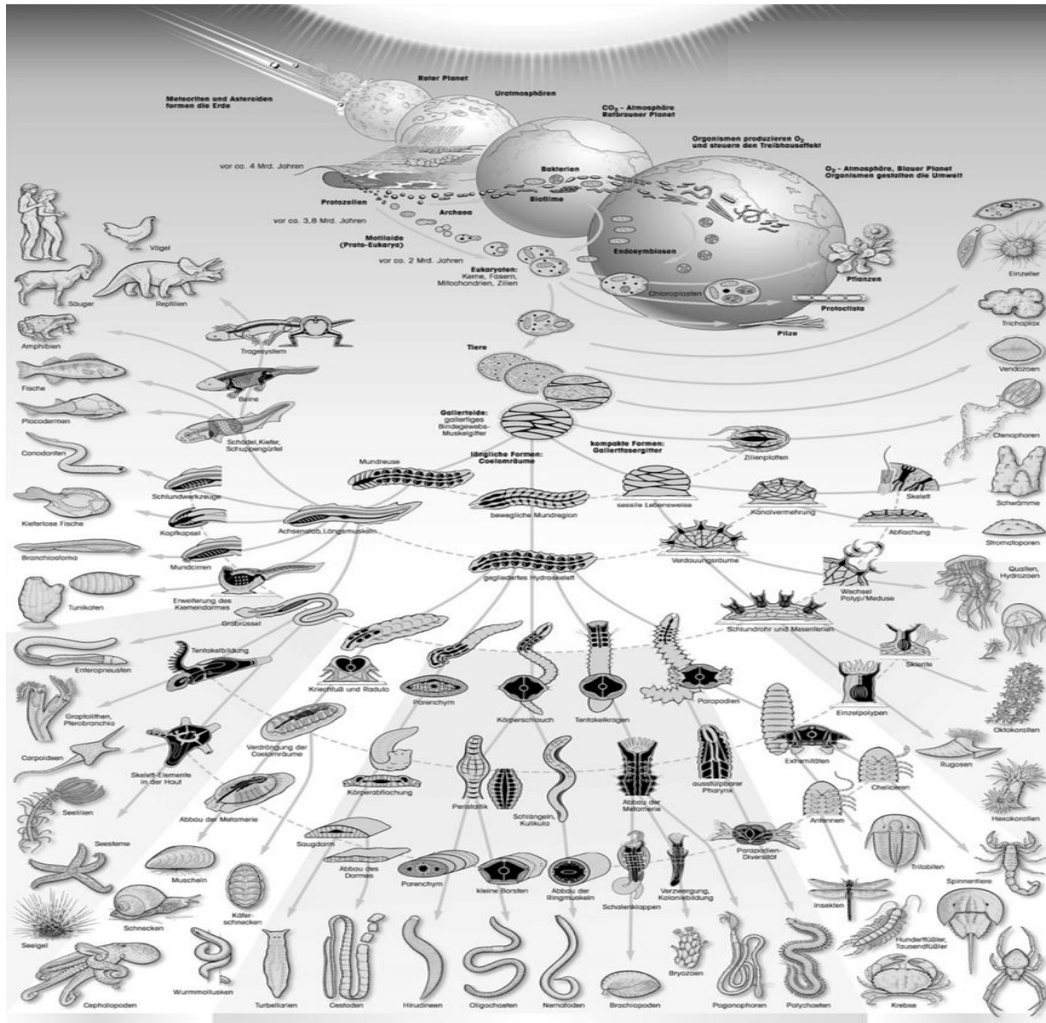


Figure 8: Evolution of animal species in the planet¹²

Stuff and organization being the same all the time, there is only one structural difference that is relevant: *complexity*. As we have seen above, this is deciding upon the explicit forms that are created in the long run. In the following we see a small selection of forms.

12 Ibid.

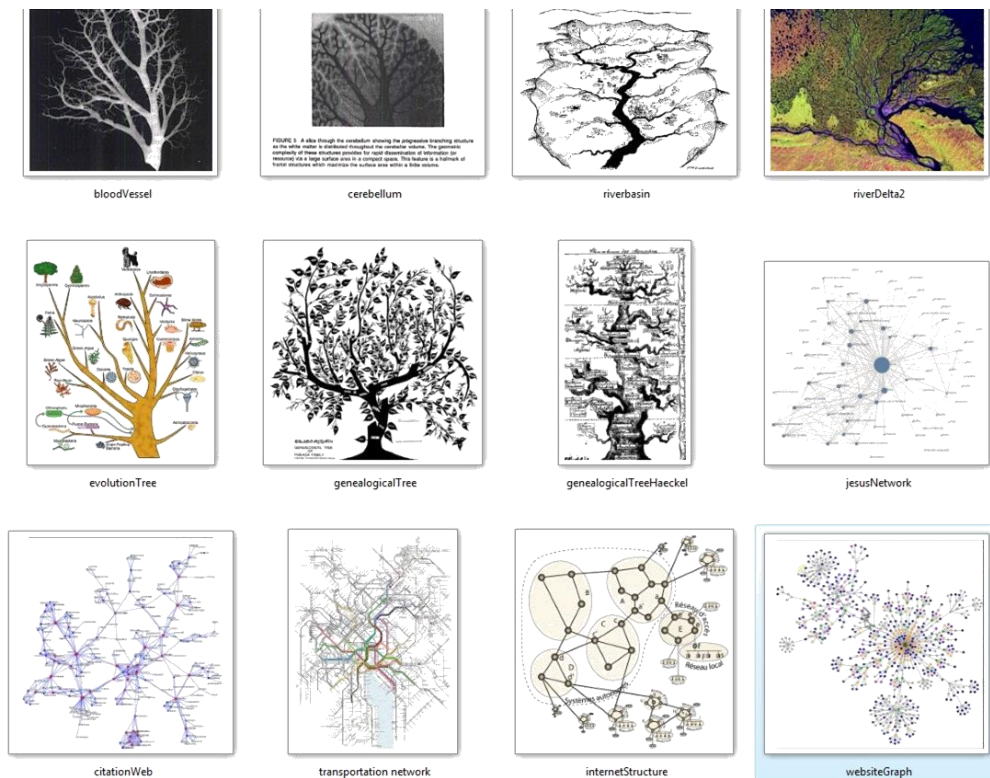


Figure 9: All the tree networks above show empirically observable Pareto-Zipf-Mandelbrot (parabolic fractal) statistical structure.¹³

It should be apparent by now that the modern picture of worldly evolution is not very far from the ancient viewpoint of *substance metaphysics*: In a moderately modified version of the originally Aristotelian approach, Spinoza visualizes the world as a substance that can be expressed by an infinity of attributes. But human beings have only access to two of these attributes, called *matter* and *mind*, respectively, and it is by this characteristic of their *mode of being* that they are able to model the world according to their (modest) purposes. *But obviously, they do not deal with the truth, because the world is not as it is being observed.* Hence, this perspective is still ours today. The crucial difference might be the fact that the entities qualifying for us as attributes are *energy-mass* and *information-structure*, respectively, rather than matter and mind.

Social Networks

However, things change considerably when we encounter social networks: This is mainly because it is the human being only that signifies the world and attaches meaning to it by applying various modelling techniques. In other words: *The concept of network itself is a human invention.* Hence, in nature, there *is* no network in the strict sense, but things in nature, as far as human beings can cognitively grasp them at all, *are modelled such* that they are visualized in terms of a variety of networks: Human beings act for instance on the given background of their geography. The latter is determining communication mainly by means of available transport routes that define the infra-structure of the environment. Hence, on this level, life, human or not, is still depending on physical aspects within the biological framework. It can thus be shown that one of the cradles of human civilization, the social space of the ancient Greek culture, is not a coincidental location of emergence: Instead, *the geographical contours of this space* strongly support the emergence of a network of *poleis* in the first place, because the organizational structure of an ancient *polis* can be visualized as a direct consequence (mapping!) of the de-centralized geography of a fractal distribution of islands.

¹³ Ibid.

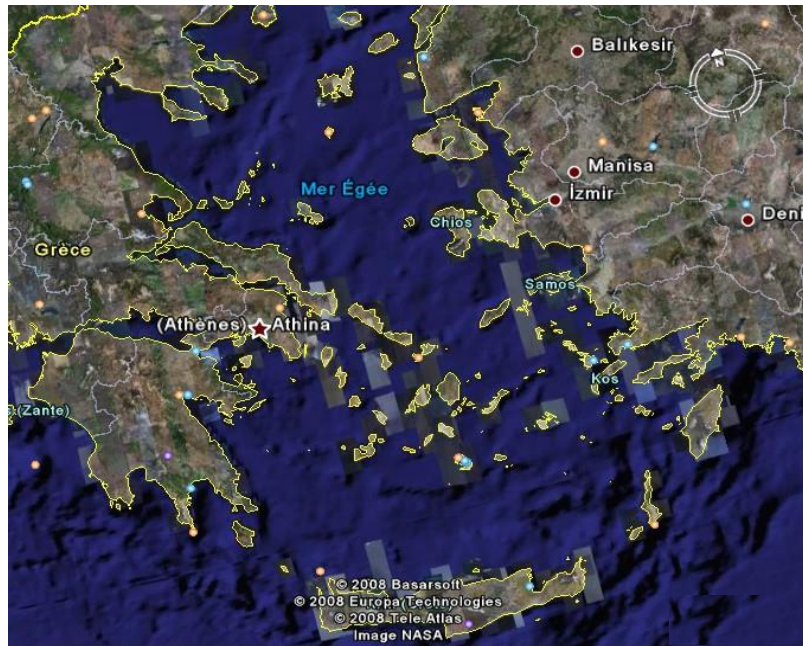
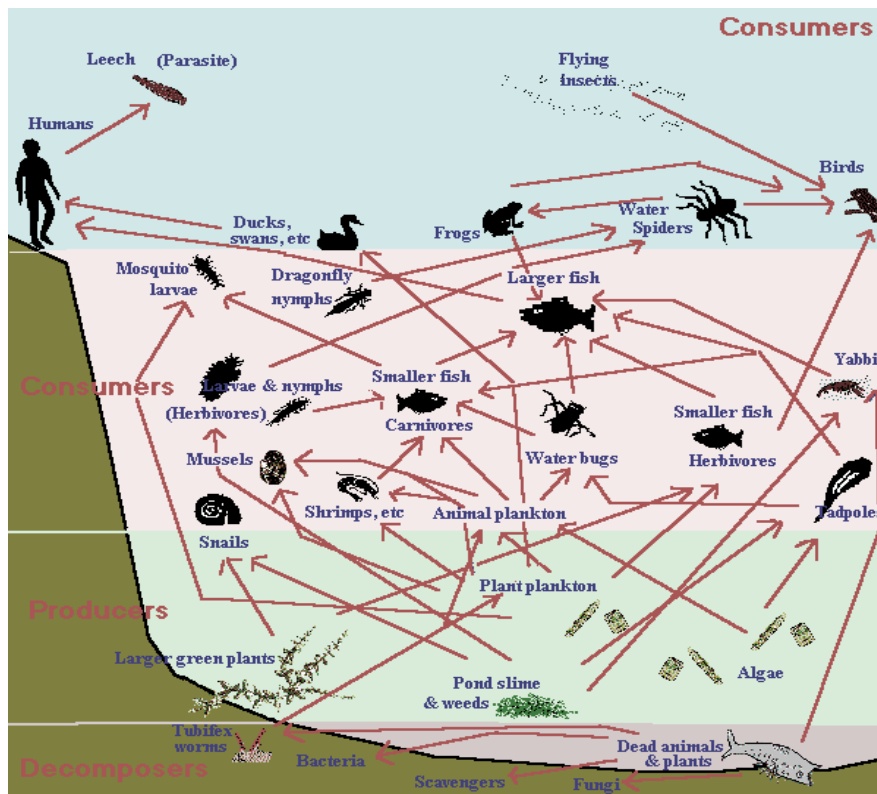


Figure 10: island size distribution are of the PZM Pareto-Zipf-Mandelbrot type (parabolic fractal).¹⁴

Note that beside the geographical network, human beings also rely on explicitly biological networks whose products they consume. A seaside network of this type is displayed in the following:



14 Ibid.

Figure 11: Biomass-size distribution of aquatic ecosystems (trophic web or foodweb).¹⁵

Again, though depending on the modes of consumption organized within the biological submarine network, human beings stand apart somehow: not only, because they are not beings of the sea and do only participate in what other beings have organized themselves – but especially, because they can actually *model* the network in which they are participating. Obviously, the straightforward idea is to apply these models to the community of human beings itself. But the point is that these models are simply mappings (or pictures) and relate to the concrete original as a picture relates to the object it is a picture of. In fact, by applying models, human beings apply nothing but their own cognitive capacity. Hence, from the beginning on, the vital characteristics of human beings are implemented into these models in the first place: This is why observation of animals in the sea entails a large portion of self-observation. *Modelling of the seaside eco-system means modelling of an alien world according to human criteria.* Hence, the results, if in turn applied back to human conditions, constitute a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy. In fact, the perspective is even more restricted, because while we are talking of human beings, we actually talk of social *hubs* only, as we can clearly recognize from the next picture.

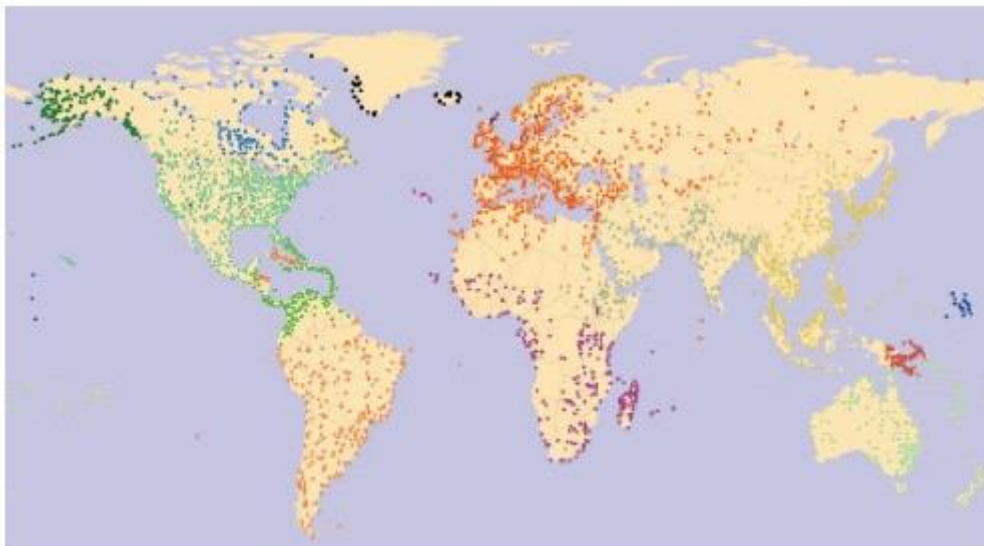


Figure 12: Communities in the giant component of the worldwide air transportation network. Each node represents a location, and each color corresponds to a community.¹⁶

So this is chiefly the human perspective: What we call *observation* is the result of cognitive work that is performed according to the boundary conditions of human biological capacities. What we call *model* is the reconstruction of all these results including the interpolation and extrapolation of details which have been left out in the first place or cannot be actually observed. Models are clustered to form *theories*, and the set of available theories constitutes the present picture humans have of this world. Within this framework everything is modelled, especially what is not human itself. Nevertheless, the intrinsic self-reference of modelling guarantees that all what is non-human in the world is treated according to what is human. In other words: What we thus observe in a *human* manner is nothing but a specifically *human* world, because what we derive from these observations and assemble to the architecture of theories is itself constituted in a characteristically *human* way. Obviously: What we have in the end, is *not the world as it really is*, but *the world as it is being cognitively perceived according to the human modality*. We never deal with reality explicitly, we only deal with modality.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Conclusions

First of all, there is a rather technical conclusion: We notice that the concepts of space(-time), network, and system form a conceptual triade that characterizes the epistemological aspect of human beings. Networks constitute the *dynamical skeleton* and/or *circulation* of a system. If we define a *system* as a totality of components that interact with each other such that they can be visualized as a conceptual unity, then we realize that the tenor lies on the word "interact". Hence, the sub-totality of interactions in a system is expressed as a network. Interaction and communication can be utilized synonymously for "exchange of information". A network is thus constituting the dynamics that defines the characteristic properties of a system. On the other hand, what we call *space* is the range of interactions as defined by the network. Hence, space can only be defined reasonably, if there are objects that interact. (Obviously, there is no empty space.) Similarly, *time* is the sequence in which the system updates itself. Visualized in terms of categories, this means that nodes and links (agents and their operations) are the objects and morphisms, while space and time as range of interactions (domain of dependence) and updating sequence, respectively, define the qualities of the interactions (they define the system's *action*). Because the operators in a system (objects) can also be visualized as agents, this action is always meaningful and thus *intentional*. It follows the consequences of the updating results and hence relies on *reflexion* which is essentially the self-observation of a system with respect to its environment. So in a mild sense of the word, systems can always be visualized as *reflexive as well as active*. Note that the conceptual triade of epistemological type: *space-network-system*, corresponds directly to another conceptual triade of *ontological* type defined by *cognition-communication-cooperation*. In other words: Because human beings are constituted in a cognitive manner, there is space(-time) – in order to make sure that the human capacity for observations suffices by arranging observed events in a well-defined spatial and temporal order – because human beings have to communicate in order to secure their own orientation within the observable world, there is network – because they must be able to directly interact with the non-human environment (in utilizing energy or stuff) and because they do so by means of cooperation, there is system. It is in fact the type of system that is deciding upon any possible strategic routes to be taken.

This can be seen in the following way: The (actually quite ancient) idea is that form must be arranged in harmony with content. For us here, this means that the explicit management of systems must be an outcome of the results developed before as to the system's structure, comprising characteristic spaces, times, networks of communication, and so forth. Hence, the determination of an *adequate form* (what the Stoic philosophers called a form which is adequate with respect to nature: *kátà physin*) depends on the evaluation of cognition. It is thus a primarily *aesthetic* activity. On the other hand, life is determined by the results of what we call *design*: Human beings have to behave adequately according to what they know. And in an existential sense, human behaviour is always design in fact. Hence, *ethics* (which is the lore of adequate behaviour) demands criteria for adequacy that are essentially grounded in aesthetics. This is the old idea of *kalokagathía* (from: *kalós* = good, and *ágathos* = beautiful): namely to produce the desired harmony such as to fit the one to the other.

For the system's perspective this idea has been illustrated somewhat by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus: When asked by his fellow citizens for his opinion on how to achieve harmony in *polis* life (*homonoia* = civic harmony), he simply kept silent, took a cup and mixed water and barley flour, adding some mint to make a mixture that follows the recipe for the *kykeon* (the ritual drink when at the Delphi oracle), drank it and went away, still without speaking.¹⁷ The message is clear: The mixture remains stable only when permanently stirred. In other words: Harmonic systems (which in science are usually called *resilient*) based on the state of communication within their (social) networks can be achieved, if they are designed within the boundary conditions of the metastable range of their state space. Hence, there is permanently diverging (and thus conflicting) motion among the components of a system that can only stabilize, if it never stops. This calls for a permanent stirring. The reader is invited to look for practical examples (e.g. as far as the intercultural discourse is concerned). But it should be quite obvious that it is the perspective of networks that grounds praxis on a new insight: Hence, the onto-epistemological viewpoints as to networks carries explicit ethical connotations, in fact. Moreover, at

¹⁷ I am paraphrasing Nicole Loraux who quotes Plutarch's *Moralia* in: *The Divided City*. Zone Books, N.Y., 2006, 109.

the same time, it is actually the main practical field of applications (namely, ICT and Society) within which these connotations unfold in a most innovative as well as concrete manner.

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