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REVOLUTION IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS

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The 1960 US Presidential debates between Richard Nixon and John Kennedy have often been referred to as the pivotal events in the eventual election of the Massachusetts Senator over his Republican rival. The first Presidential debates ever to be televised saw the younger, tanned and relaxed Kennedy dominate his older, paler and tired competitor, in effect harnessing a new communications medium to push his political agenda. While the final vote was close – at the time the closest in American history – Kennedy won office and decreed a new era in American politics had begun.

It's not difficult to draw comparisons between Kennedy's use of television as an electoral tool and Barack Obama's embrace of the internet during the 2008 US Presidential campaign. Like Kennedy, Obama faced an older rival seemingly out of touch with new communications technologies; indeed, the Republican candidate, Senator John McCain, was ridiculed by his Democratic rivals for not knowing how to send a message by email. Also like Kennedy, Obama and his campaign team was able to harness the power of a new communications technology to successful political ends, culminating in Obama's elevation to the same office Kennedy had won some 50 years before. The internet, like television before it, has clearly had an effect on winning a mandate from the American people.

Yet while the American example – driven as it is by the world's most expensive electoral politics – is perhaps the most prominent of this new communications medium affecting politics, it is not the only state in which the internet is having a profound effect on political realities. States as diverse as Australia, Canada, China, Estonia, Malaysia and the United Kingdom have all experienced political evolution arising from the nexus between the internet and domestic political processes. Whether those states have embraced e-government, are trialling e-elections, are thriving or suffering from internal and external e-advocacy efforts or are

choosing to erect nationwide firewalls to censor free speech online, the internet is changing politics and the practice of politics all over the world.

The internet, too, is changing the way that scholars of politics are approaching and examining their subject. Searching though shelves of hard-bound journals for individual articles, knowledge gaps between researchers in different countries and continents and research manuscripts lying unavailable and therefore unread in local university collections are almost anachronistic as libraries and scholars embrace the power of the internet to deliver information from almost anywhere in real time. No longer do political scientists lack access to the work of colleagues on the other side of the world, no longer do they wait months or even years for data sets to be shared between researchers due to time, size and problems related to the physical transfer of reams of paper, boxes of punch cards or magnetic tape. The political scientist of the twenty-first century needs little more than a notebook computer and an internet connection to access scholarly works on almost any subject from almost any period in history within seconds. A positive change, to be sure, but one that is also hanging fundamentally the practice of political science and the research that political scientists produce.

Recognising the marked impact of the internet on both practical politics and the practices of political scientists, it is not too large a step to paraphrase the US Department of Defence and decree the internet a Revolution in Political Affairs. Akin to its military phrase mate, the internet is effecting all areas of political discourse, exchange and public policy while, at the same time, forcing those who study and theorise politics to change their existing ways of thinking, working and imagining their chosen field. In this Special Issue of the *Central European University Political Science Journal* we publish five papers that demonstrate not only the breadth and depth of the impact of the internet of local, domestic and international politics but also the ways in which political scientists have embraced new technologies to embark on thought-provoking and challenging research.

Nicole Goodman's article, 'The Experiences of Canadian Municipalities with Internet Voting', opens the issue with fundamental research on the practical aspects of e-elections. Faced with both high internet connectivity rates and low voter turnout at polling stations, Goodman recounts how the embrace of e-voting has allowed for greater exercise of citizen franchise while avoiding the assumed pitfalls relating to potential voter fraud. From her studies of disparate municipalities experimenting with e-voting in Canada, Goodman identifies five factors that are associated with the successful implementation of an e-voting system. In her exploration of online voting, Goodman also concludes that e-voting can lead to increased turnout, greater participation in the democratic process and the engagement of habitual non-voters.

Minhua Lin is also concerned with the effect of the internet on national politics. Her article, 'What are the Impacts and Limits of e-Advocacy in China', reveals a side of Chinese politics not often revealed: a grassroots lobbying movement embracing a strictly censored internet platform to push for reforms from a central, single-party government. Lin's three case studies of aspects of the e-advocacy movement demonstrate that there is real potential to effect change in China using the internet. At the same time, however, she notes that for all the promise of e-advocacy, the lobbying movement is as much held back by its participants as it is by the government it is trying to influence.

Ellen Hallams' article, 'Digital Diplomacy', considers the impact of the internet on politics at the international level. Focussing on US public diplomacy efforts in the Islamic world, Hallams' article describes and explains how the internet has come to play a role in national security, winning 'hearts and minds', building and utilising soft power, countering terrorist propaganda and driving foreign policy in the post-9/11 world. Her article contrasts the digital diplomacy of the George W Bush administration with that of the current Obama administration, concluding the latter is clearly more engaged and willing to draw on the potential of the internet to develop and drive public diplomacy efforts, though there remains significant room for improvement still.

Alec Charles' article, 'The Politics of Facebook Friendship', takes a meta-view of the impact of the internet on politics, in particular when it comes to issues of trust and notions of friendship in online social networks. The centrepiece of Charles' article is a practical experiment on the popular social network, Facebook. By inventing a Facebook profile and issuing random 'friend' invites, Charles' was able to track the various levels of trust that exist in online networks. Applying the theory of Jacques Derrida to his results and extrapolating hypotheses for the likely impacts on Western-style democracy, Charles submits that sites like Facebook and the invasive nature of such social networks in the daily life of millions is redefining the nature of friendship, and by implication the nature and strength of democratic systems.

Finally, Kevin Fernandez's article, 'The Two Waves of Cyberpolitics in Malaysia', moves examination of the internet and politics from the municipal to the national level. He tracks the rise of the internet as an alternative media source and the importance that internet-fuelled media played during the post-Mahathir *reformasi* period of Malaysian politics. Fernandez notes the significance of the internet in Malaysian political discourse in recent years, particularly in the period leading up to the 2008 election, and argues that incumbent politicians made grave errors in underestimating the impact of the web in fighting for their seats. In particular, Fernandez highlights the significance of the Malaysian blogosphere in driving a new wave of cyberpolitics in the south-east Asian state.

The scope of the impact of this Revolution in Political Affairs, then, is clearly immense. Whether discussing electoral reforms in small Canadian municipalities or e-advocacy in the world's most populous state, whether dealing with the Malaysian blogosphere, British social networking or the public diplomacy efforts of the sole remaining superpower, the internet has intruded on, impacted on and forced change in disparate political systems, up to and including the international political system itself. These five articles provide a taste of the cutting-edge research that is describing, explaining and predicting this phenomenon and I am proud to have played a part in bringing these examinations of

twenty-first century politics at every level to the *Central European University Political Science Journal.*

THE EXPERIENCES OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES WITH INTERNET VOTING

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Abstract

This article explores the viability of Internet voting by examining the approaches used by two major Canadian municipalities to conduct their local elections. The analysis is based on data from personal interviews with key officials and technical experts from Halifax and Markham that were conducted between July 2009 and April 2010. The article suggests that political will, a relatively high rate of Internet penetration and Internet access, public support and trust, a supportive legal framework, and a gradual development process are important requirements to ensure the effective introduction of an Internet voting model. There is evidence that Internet voting impacts the electoral process by eliminating the need for traditional scrutineers and forcing change in the campaign strategies and mobilization tactics of candidates. The findings also suggest that the extension of online voting may have the potential to engage non-voters, develop a faithful following, and increase turnout.

Keywords: Internet, elections, e-voting, participation, turnout, Canada

1. Introduction

Several countries have initiated Internet voting trials in binding elections at various levels of government, including Canada, Estonia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.[1]

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1   There have been several instances on Internet voting in the United States, but these have all been small scale, one-time events. In 2000, for example, Internet voting was used in a state-wide straw poll of Republican party members, the Arizona Democratic Party primary, and in an experimental project (Voting Over the Internet Pilot Project) as part of the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) in conjunction with the presidential election that year. In 2004 Internet ballots were made available in the Michigan Democratic Party's Democratic caucus vote. However, no substantial Internet voting trials have been introduced in the

While some have come farther than others in the development of these e-voting approaches, the literature on Internet voting and electronic election projects only addresses trials and research in Europe and the United States.[2] There has been little scholarly focus on Internet voting in Canada despite its widespread usage among municipalities and the unique features some local Canadian approaches embody. While Internet voting has yet to be used nationally or provincially in Canada, it has been actively used in binding Canadian municipal elections since 2003. Internet voting activity is most highly concentrated in the province of Ontario, which by October of 2010 has plans to extend the option of casting an online ballot to about 800,000, or one tenth, of the eligible electors. This figure suggests that Canadian municipalities are a good place to learn about the effects of online ballots and Internet elections.

This article takes a closer look at how Internet voting is taking shape in Canadian municipalities by examining two of the more prominent jurisdictions, Markham and Halifax, as case studies. Although no broad conclusions concerning the effects of Internet voting can be made from these examples, the article sheds light on various elements of these models that may be useful in the development of Internet voting programs in other jurisdictions or regions and assesses what particular factors make these models work. Based on these cases, it is argued that Internet voting appears to be an effective method to enhance convenience and accessibility for electors and also holds promise to positively impact voting turnout. Moreover, this article asserts that Canada

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United States and all remote Internet voting projects have been cancelled prior to their introduction, primarily because of security concerns.

2   See Michael R. Alvarez and Thad E. Hall. *Point, Click & Vote: The Future of Internet Voting.* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2004); Michael R. Alvarez and Thad E. Hall. *Electronic Elections: The Perils and Promises of Digital Democracy.* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008); Michael R. Alvarez, Thad E. Hall and Alexander H. Trechsel, "Internet Voting in Comparative Perspective: The Case of Estonia." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 42 (2009):497–505; Michel Chevallier, Michel Warynski and Alain Sandoz. "Success Factors of Geneva's E-Voting System." *The Electronic Journal of e-Government* 4 (2006):55–62; Alexander Trechsel. *Report for the Council of Europe: Internet Voting in the March 2007 Parliamentary Elections in Estonia.* (Council of Europe, 2007); available at http://votingtechnologyproject.org/drupal/files/report/internet_voting_estonia_2007.pdf.

is an important research case with regards to Internet voting and should be the focus of further investigation.

While Internet voting is commonly associated with electronic machines, there are several different types of Internet voting that can involve kiosks, polling place machines, and computers from remote locations.[3] The type of Internet voting considered here however is remote Internet voting, which involves casting a ballot over the Internet from a remote location such as an elector's home or other potential site.[4] The concentration on remote Internet voting is justified for several reasons. For one, although it can be associated with many types of electronic voting, generally the term *Internet voting* is often considered one in the same with remote Internet voting.[5] Also, remote Internet voting has the most promise to positively impact electoral participation by making the electoral process more accessible and convenient for electors than other types, which have a greater opportunity cost for potential voters. This type of Internet voting can also be considered "most consistent with the development of other political aspects of society that have changed with technology."[6] Finally, the greatest frequency of trials has occurred using remote Internet voting and this appears to be an ongoing trend.

2. Methodology

The primary data for this article comes from a series of unstructured qualitative interviews conducted with relevant experts, professionals, and municipal representatives from Markham and Halifax between July 2009 and April 2010. While some of the interviews took place as part of another, larger research project[7] others were carried out specifically for this article. Interviews were either conducted over the phone or in person and all interviewees were made aware of the nature of the

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3   Alvarez and Hall, *Point, Click & Vote: The Future of Internet Voting*.

4   Nicole Goodman, Jon H. Pammett and Joan DeBardeleben, *A Comparative Assessment of Electronic Voting* (Report prepared for Elections Canada, 2010).

5   Bryan Mercurio, "Democracy in Decline: Can Internet Voting Save the Electoral Process?" *John Marshall Journal of Computer and Information Law* 12 (2004): 101–143.

6   Goodman, Pammett and DeBardeleben, *A Comparative Assessment of Electronic Voting*.

7   Goodman, Pammett and DeBardeleben, *A Comparative Assessment of Electronic Voting*.

project. Survey data collected by the municipalities themselves, or other companies involved in the electronic portion of the election, are also drawn upon to highlight some potential patterns.

Criteria for Case Selection: Why Canada?

Aside from the United Kingdom, there have been more legally binding elections with an Internet voting option in Canadian municipalities than anywhere else in the world.[8] However, while the United Kingdom has since abandoned trials, the number of Canadian municipalities using Internet voting in local elections is growing, as is the number of electors who are opting to cast their ballots online. Canadians are considered the most active Internet users compared with other countries given that three-quarters report regular Internet use.[9] Furthermore, Canada boasts an Internet penetration rate of 84 percent, which is the third highest worldwide.[10]

Internet voting was first used in Canada to conduct an NDP leadership vote in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 2003. Shortly after, an Internet voting option was offered in the 2003 local elections of 12 Ontario municipalities, the largest being Markham with an electorate of 158,000.[11] All together this first trial reached approximately 260,000 electors. In 2006 the number of Ontario municipalities offering an Internet voting option grew to 20, and the number of electors who were able to vote online rose to

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8   Dean Smith, Personal communication, April 8, 2010

9   Tamara A. Small, "Still Waiting for an Internet Prime Minister: Online Campaigning by Canadian Political Parties," in *Election,* ed. Heather MacIvor (Emond Montgomery, 2010).

10   J-F Belisle, "Canada in the Worldwide Top 3 for Internet Penetration Rate," *E-Marketing, Trends, Technology and Society* 3 (2009).

11   Markham currently has an electorate of 164,000. The eleven other municipalities and townships include Champlain, Clarence-Rockland, East Hawkesbury, Hawkesbury, North Dundas, North Glengarry North Stormont, South Dundas, South Glengarry, South Stormont and the Nation. North Glengarry is the only municipality in Ontario to not offer Internet voting in subsequent elections and this is because council voted against its use. North Glengarry now uses only paper balloting in its elections.

approximately 400,000 (see Figure 1).[12] As of June 1, 2010 (the date by which municipalities were required to declare whether or not they planned to offer Internet voting in the 2010 elections) 44 towns and cities had confirmed they will offer online ballots in the October 2010 municipal elections. This will affect approximately 800,000 Ontario electors (see Figure 2 for a list of Canadian municipalities that have used Internet voting in binding local elections as well as the projected figures for 2010).[13]

Figure 1. The Spread of Internet Voting in Ontario
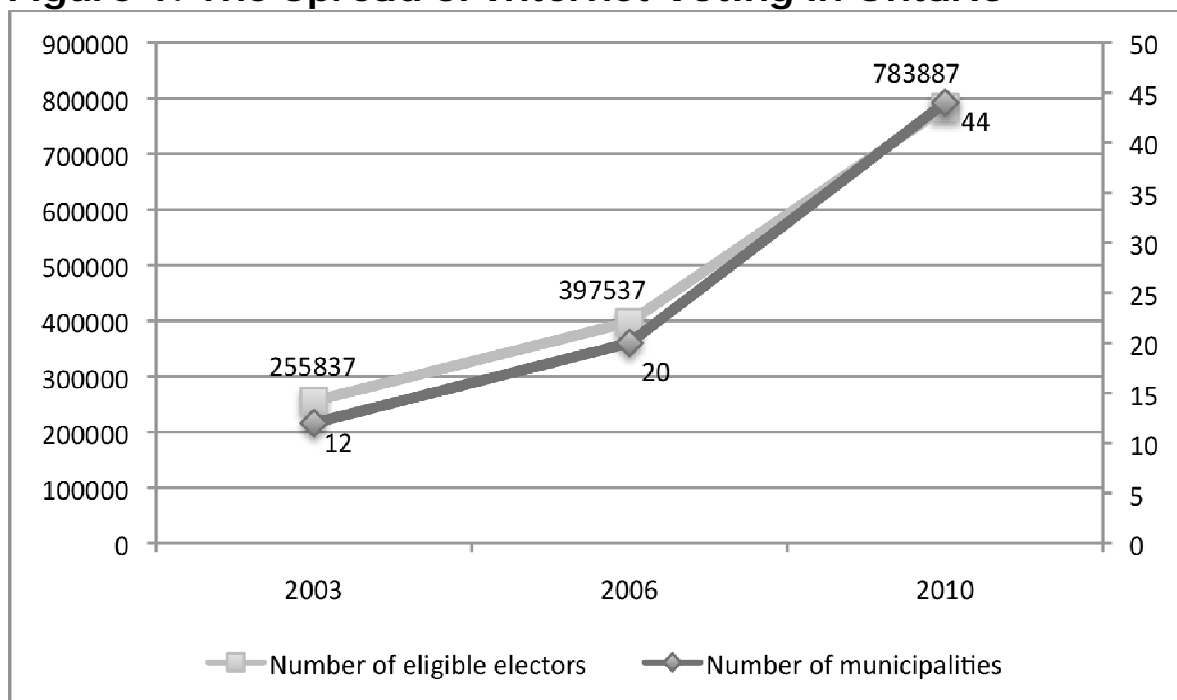
Aside from Ontario, four Nova Scotia municipalities, Halifax, Berwicke, Windsor, and Stewiacke recently introduced Internet voting in their 2008 municipal and school board elections, and Halifax used an expanded version of this Internet voting model in a more recent by-election.[14] Overall, the number of municipalities

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12   The 2010 figures are projected based on the number of Ontario municipalities that have confirmed they will be offering an Internet voting option in the October 25, 2010 election and their electorates.

13   Dean Smith, Personal communication, June 1, 2010.

14   The Halifax by-election took place on September 19, 2009. Many of these Internet voting initiatives also offered a telephone voting component for electors. This was the case in all Nova Scotia municipalities.

Figure 2[15]. Internet Voting in Canadian Municipalities

Ontario		Ontario		Nova Scotia		Ontario	
2003	# of electors	2006	# of electors	2008	# of electors	2010	# of electors
Champlain	8000	Addington Highlands	5135	Berwick	1696	Addington Highlands	5135
Clarence-Rockland	15343	Augusta	6500	Halifax	279326	Arnprior	6600
East Hawkesbury	3100	Champlain	8000	Stewiacke	1002	Augusta	6500
Hawkesbury	10100	Clarence-Rockland	15343	Windsor	2744	Belleville	49500
Markham	158000	Cobourg	15500	**Total**		Brockton	3500
North Dundas	8289	East Hawkesbury	3329		284,768	Brockville	15000
North Glengarry	8900	Edwardsburgh/Cardinal	5700			Burlington	125000
North Stormont	5500	Hawkesbury	10100			Carling	3800
South Dundas	8417	Markham	164000			Champlain	8000
South Glengarry	10988	North Dundas	8700			Clarence-Rockland	15343
South Stormont	10100	North Stormont	5500			Cobourg	15500
The Nation	9100	Perth	5200			East Hawkesbury	3329
	Total	Peterborough	75000			Edwardsburgh/Ca	5700

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15   Three by-elections have also been conducted in municipalities using Internet voting, these include Tay Valley in 2007, Montague in 2008, and Halifax in 2009. This data is original research obtained from contacting various municipalities and personal communication with Dean Smith, President, Intelivote.

255,837	South Dundas	9000
	South Frontenac	19000
	South Glengarry	9230
	South Stormont	10100
	Tay Valley	7800
	The Archipelago	5300
	The Nation	9100
	Total	
	397,537	

rdinal	
Elizabethtown-Kitley	7500
Greenstone	5000
Hawkesbury	10100
Huron-Kinloss	7200
Huntsville	19000
Laurentian Valley	10000
Leeds-Thousand Islands	7000
Markham	164000
McNab/Braeside	5700
Mississippi Mills	11000
Montague	3500
North Dundas	8700
North Grenville	10000
North Stormont	5500
Pembroke	10000
Perth	5200
Peterborough	75000
Port Hope	13900
Prince Edward	23000
Renfrew	5700
South Bruce	8350
South Dundas	9000
South Frontenac	19000
South Glengarry	9230
South Stormont	10100

				Stratford	20000
				Tay Valley	7800
				The Archipelago	5300
				The Nation	9100
				West Elgin	4000
				Whitewater	7100
				Total	783,887

that offer online ballots is on the rise and municipal officials express what appears to be a growing trend of support for electronic voting methods. In addition, many provincial election agencies have expressed interest in the prospect of Internet voting, as well as Canada's national election agency, which is currently pursuing research to fulfill a parliamentary mandate to conduct an electronic voting experiment by 2013. Growing interest, research, and a hotbed of activity at the municipal level suggests that use of, and support for, Internet voting in Canada is likely to increase, making it an important research case.

The cases of Markham and Halifax are focused upon given that they have the largest electorates and arguably use more developed approaches than some of the others. The following section examines the experiences of Markham and Halifax with Internet voting by assessing their rationales for implementation, significant characteristics of the models, and effects on the electoral process and voting turnout.

3. Markham

The Town of Markham used remote Internet voting in both its 2003 and 2006 municipal elections and has plans to continue to do so in the forthcoming October 2010 election. Markham is a significant case with regards to Internet voting because it was the first major Canadian municipality to embrace the concept of electronic voting. It is the only jurisdiction that has conducted election surveys to measure public attitudes toward Internet voting and to orchestrate a comprehensive online communications plan to inform and educate its electors. The Markham approach also serves as a model of development for all other Canadian municipalities that have adopted, or are considering, Internet voting as well as election agencies from other levels of government. Although the success of any model is context dependent, this case shows that Internet voting can work in a diverse[16] community and can have positive effects for

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16   58 percent of Markham residents are non-English, the largest groups of which are Chinese (29 percent) and South Asian (12 percent).

election stakeholders.[17] It also produces evidence that suggests the extension of Internet voting has the potential to positively affect voting turnout, particularly by encouraging previous non-voters to participate.

Rationale

The motivation to introduce remote Internet voting was based on a number of factors. First, the decision to offer online ballots was part of a multi-channel service delivery strategy that also sought to position Markham as a leader in electronic service delivery. It was also spurred by a need to adhere to the changing lifestyles of electors, appeal to younger potential voters, and to enhance accessibility and convenience for voters, particularly by enhancing ballot accessibility for special populations of electors such as persons with disabilities.

Characteristics

Online voting was made available in Markham's advance polls for a five-day period in 2003 and a six-day period in 2006. The model was based upon a two-step security process[18] wherein all electors received two notification cards by mail. The first card was sent along with the regular voter notification materials. This card enabled electors to register to vote online and prompted them to create a unique security question and answer, which was required prior to officially submitting an online ballot.[19] While some question options were pre-determined such as *"What is your mother's maiden name?"* it was possible for an elector to

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17   Kimberly Kitteringham, "Markham's Online Voting Experience" Power point presentation, January 26, 2010.

18   There are essentially two methods of Internet voting – a one-step and two-step process. In the one-step process a card is mailed to the elector which allows him or her to cast an online ballot. This method assumes the same risks as traditional poll voting along with added risks associated with the Internet such as denial of service attacks, server malfunctions, etc and mail system risks. The two-step process requires another, second notification card to cast a ballot. This option has the same risks as poll voting and the online portion of one-step Internet voting, but not the same mail system risks because a thief would have to steal the mail twice.

19   Once registered to vote online electors' names were removed from the traditional, paper ballot voters lists.

formulate his or her own question. The second card was sent out only to those who registered and provided electors with a unique PIN (a randomly generated alpha-numeric credential), which was also a requirement to vote online.[20] It was reasoned that this two-step process sufficiently mitigated the risks associated with Internet voting while maintaining the integrity of the vote.[21]

To educate and inform electors of the option to vote online Markham partnered with Delvinia, a Toronto-based company that specializes in producing digital marketing experiences. Delvinia created an interactive website which prompted electors to register to vote online and presented them with information regarding online voting, the campaign, and candidates. The goal was not only to educate electors about the opportunity to vote online, but also to emphasize the importance of voting more generally. The website was advertised by the Town through mailings, print advertising, email, and telephone notifications. Delvinia was also responsible for facilitating election surveys, which has been the first effort to systematically collect attitudinal data regarding electors' experiences with online election services in Canada.[22]

Effect on electoral process and turnout

Overall, electors report that online voting made the voting process more accessible and convenient. In 2003 for example, 86 percent of respondents cited convenience as their primary reason for voting online and 100 percent reported being likely to vote online in future elections. 99 percent of respondents reported satisfaction with the online voting process and 79 percent of online voters stated they voted from their home computer.[23] In 2006, 88 percent of online voters reported having cast their ballot online because of its convenience. Voters again expressed

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20   Andrew Brouwer, Personal interview, August 27, 2009; Andrew Brouwer, Personal communication, April 8, 2010.

21   City of Peterborough, *Report FACLK05-018 Alternative Voting Methods for the 2006 Municipal Election* (Peterborough City Council, 2005).

22   Adam Froman, Personal communication, April 7, 2009.

23   Delvinia, *Internet Voting and Canadian Democracy in Practice: The Delvinia Report on Internet Voting in the 2003 Town of Markham Municipal Election*, 2003.

satisfaction with the process (99 percent) and approximately 26 percent of online voters in 2006 reported having cast an online ballot in 2003 as well.[24] Although it is too soon to confirm, there appears to be the presence of a *faithfulness effect*, which has been documented in European cases[25], whereby those who cast their ballots online in one election are likely to continue to do in the future.

In 2003, 11,708 (or 7.5 percent of eligible voters) registered to vote online, and 7,210 of them cast online ballots. In 2006, 16,251 (9.7 percent of eligible voters) electors registered and 10,639 of those actually voted online.[26] Not only did electors make use of online voting, but the number of users also increased (see Figure 3). Voting turnout noted positive increases as well. Turnout in the 2003 advance poll, for example, increased by about 300 percent, and in 2006 rose by another 43 percent (see Figure 4 for overall turnout comparisons). Survey data also indicates that the option of online voting enticed some reported non-voters to participate electorally. For example, 25 percent of online voters in 2003 reported having not voted in the 2000 election and 21 percent of electors who cast an Internet ballot in 2006 claim they did not vote in 2003. This pattern has also been detected in research on European Internet voting trials, particularly in Estonia.[27]

Aside from its ability to enhance accessibility for electors, Internet voting also impacted other elements of the electoral process. For one, it altered the nature of the campaign. While canvassing door to door, candidates encountered some electors who had already voted.[28] The extension of online voting in advance polls made

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24   According to the 2007 report published by Delvinia 89 percent of those surveyed report being likely to make use of Internet voting in a federal election and 90 percent say they would be likely to do so in a provincial election.

25   Alvarez, Hall and Trechsel, "Internet Voting in Comparative Perspective: The Case of Estonia."

26   Kimberly Kitteringham, "Markham's Online Voting Experience".

27   Alvarez, Hall and Trechsel, "Internet Voting in Comparative Perspective: The Case of Estonia."; Delvinia, *Understanding the Digital Voter Experience: The Delvinia Report on Internet Voting in the 2006 Town of Markham Municipal Election*, 2007; Goodman, Pammett and DeBardeleben, *A Comparative Assessment of Electronic Voting*.

28   Adam Froman, Personal interview, October 2, 2009.

early voting more popular and, as a consequence, required candidates to rethink traditional campaign strategies. Permitting online ballots also changed the traditional function of election scrutineers[29] since they were not able to monitor online voters receiving their ballot in the same manner they would be able to in traditional paper ballot polls.[30] As for election officials, they consider the addition of the Internet a success and view its presence as a continued opportunity to offer service excellence to electors and encourage electoral participation.[31]

Figure 3. Method of Voting Used

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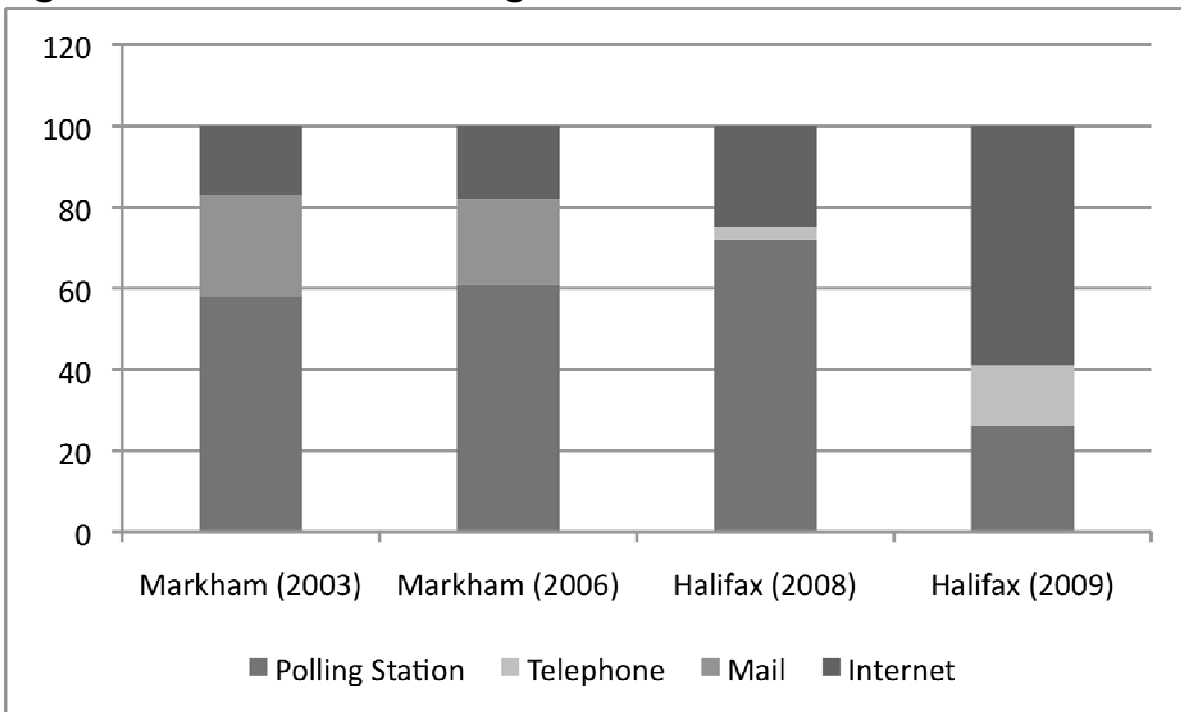
29   In Canadian elections scrutineers represent political parties or candidates and monitor the voting process to make sure ballots are distributed fairly and that their supporters are able to vote.

30   Internet Voting Workshop, Ottawa, ON, 2010.

31   Kimberly Kitteringham, "Markham's Online Voting Experience".

Figure 4. Voter Turnout in Markham and Percentage of Votes Cast Online
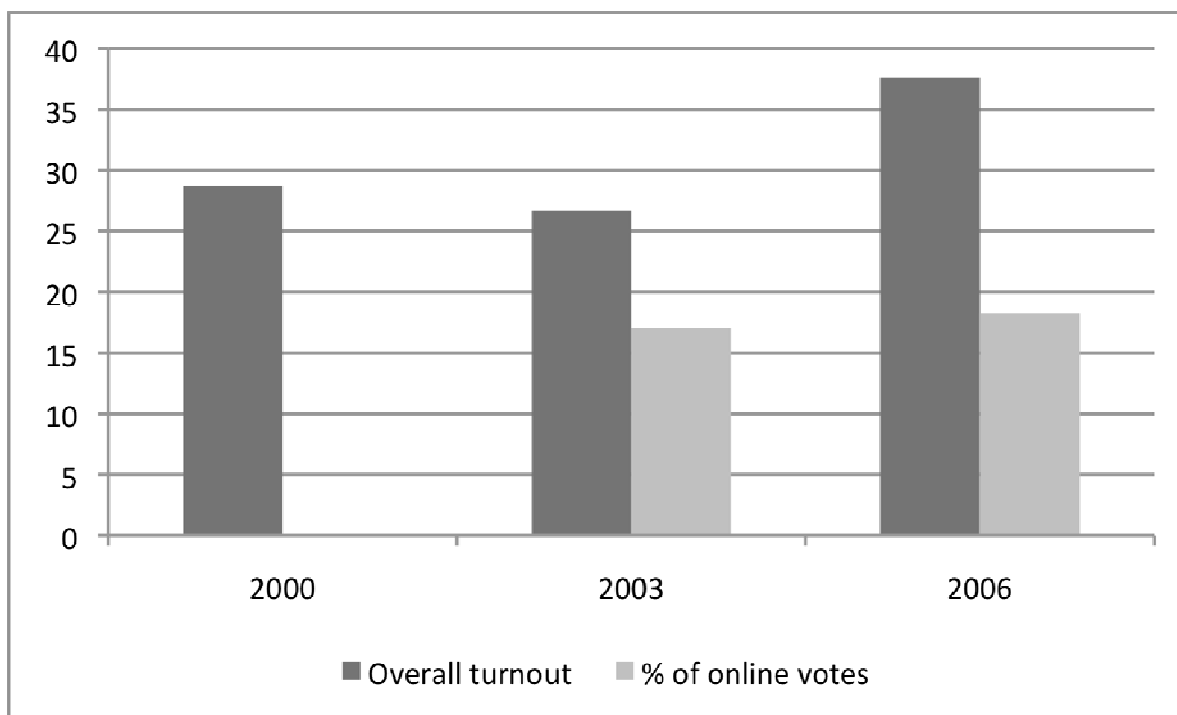
4. Halifax

Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) introduced remote Internet voting with a telephone option[32] in its 2008 municipal and school board elections and in a more recent 2009 by-election. There are several reasons for examining HRM's experience with Internet voting. First, HRM is the largest municipality to have trialed online voting in Canada with an electorate of approximately 280,000. Second, the HRM approach did not require electors to pre-register to vote as in Markham. The model has also evolved beyond advance polling, extending the online voting period right up until and on election day in the recent by-election. Finally, the model adopted by HRM possesses unique features that serve to address some of the concerns raised by opponents of Internet voting. Examination of the HRM case reinforces the position that Internet voting has the potential to improve accessibility and convenience

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32   Telephone voting was offered as a complimentary electronic method because there were concerns about Internet accessibility since there are many parts of HRM which are rural and may experience limited connectivity as a consequence.

for electors, and as a consequence, promote electoral participation.

Rationale

The motivation to adopt Internet voting was part of a pilot project whose goal was to establish electronic voting as a reliable and viable alternative voting method. It was also a step in providing improved election service for potential voters based on their changing lifestyles. Officials regard electronic voting as a natural extension of services given recent technological advancement. Another consideration was improving rates of electoral participation, which are typically quite low in elections at the municipal level in Canada (usually ranging from 28 to 32 percent overall). This included engaging younger voters, a group that typically votes at lower rates than older cohorts of potential voters.[33]

Characteristics

Remote Internet and telephone voting were offered for three days during the advance polls in the 2008 election, about two weeks prior to the actual election day. In the 2009 by-election the option to vote online or via telephone was expanded to the entire election period including election day. In both cases electors were not required to pre-register and were not removed from the manual voting lists if they chose to vote online. The HRM system allowed electors to select their preferred method of voting when they decided to cast a ballot, and not before. HRM decided not to require pre-registration because improving electoral turnout was an important motivation and evidence from trials in the United Kingdom suggested that mandatory pre-registration greatly reduced electronic participation rates.[34]

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33   Delvinia, *Internet Voting and Canadian Democracy in Practice: The Delvinia Report on Internet Voting in the 2003 Town of Markham Municipal Election*; Cathy Mellett, *Voter Participation 2008 Municipal and School Board Elections*, (Halifax Regional Municipality, 2008); Jon H Pammett and Lawrence LeDuc, *Explaining the Turnout Decline in Canadian Federal Elections: A New Survey of Non-voters*, (Ottawa: Elections Canada, 2003).

34   Cathy Mellett, Personal communication, September 11, 2009.

Not requiring electors to pre-register meant that only one card would be mailed to eligible electors (one-step process). However, HRM decided that one PIN was not secure enough to sufficiently mitigate security risks and so decided on a security model that relies on two shared secrets. The shared secrets approach necessitates that the electoral administration has access to a reliable second data source, which in this case was electors' Date Of Birth (DOB). The online voting process prompted electors to complete a CAPTCHA challenge[35] and then use their unique PIN and DOB to verify their identity. Once these security requirements were met, electors were able to access the online voting menu, make their selections, and cast a ballot.[36]

Voters were also able to switch voting channels at any point during the selection of candidates or ballot validation. For example, an elector could start selecting certain candidates using the Internet connection on his or her home computer (i.e. school board representatives) and then leave the house and continue the voting process on a cell phone (i.e. selections for councilor and mayor). This feature sought to maximize convenience and accessibility for voters.[37]

A Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) module enabled election administration at traditional polling locations to verify whether an elector had previously cast an online ballot when he or she appeared at a poll. Once the prospective voter presented identification the DRO was able to access the voter's profile using an on-site computer and confirm whether he or she had participated. The DRO then selected a "Manual Vote" box beside the elector's name and handed the elector a paper ballot. There were no reported instances where an elector claimed to have not voted but the system indicated otherwise. If this had occurred the

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35   CAPTCHA stands for Computer Assisted Program to Tell Computers and Humans Apart. It is a security procedure wherein a user is required to re-type a group of distorted characters that are located in a blurred box.

36   Bousquet, Tim, "iVote: Can Electronic Voting Save Democracy?" *The Coast*, September 18, 2008; Cathy Mellett, Personal communication, September 11, 2009.

37   Dean Smith, Personal communication, August 26, 2009.

voter would have been required to sign an affidavit confirming that he or she had not voted already.[38]

Also unique to the HRM approach was a feature that allowed electors to spoil a ballot. Often times Internet voting is both praised for not permitting ballot errors, but also criticized for not allowing spoiled ballots to be submitted. Although not a legal issue in Canada, in some countries such as France voters are legally entitled to spoil their vote, and so not having this option violates this right. Intelivote, the company hired to administer the electronic portion of the election, designed a *decline to vote* button that was offered as an option along with the candidates' names so that electors would have the choice to spoil their ballot.[39]

Finally, the 2009 by-election trialed a special candidate module, which allowed candidates to identify whether an elector had participated by selecting the elector's name on the voters' list.[40] Since electors' statuses were updated at paper ballot polls as well, candidates were able to track all methods of voting online. Though scrutineers were legally able to attend traditional polls, the features of the candidate module eliminated the need for this. [41] Interestingly, the candidate who made the best use of the system won the by-election.[42]

Effect on electoral process and turnout

Though there is not as much data for HRM given that election surveys were not administered as comprehensively as in Markham, overall the effect of Internet voting on electors, candidates, and electoral administration appears to be positive. Of the electronic ballots cast, 86 percent were Internet ballots,

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38   Dean Smith, Personal communication, October 2, 2009.

39   Goodman, Pammett and DeBardeleben, *A Comparative Assessment of Electronic Voting*.; Dean Smith, Personal communication, October 2, 2009.

40   Candidates were also able to search electors by name and address.

41   Based on feedback from this trial the system has been modified to allow candidates to create special lists of electors such as undecided voters who may have expressed the possibility of support or organize electors by their street names, etc.

42   Dean Smith, Personal communication, October 2, 2009.

and the remaining 14 percent were submitted via telephone. These numbers suggest that Internet voting was the preferred method and offered electors the greatest convenience. Furthermore, in 2008 about 30 percent of all ballots cast were electronic and in 2009 59 percent of all votes were online ballots. Interestingly, middle-aged electors (those between 40 and 59) were more likely than other cohorts to cast their ballots online confirming trends of use by age group found in some European trials.[44] This trend is also apparent in the Markham data (see Figure 5).

Although there have not been sufficient elections to draw conclusions about patterns or trends, turnout in the advance polls in Halifax increased from 12 percent (15,386 voters) in 2004 to 28 percent (28,709 voters) in 2008 (see Figure 6). Turnout in the 2009 by-election was 35 percent, an average increase of 51 percent compared with the turnout rates of the three previous by-elections (21, 10 and 23 percent respectively).[43] While there is not much evidence, results so far have been positive; at least in the portion of the election in which online voting was available.[44] Furthermore, in the other smaller Nova Scotia towns where Internet voting was offered in 2008 for a longer period of time (over 10 days), turnout was substantially higher (e.g. 53 percent in Berwick and 73 percent in Stewiacke).[45]

In terms of other effects, the HRM model eliminated the need for traditional scrutineers because observing the online list could fill the function. This list also affected the ability of candidates to campaign and mobilize voters because a number of electors voted prior to election day and because candidates were able to observe, search, and sort who had voted and who had not, using the candidate module. While it is too early to tell what the effects

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44   Alvarez, Hall and Trechsel, "Internet Voting in Comparative Perspective: The Case of Estonia."

43   Cathy Mellett, Personal communication, September 11, 2009.

44   While overall turnout did not increase in 2008, it actually decreased, advanced turnout was up from previous elections and online voting was only an option in advanced polls.

45   Cathy Mellett, Personal communication, September 11, 2009; Dean Smith, Personal communication, April 8, 2010.

Figure 5. Age of Internet Voters
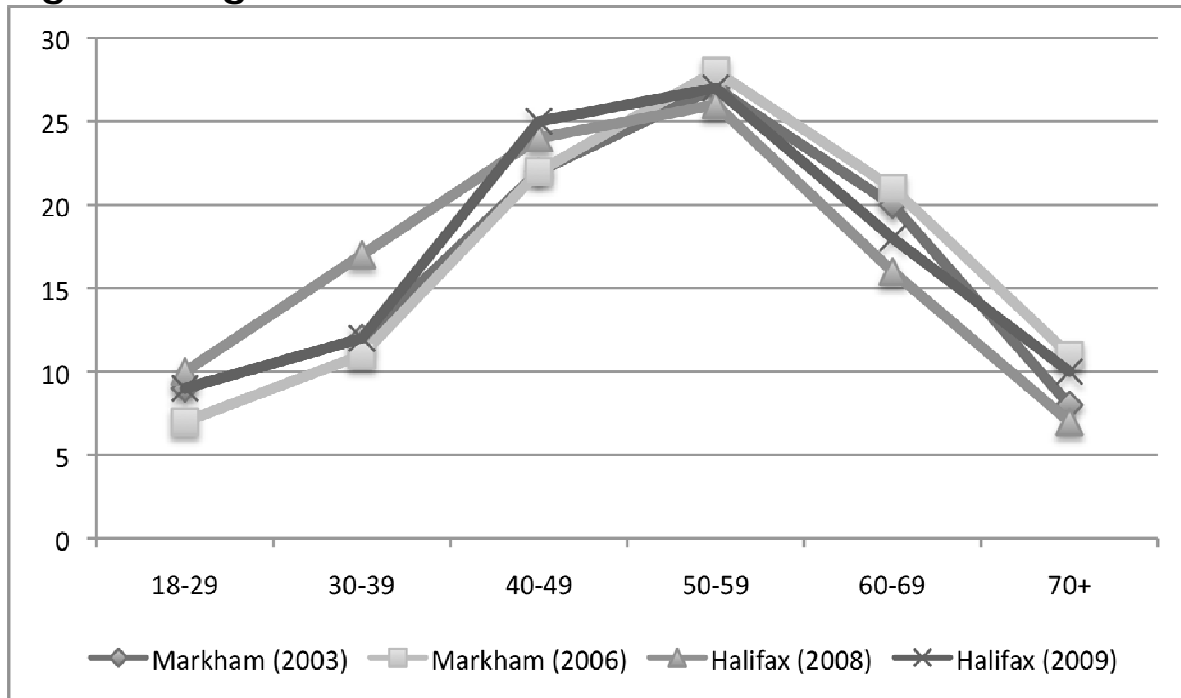
Figure 6. Overall and Advance Turnout in HRM Before and After Internet Voting
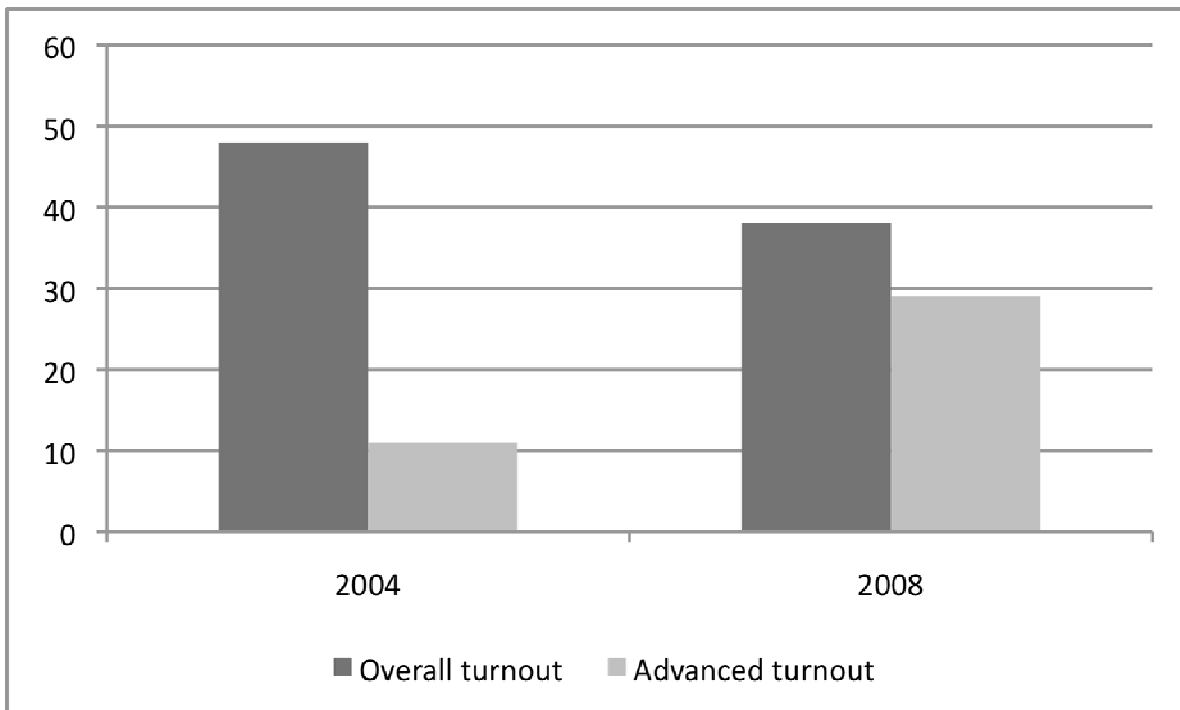
Elections officials are also sufficiently pleased with how Internet voting has fared, giving it a rating of 90 percent based on their evaluation criteria, particularly the convenience it provided to electors and its potential to enhance civic engagement. Cost is also a factor. Though HRM did not reduce the number of in person polling locations in 2008, officials plan to reduce these locations in subsequent elections and state that the reduction in cost will help to stabilize the rising costs of administering an election. The presence of a call centre in the advanced polls however, reduced costs by two thirds and also increased the quality of support available to electors.[46]

5. What makes these models work?

Although it may be too soon to classify the Markham and HRM e-voting projects as a "success," so far the results have been positive. Aside from the characteristics of the models and effects they have imparted, equally important are the presence of supportive factors that have made Internet voting workable in these jurisdictions. Namely, there are five central elements which have fostered the effectiveness of these Internet voting projects, these include: (1) political will (2) Internet penetration and access, (3) public support and trust, (4) a supportive legal framework, and (5) gradual testing and implementation. Most of these features are also cited as contributing to the success of Internet voting projects elsewhere[47] (see Figure 7). As such, it is probably wise to assume that they are central prerequisites to the effective implementation and development of an Internet voting program.

Foremost, in Markham and HRM there was a political will to introduce and trial alternative voting methods. In both cases officials viewed the introduction of Internet voting as an opportunity to establish themselves as a leader in electronic service delivery, meet the changing needs of electors' lifestyles,

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46   Cathy Mellett, Personal communication, September 11, 2009.

47   Alvarez, Hall and Trechsel, "Internet Voting in Comparative Perspective: The Case of Estonia."; Chevallier, Warynski and Sandoz, "Success Factors of Geneva's E-Voting System."

Figure 7.[48] Primary Factors That Make Internet Voting Models Work

Factors[49]	Country		
	Canada	Estonia	Switzerland
Political will	X		X
Internet penetration	X	X	
Public support and trust	X	X	
Legal framework	X	X	
Gradual implementation, testing & research	X		X
Digital identification system		X	
Interdisciplinary involvement			X

and encourage civic engagement among citizens. Their motivation to pursue such a program is one of the critical factors for its success. The effectiveness of these trails has also helped foster political motivation among other municipal governments and encouraged them to introduce Internet voting. Academics and other experts have suggested that along with trust, the political will to pursue Internet voting is perhaps one of the most significant requirements for the effective development of an Internet voting project.[50] In addition, political will has been an essential factor in the effectiveness of Internet voting programs in countries like Estonia and Switzerland. Ironically, a lack of political will has contributed to the failure of such projects in countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States.[51]

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48   The cases of Estonia and Switzerland are compared here because they are the only other jurisdictions to successfully implement and maintain Internet voting models. While Internet voting has been presented, trialed, or researched elsewhere, these projects were either stopped or not pursued for various reasons, usually relating to security risks. As noted earlier, although there has been an abundance of research in the United States, all planned trials in regular American elections have been terminated prior to actual implementation.

49   Estonia factors taken from Alvarez, Hall and Trechsel, "Internet Voting in Comparative Perspective: The Case of Estonia."; Swiss factors taken from Chevallier, Warynski and Sandoz, "Success Factors of Geneva's E-Voting System."

50   Internet voting Workshop, Ottawa, ON, 2010.

51   Alvarez and Hall, *Point, Click & Vote: The Future of Internet Voting.*; Alvarez, Hall and Trechsel, "Internet Voting in Comparative Perspective: The Case of Estonia."; Chevallier, Warynski and Sandoz, "Success Factors of Geneva's E-Voting System."; Goodman, Pammett and DeBardeleben, *A Comparative Assessment of Electronic Voting.*

Second, sufficient Internet penetration and access is an essential requirement – electors must be able to easily use the service if it is to prosper. These communities have substantially higher Internet penetration than other countries and regions where Internet voting is working well, such as Estonia, where 53 percent of households had Internet access in 2007, and Switzerland, where 70 percent of households had broadband access in 2006.[52] Comparatively, more than 80 percent of Markham residents report having access to a home computer and 80 percent say they have high-speed Internet access.[53] The Canadian Department of Economic and Rural Development reports that as of November 2009 more than 93 percent of Nova Scotians had access to broadband.[54] In addition, local data indicates that 78 percent of HRM households have an Internet connection, which is one of the highest percentages of users by region in Canada.[55] These figures suggest that Markham and Halifax have relatively high rates of Internet penetration, which is a prerequisite for access and use.

Public support and trust are a third element that has been instrumental in the development of Internet voting projects in these municipalities and elsewhere.[56] Prior to implementing Internet voting, HRM council conducted polls to gauge public opinion toward online voting and found that over 70 percent of respondents reported they would be in favour of such an initiative.[57] Markham data also highlights relatively supportive feelings toward online voting, although this is among online voters specifically. For example, online voters in Markham were likely to encourage others to vote online – 79 percent of survey respondents report that at least one other person in their

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52   Alvarez, Hall and Trechsel, "Internet Voting in Comparative Perspective: The Case of Estonia.";
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Stat Extracts. *Country Statistical Profiles 2009:
Switzerland.* http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=CSP2009
(April 8, 2009).

53   Kimberly Kitteringham, "Markham's Online Voting Experience."

54   Linda Grant, Personal Interview, August 25, 2009.

55   Cathy Mellett, "HRM's Experience with Electronic Voting: The 2008 Municipal Election and beyond"
Power point presentation, January 26, 2010.

56   Internet Voting Workshop, Ottawa, ON, 2010.

57   Cathy Mellett, Personal Communication, September 11, 2009.

household voted using the Internet. Additionally, 80 percent of online voters report they would be likely to recommend it to others.[58] More generally, data collected by Canada's national election agency confirms that overall support is growing for Internet voting in the country as a whole. Whereas in 2000 47 percent of the general population reported they would be likely to make use of online voting, in 2008 this figure had risen to 54 percent overall.[59]

Aside from public opinion it is important to have the support of other election stakeholders such as candidates, election administration, and the media. To foster this support it was imperative for election officials to communicate with all affected parties. Officials from both municipalities ensured they engaged candidates early by educating them on the process and encouraging questions. Part of this included holding meetings where candidates could voice concerns.[60] Creating access to information about online voting and communication were key tools toward building and nurturing public support and trust.[61]

Fourth, a legal framework that allows for alternative voting methods is an important condition. Municipal election legislation in Canada is regulated and passed provincially. Currently, six provinces (Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Saskatchewan) have enacted legislation within their respective *Municipal Elections Act* that permits the use of alternative voting methods in elections or allows for the passage of by-laws (by municipalities), which would allow the incorporation of electronic voting in local elections. Although this legislation exists, many municipalities, Markham and HRM in particular, were required to pass an additional by-law prior to the introduction of Internet voting which specified the type of voting method to be used and a rationale for doing so. HRM was actually

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58   Delvinia, *Understanding the Digital Voter Experience: The Delvinia Report on Internet Voting in the 2006 Town of Markham Municipal Election*.

59   Goodman, Pammett and DeBardeleben, *A Comparative Assessment of Electronic Voting*.

60   In the Canadian municipality of Peterborough negative media was an issue and was mitigated by educating the media and providing information resources that explained the system and affirmed its security.

61   Goodman, Pammett and DeBardeleben, *A Comparative Assessment of Electronic Voting*.; Internet Voting Workshop, Ottawa, ON, 2010.

required to pass two separate by-laws for the 2008 and 2009 elections given that one offered Internet voting in the advanced polls only, whereas the other expanded the timeline of use for the entire voting period, including election day.[62] Along with this, a formal list of procedures and policies was necessary to outline elements of the vote such as recount procedures, ballot forms, etc.[63] European cases went through similar procedures, although in most of those cases the process was much more drawn out and complex, especially in Estonia.[64]

Finally, gradual implementation and extensive prior research were essential components. HRM delayed extending Internet voting through to election day and employing the candidate module in the first election where online ballots were offered to ensure they were able to mitigate any risks which arose and take advantage of any unforeseen opportunities. After council deemed the Internet portion of the 2008 election a success, these features were tested in a subsequent by-election. Prior to the introduction of Internet voting more generally however, HRM conducted extensive research by following the experiences of other municipalities that had trialed online voting, ensured a comprehensive understanding of the electoral process, and established key objectives and electoral principles. Security and privacy issues were concerns, particularly the integrity of the voter's data. These issues were handled by creating a detailed matrix for criteria of evaluation and procedures to be followed. Overall, HRM is systematically building on the accepted success of its trials.

Markham also conducted extensive research, which included a comprehensive risk analysis and careful study of previous trials. In addition, officials conducted consultations with various experts. Although the Markham approach was more fulsome from the

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62   Linda Grant, Personal Interview, August 25, 2009.

63   Goodman, Pammett and DeBardeleben, *A Comparative Assessment of Electronic Voting*.; Linda Grant, Personal Interview, August 25, 2009.

64   Alvarez, Hall and Trechsel. 2009. "Internet Voting in Comparative Perspective: The Case of Estonia."

start, election officials have been able to develop their research by expanding the election survey initiative, which has plans to probe the attitudes of candidates and election administration toward Internet voting as well as more closely examine Internet security and voter authentication in the upcoming election. At any rate, both cases took time and care in development. Step by step approaches have also been cited in literature addressing European trials as a key success factor, particularly Switzerland.[65]

6. The Future of Internet Voting in Canada and Beyond

Several conclusions can be drawn from the experiences of Markham and HRM. For one, although most models are context dependent it is likely that political will, a relatively high rate of Internet penetration and access, public support and trust, a supportive legal framework, and a gradual development process are important requirements to ensure the effective introduction and refinement of an Internet voting model. While some items may be of greater importance than others they all appear to play a role in successfully deploying an Internet voting system.

Furthermore, while Internet voting has the potential to make the electoral process more convenient and accessible for electors, it also has broader effects on the electoral process, such as eliminating the need for traditional scrutineers and forcing change in the campaigning and mobilizing tactics candidates employ. We are likely not yet aware of all the effects the emergence of online voting will have on candidates, the campaign, and the electoral process. Continued research is important as a consequence.

Although there is not enough data to confirm or refute the potential of Internet voting to engage electors in the electoral process, there are indications that the extension of online voting may have the potential to engage non-voters, develop a faithful following, and increase turnout. There are mixed results overall, but in most municipalities in which online ballots were offered turnout increased, sometimes tenfold. By comparison, in Estonia and certain Swiss cantons where Internet voting has been

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65   Chevallier, Warynski and Sandoz. "Success Factors of Geneva's E-Voting System."

successfully developed and maintained by government, use of electronic ballots and voting turnout has increased over time.[66] It is too soon to tell for certain, but there is some empirical support that Internet voting can encourage non-voters to participate and promote turnout.

There are also specific characteristics of these models such as a comprehensive online marketing campaign, candidate and DRO modules, multi-channel electronic voting, and the feature which permits spoiled ballots that are useful for consideration in the development of Internet voting systems elsewhere.

In sum, the future of Internet voting in Canada appears promising and future research should be focused here. 2010 will be the third election year wherein Ontario municipalities offer an Internet voting option to electors. Compared with the 2006 elections, more than double the amount of cities and towns has confirmed that they will be using online ballots. Interest from additional municipalities and from provincial and federal levels of government suggests there is a good chance Internet voting programs will expand across the country. While nations like Estonia and Switzerland have developed fairly refined approaches, which have been used to conduct binding elections for higher levels of government, Canada is emerging as an important research case. If Canadian municipalities continue to offer online ballots as a method of voting, Canada will soon have more instances of local Internet elections than any country worldwide. Canadian municipal elections should be the focus of greater research and data collection if we are to learn about the effects and outcomes that come from Internet voting.

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66   Alvarez, Hall and Trechsel. 2009. "Internet Voting in Comparative Perspective: The Case of Estonia."; République et Canton de Genève, *E-Voting: The Geneva Internet Voting System*, www.geneve.ch/evoting/english/presentation_projet.asp (August 16, 2009).

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WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS AND LIMITS OF E-ADVOCACY IN CHINA?

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Abstract

Before the widespread application of Internet, the Chinese government had been closely monitoring information accessed by the general public. This study points out that with either ownership or strong presence within communication and network service providers, the government has been able to censor an extensive amount of information before it reaches the public. Nonetheless, the government has not prevented people from raising their voice through the Internet. Is this tolerance forced by the growing civil society advocacy in China? What have been the impacts and constraints of e-advocacy in China? By analyzing three typical e-advocacy cases, this paper points out that e-advocacy could potentially have impacts on provincial and municipal government decisions toward certain events. It would also scrutinize the major Bullet Board Systems (BBS) and micro-blogs on Chinese websites and reveals that the constraints of e-advocacy have come from not only governmental control, but also unorganized and emotional behavior of citizens.

Keywords: e-advocacy, China, Information and Communication Technology, restricted, limitation, impact

1. Introduction

With increasing exposure to the World Wide Web since the 2000s, people in China have acquired more diversified channels to obtain information, especially regarding public affairs which were less accessible in the past. More importantly, the Internet provides an unprecedented channel for citizens to voice their own opinion. Various parties endeavor to explore this new sphere to influence government decision making. The Chinese government shows different attitudes in respect to bottom-up movements regarding

e-advocacy. It suppresses certain approaches but welcomes others. The seemingly *ad hoc* reactions of the government are the combined results of the multi-level governmental institutions, as well as the organizational structure of these advocacy groups. This paper analyzes e-advocacy with respect to the political situation in China and discusses limits and impacts of e-advocacy. Through three case studies, one may understand why e-advocacy could become influential in decision-making by provincial/ municipal governments, but encounter a greater challenge with central government. E-advocacy is neither a panacea leading to a society thriving for more civil freedom nor a useless instrument manipulated by the government. Understanding the limits and impacts of e-advocacy will help advocates to use this tool more effectively in the future.

E-advocacy in this paper means using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a medium to draw public attention to certain policy/public issues, to shape public opinion on these issues and thus to influence government decision-making. E-advocacy is different from the traditional institutional advocacy, which is carried out by organizations and lobby groups[1]. It is also distinct from media advocacy, which is facilitated by mass media[2]. The uniqueness of e-advocacy is the possibility of direct participation of individual citizens enabled by ICT. This paper will focus only on Internet e-advocacy as it is a comprehensive technology which includes the functionalities of telephone, fax, video-conference and many other ICT tools. Participants in e-advocacy could be organized groups, like NGOs and interest groups[3]; yet, this is seldom the case in China. Chinese e-advocacy mostly bases on individual citizens and *ad hoc* coalitions of stakeholders[4].

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1   Thomas Holyoke, Jeffrey Henig, Heath Brown, and Natalie Lacireno-Paquet, "Institution Advocacy and the Political Behavior of Charter Schools", *Political Research Quarterly* 60, (Jun. 2007): 202-214

2   David Jernigan and Patricia Wright, "Media Advocacy: Lessons from Community Experiences", *Journal of Public Health Policy* 17, (1996): 306-330

3   David Suárez, "Nonprofit Advocacy and Civic Engagement on the Internet", *Administration and Society* 41, (May 2009): 267-289; Mcnutt, John and Katherine Boland, "Electronic Advocacy by Nonprofit Organizations in Social Welfare Policy", *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 28, (Dec. 1999): 432-451

4   Xin Wang , "Seeking Channels for Engagement: Media Use and Political Communication by China's Rising Middle Class", *China: An International Journal* 7, (Mar. 2009): 31-56; Xiang Zhou, "The political

2. The Social and Technological Background of E-Advocacy

E-advocacy is enabled by better education and economic development. Universal primary and junior high school education equipped people with the basic knowledge and ability to use modern ICT tools. The advanced level of education of the populace, especially elites, also stirs up rights consciousness and the desire to work within the framework of the rule of law. It is not unusual to see online debates surrounding freedom of speech, illegitimate governmental behavior, scandals within the civil service and other news which hitherto rarely have been reported in mainstream media. Meanwhile, rapid economic development ensures provision of critical Internet infrastructure and user end devices. By the end of 2009, the number of regular Internet users had reached 384 million and Internet coverage had reached 28.9%[5]. Among the 384 million Internet users, 145 million updated their blogger at least once during the second half of 2009 (the survey period) and 80.1% used the Internet as news source[6]. The Internet together with increasing popularity of mobile and digital devices has made it possible to have news reported by the citizens themselves round the clock. The public can now upload video and photos right at the spot where events occur, which may include unveiling wrongdoings by the government. Information provided by alternative channels empowers the civil society by reducing information asymmetry. The public are able to pressure the government into becoming more transparent and accountable. Yang calls it a "co-evolution of Internet and civil society" as technology offers new channels for citizen participation[7].

This "co-evolution" of the Internet and civil society, unfortunately, is closely monitored by the Chinese government. Using e-

blogosphere in China: A content analysis of the blogs regarding the dismissal of Shanghai leader Chen Liangyu", *New Media Society* 11, (Sep. 2009): 1003 – 1022

5   China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) (2010), "The 25th Statistical Report of Internet Development in China", available on line:

http://www.cnnic.cn/html/Dir/2010/01/15/5767.htm, accessed on Feb 23rd 2010

6   CNNIC, "The 25th Statistical Report of Internet Development in China", 32

7   Guobin Yang, "The Co-Evolution of the Internet and Civil Society in China", *Asian Survey* 43, (May/Jun. 2003): 405-422

advocacy to influence government decision making and political changes has both tug and pull factors in China. On the one hand, as discussed above, modern ICT technology empowers civil society by providing channels for low-cost and relatively free-flowing information. An increasing number of Internet users are actively using the new platform to express their opinions and form their advocacy groups to influence policymaking[8]. This bottom-up participation changes the government-citizen relationship profoundly. The possibility of citizens uploading information at any time and within any of the e-platforms breaks the government monopoly of information dissemination. On the other hand, with the single party government maintaining its absolute authority in governance, civil involvement in policy-making initiated by the government seems almost impossible, not to mention the development of civic activities through the Internet being closely monitored and controlled[9].

The Internet has emerged with the absolute control of the government, thus ICT in China has never been neutral. Chinese governmental intervention in Internet development is comprehensive and has existed ever since the advent of the Internet era. There are basically four levels of Internet control from service providers to individual users. First, at the national level, only government approved agencies are allowed to set up critical Internet infrastructure. Secondly, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) must obtain licenses issued by the government[10]. These services are required to go through international gateways located in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou and are subject to governmental control and regulation. Thirdly, web portal providers have to register with one of these ISPs and install filters to block undesirable content. Last but not least, individual users need to register with ISPs in order to obtain Internet access[11]. In addition to the technical

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8   Yongming Zhou, "Living on the Cyber Border: Minjian Political Writers in Chinese Cyberspace", *Current Anthropology* 46, (Dec. 2005): 779 – 803; Xin, "Seeking Channels for Engagement', 56; Yang, "The Co-Evolution of the Internet and Civil Society in China", 422

9   Nina Hachigian, "China's Cyber-Strategy", *Foreign Affairs* 80, (Mar. /Apr. 2001): 118-133

10   Bin Liang and Hong Lu, "Internet Development, Censorship, and Cyber Crimes in China", *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 26, (Feb. 2010): 103-120

11   Bin and Lu, "Internet Development, Censorship, and Cyber Crimes in China", 106

control, the government has implicit influence by employing anonymous commentators and bloggers to promote government ideologies on the Internet.

Considering the positive and negative conditions analyzed above, it is not surprising that scholars came up with very different conclusions on the impact of e-advocacy when they focused on specific factors. Evaluation of ICT's impact on China's public affairs fell into two extremes. Scholars like Hachigian and Yang are optimistic and have stated that the Internet can lead to the democratization of China and be a potential challenge to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)[12]. Nonetheless, others have appeared less positive; for example, Tsui even describes the Chinese Internet environment as a Panopticon[13]. Regardless of the various attitudes, these researchers have focused more on the regulatory framework and government behavior. There is a significant gap in analyzing different types of advocacy events and the behavior of the advocates themselves. In agreement with MacKinnon, activists who employ the Internet as advocacy tools are strictly regulated by the government[14]. However, my research will show that e-advocacy is allowed and even supported by the government on certain issues at provincial/municipal level. Moreover, one should realize that the limitations of advocacy have come not only from government suppression, but also from the lack of rational organization and the absence of leadership within advocacy groups. Advocates have somehow restricted themselves from having greater impacts of e-advocacy even within allowed territories. The following section will analyze outcomes of different types of e-advocacies through three specific cases and understand their impacts and restraints.

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12   Nina, "China's Cyber-Strategy', 127; Yang, "The Co-Evolution of the Internet and Civil Society in China", 405

13   Lokman Tsui, "The Panopticon as the Antithesis of a Space of Freedom: Control and Regulation of the Internet in China", *China Information* 17, (Oct. 2003): 65-82

14   Rebecca MacKinnon, "Flatter world and thicker walls? Blogs, censorship and civic discourse in China", *Public Choice* 134, (Jan. 2008): 31–46

3. Case Study: Significant Impacts of E-advocacy on the Restricted Issues

A few researchers are aware of both the capacity of the government in controlling the Internet and the civil society's ability to organize influential e-advocacy[15]. MacKinnon and Zhang explained that the government's ambiguous Internet policy is due to its priority regarding economic prosperity, which supports leadership of the government[16]. Nevertheless, official data shows that in 2009, the most frequently visited websites were those related to entertainment and news reports. Likewise, websites for online shopping have experienced the fastest growth in visiting frequency[17]. It would not conflict with economic interests that even if the government exercises harsh censorship on all forums, Bulletin Board System (BBS), NGO websites and blogs where e-advocacy normally takes place. Moreover, one might have noticed contradicting governmental behavior in handling e-advocacy events. At collective level, the government allows certain e-advocacy group to carry out their campaign, and revises governmental policy/behavior accordingly; while it suppresses many others and even condemn their advocacy as unlawful act. At the individual level, despite the harsh sentencing of many activists, the government occasionally tolerates certain civic activists' continuously advocating for political changes with only mild caution[18].

How can we reconcile the seemingly indeterminate government attitude and the rising e-advocacy? By scrutinizing a few influential e-advocacy events in 2009, it is possible to understand the key factors determining the government's attitude towards e-advocacy. Three typical cases are selected from more general e-advocacy activities in order to understand government's attitude. The three cases are representative due to the following reasons. First of all, they all tackled unconstitutional or illegality behavior

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15   Zhou, "Living on the Cyber Border", 780; MacKinnon, "Flatter world and thicker walls?", 31

16   Lena Zhang, "Behind the 'Great Firewall': Decoding China's Internet Media Policies from the Inside", *Convergence* 12, (Aug. 2006): 271–291; MacKinnon, "Flatter world and thicker walls?", 31

17   CNNIC, "The 25th Statistical Report of Internet Development in China", 31

18   Zhou, "Living on the Cyber Border", 799

of government or civil servants. In China's single-party political background, e-advocacy is a civilian effort to introduce checks and balance on state power. These cases reflect the main theme of current e-advocacy, which is to promote the democratization process in China. Secondly, the three cases are all influential cases which have successfully drawn attention nationwide. The first case is recorded in the first annual report of the Supreme Court as a representative case to improve rule of law. Despite unsuccessful outcomes, the second and third cases have profound and long-lasting impacts on Chinese institutional arrangements. Thirdly, the three cases comprise certain diversity. Two of them are successful examples while the last one is suppressed by the government. The three cases tackled specific targets as well as general issues. They are related to county, municipal and national level governmental issues respectively.

The three selected cases are presented briefly as follows:

Case One[19]: In a small town in Hunan Province, a body massage specialist accidentally killed a government officer and hurt two when the later attempted to sexually harass and rape her. At first the local government wanted to cover the initial assault. The news spokesman distorted the facts of the crime. The police locked up the woman by tying her to a hospital bed. They had decided to charge her with intentional murder. Nonetheless, the public tried to find out what actually happened at the massage center. People posted online about the unlawful treatment towards the massage therapist in the hospital. Additionally, they advocated and provided necessary legal support for the young woman. The local government then shut down broadcasts and Internet in the town for several days to suppress e-advocacy. However, a nation wide advocacy group was formed beyond the control of local government. Higher level government finally stepped in. The body massage specialist was found guilty for undue defense and the two injured officers were sentenced for their attempted rape.

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19   Detail course of the incident was recorded in many news reports, including three self-conflicting description from the policy during the press meeting. Available on line in Chinese: http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/邓玉娇事件, accessed on March 15, 2010.

Case Two[20]: In October 2009, Li DeTao, a volunteer of the NGO Public Budget Observer, requested free access to the budgets of the municipal governments of Guangzhou and Shanghai. According to the Regulation on the Disclosure of Government Information enforced in 2008, citizens have the right to access such information. Seven days later, the Guangzhou government informed Li that 114 departmental budgets would be available to download on the government website. On the same day, the Shanghai government replied that governmental budget was considered a state secret and would not be publicized. The different responses by the two local governments induced prevalent advocacy for free access to government information on line. Citizens questioned the reasoning of Shanghai authorities and advocated for transparent governance. Shanghai was criticized by citizens, commenter, scholars, and later in main mainstream media. In March 2010, the Shanghai government finally made the 2010 municipal budget publicly available.

Case three: Liu, Xiaobo, a human rights activist, drafted "08 Charter" to advocate for freedom, democracy, and constitutionalism in China. Dissemination and advocacy of the Charter was mainly carried out via the Internet. A few activists openly supported the Charter and carried out Internet campaign. Liu was then arrested and harshly sentenced with 11 years in jail under the charge of inciting subversion of state power.

The three cases above have shown that e-advocacy can be influential when it is pointing to specific events and related to local government. First, thanks to the relatively boundlessness nature of the Internet, local governments are less technically or legally able to effectively control news reports relating to local issues. E-advocates can disseminate information with almost no time lag and out of local government jurisdiction. Therefore, it becomes harder for local governments to cover up or censor their own misbehavior. Meanwhile, provincial and even central governments are willing tolerate and sympathize with e-advocacy

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20   The news is available on line: http://news.eco.gov.cn/2009/1026/92372.html, accessed on March 20, 2010

on local issues. The central government wants to show that public administration is transparent and accountable to public supervision, which could elevate government credibility at a national level. Furthermore, it also allows the central government to shift blame to individual local officers. Punishment of a local officer delivers the message that lawlessness is a personal behavior and does not represent the government. In addition, the highly centralized government structure gives incentive for local governments to compete with each other, so that they may receive more funding and investment from the central government or the public. ICT provides an effective platform for comparing different local governments' behavior. E-advocacy benefits from such exhibited competition among peer governments. Lastly, if e-advocacy is campaigning for change in institutional arrangements or questioning general issues of the CCP's governance, it would be suppressed without exception as demonstrated in the third case mentioned previously. The central government's capacity in suppressing e-advocacy is ensured by the centralized administration of the Internet as discussed above.

4. Limitations of E-advocacy from within the Advocacy Groups

As analyzed in the previous section, e-advocacy could be effective in local affairs due to local limitations in suppressing national e-advocacy, central government support and competition between local governments. Unfortunately, it is not common to have well-organized e-advocacy which is underpinned by sufficient legal knowledge, as outlined in case two. Limitations of e-advocacy not only come from government restrictions, but also advocacy groups themselves.

The individuals applying e-advocacy reflect the digital division in China and thus many successful e-advocacies only represent a rather small portion of the population. Although Internet coverage in China is growing rapidly, many people use it merely for entertainment, or obtaining information. The rising advocacy groups are from mainly the "propertied, educated and digitally

well-off" middle class[21]. They represent only small portions of the stratified Chinese population[22]. This proposition can be supported by examining the background of a few famous activists. Li Detao (in case one), Liu Xiaobo (in case three), Feng Zhenghu (a human rights activist), Tan zuoren (an environmentalist, investigating building quality after the Sichuan earthquake), and many other well-known e-advocates mostly share similar backgrounds, including being educated overseas, and occupations such as university professors, lawyers or editors. Besides that, the digital divide is also reflected among e-advocates due to geographic and educational disparities.   Geographic digital divides in China comprise of the division between rural and urban, higher income coastal China and less developed inland China[23].   Educational divide is mainly reflected in the field of higher education and elite groups. According to official data, among a 1.1 million sample population over 6 years old, there were only 0.074 million people (6.7%) who had college degrees in 2008[24]. Such a digital divide indicates that advocates who are able to use the ICT as a tool for advocacy are only the few well educated middle class.

Beyond the issue of limited representation, the Internet community is highly emotional and usually lacks the skills to develop a proposition into e-advocacy. For example, Tianya BBS (http://www.tianya.cn/bbs/index.shtml) is one of the most famous portal sites for civil society activities. It is also the first website to initiate many famous national e-advocacies, including case one mentioned above.   Compared to the US based Huffington Post (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/), which is a commentary outlet for liberal/progressive ideas, general participants in Tianya BBS also consider themselves alternative information providers to the main stream media. However, when I selected twenty topical subjects, which are against government malfunction or appealing for collective social action, and with

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21   Robert Tian and Yan Wu, "Crafting self identity in a virtual community: Chinese internet users and their political sense form", *Multicultural Education and Technology Journal* 1, (2007): 238-258

22   Xin, "Seeking Channels for Engagement", 32

23   Eric Harwit, "Spreading Telecommunications to Developing Areas in China: Telephones, the Internet and the Digital Divide, *The China Quarterly* 180, (Dec. 2004): 1010-1030

24   National Bureau of Statistics of China (2009), China Statistical Yearbook, Beijing

more than 100,000 clicks and over 1,000 responses during May 2010, I discovered that over 90% of the responses are emotional expression rather than serious debate. Instead of posting arguments or statements with complete sentences, follow up messages to a main topic are flooded by words or phrases expressing nothing but personal feelings. These emotional responses are mostly negative, such as anger and fury, and sometimes sadness and helplessness. Negative feelings would then be amplified by hundreds of repeated grumblings, without much logical reasoning or argument. What may be worse is that the large number of these messages makes it more difficult to search for the useful and valuable information. Another sign of emotion dominated e-advocacy is the lack of tolerance. A dominating argument at one topic shows limited respect towards opposite views. Debates normally develop into labeling and personal attacks within one or two posts. Similar events like case one are reported in Tianya from time to time. However, due to the disorganized emotional response of Internet users, most of them did not develop into successful e-advocacy which may help address government misconduct.

Another constraint which negatively impacts e-advocacy is the entertainment focus of ICT users. ICT users tend to utilize these appliances as entertainment and commercial means for making profit rather than to deliberate and communicate. Despite the rapid growing Internet user group in China, the majority of the population uses Internet as a source of entertainment and e-business[25]. This might not be an obstacle for e-advocacy in other countries, but is crucial in China due to government censorship. Unlike the situation in Europe or the United States, where ICT could perform an influential role despite its overwhelming entertainment function, advocates in China are facing a tougher political environment. E-advocacy in China requires extensive participation and attention from the public in order to avoid suppression by the government. Unfortunately, at Tianya BBS, the most frequently visited posts are usually related to

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25   CNNIC, "The 25th Statistical Report of Internet Development in China", 31

entertainment[26]. Among all of the hot topics with most clicks, there are always advertisements and unrelated gossip inserted as comments or follow up messages because that information could be more visible by more people without cost. Micro-blogging is another frequently used platform of e-advocacy; for example, Twitter was heavily used during the disputed Iranian presidential

Table 1. Ranking of SINA micro-blog topics by clicking frequency

Ranking by Clicking	Category of topic		
	Week One	Week Two	Week Three
1	Entertainment	Earthquake	Earthquake
2	Food Safety	Celebrity	Celebrity
3	Blessing for traditional festival	Celebrity	Celebrity
4	Celebrity	Entertainment	Winter Olympics
5	Earthquake	Festival	Environment concern
6	International news	Student life	Winter Olympics
7	Student life	Celebrity	Blessing for traditional festival
8	Celebrity	Celebrity	Celebrity
9	Celebrity	Celebrity	International news
10	Blessing for traditional festival	Celebrity	Winter Olympics
11	Environment concern	Celebrity	Winter Olympics

(Source: Summarized from the website's own rankings, based on participant activities online:
http://t.sina.com.cn/pub/hottopic&date=2010-03-21&type=oneweek;
http://t.sina.com.cn/pub/hottopic&date=2010-03-13&type=oneweek;
http://t.sina.com.cn/pub/hottopic&date=2010-02-27&type=oneweek;
accessed on March 21, 2010)
election.

In the Table 1, I summarize the most popular topics in three consecutive weeks between February and March 2010 on SINA

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[26]   Statistics   provided   by   the   website   itself,   available   online   (in   Chinese): http://www.tianya.cn/bbs/index.shtml, accessed on March 20, 2010

micro-blog (http://t.sina.com.cn/), one of the most popular Chinese micro-blogs. Unlike Twitter, which is becoming an important tool for journalists and other professionals to obtain valuable information, micro-blogs in China are mainly utilized as a tabloid for entertainment. This entertainment factor is also observed in Chinese blogging behavior[27].

Apart from lacking sufficient organizational back up, e-advocacy in China has an evident deficit in leadership and responsibility. E-advocacy in China is rarely led by NGOs, interest groups, or religious groups. Thus, it is atypical to have e-advocacy as in case two, with legal and organizational support. Moreover, the e-advocacy described in case two mainly occurred after the off-line actions of Li Detao and the NGO to which he belonged. E-advocacy mainly occurred in the later stage of the event, in criticizing different responses of the two local governments and advocating for a more standardized transparency policy. Most of the e-advocacy cases in recent years are similar to case one. The typical model of e-advocacy in China is as follows:

Information is first disseminated by individuals affected by certain policy or government action, or activists seeking change. Then people interested in the information voluntarily explore and contribute with more facts, data, and professional opinions through the Internet. The abundant information and knowledge shapes the attitude of the public. Due to the extensive public attention online, mainstream media finally steps in, signaling intervention from higher level governments. Under the strict information control system, this model of e-advocacy could circumvent potential government suppression at the early stage because the action is largely unorganized. However, in the long run, such unorganized e-advocacy could also restrict its own influence. Because of the lack of leadership, different opinions could easily divide the advocacy group. Participants involved in e-advocacy in a purely virtual community do not feel the same connection and obligation as they would in a real world organization. They would be likely to retreat when conflicts within the advocacy group cannot be resolved in the absence of

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27 MacKinnon,"Flatter world and thicker walls?", 35

leadership; not to mention unorganized advocacy is more susceptible to deadlocks. Due to the public's use of the Internet as an emotional and entertainment forum, passing advocacy would be quickly replaced by new events and focuses. There is hardly any case of large scale long-term e-advocacy in China.

5. Conclusion

The ever growing number of Internet users and the increasing phenomena of e-advocacy will not automatically lead to a more open, tolerated and democratic society in China. E-advocacy has demonstrated its potential in promoting more accountable local governments. However, it also has its own limitations, which are not only imposed from government restrictions, but also created by the constitution and characteristics of the advocacy groups. On one hand, the state-owned nature and licensing process of the communication and information technology infrastructure ensures effective monitoring and censoring of information. The government would desperately suppress any *ad hoc* mobilization of the society. On the other hand, e-advocacy could hardly move further due to the narrow representation of the advocacy group, users' emotional behavior, entertainment-oriented focus, and lack of organization.

It is important to understand the logic behind government reaction and address advocates' own challenges to help them organize more effective e-advocacy. Based on the research above, advocates could take the following points into consideration in future e-advocacy. Firstly, e-advocates should target specific problems rather than general issues. Considering the relatively stable social and political environment in China, sudden political or institutional change from the top-down is a remote possibility. Therefore, e-advocacy focus on fundamental government structure or constitution is more likely to attract suppression before the information spreads. On the contrary, e-advocacy dealing with specific issues can expect more solid outcomes as seen in cases one and two. Secondly, advocates should improve their advocacy skills and learn to better control the overly emotional discussion. Advocates need to mobilize as many participants as possible in order to influence government

decision making. In case one, for example, a nationwide support successfully stopped local government's intention to suppress the advocacy. To encourage more participants, advocates have tried to tolerate different opinions within the group and learn from each other. Thirdly, advocates may seek professional support rather than relying on pure passion. Many e-advocacies failed to reach positive results because they developed from merely interest or passion. Lack of sufficient professional knowledge makes the advocacy group seemingly *ad hoc* and unorganized. In case two, for instance, Li Detao did not succeed until after several attempts. More importantly, he is a member of a professional volunteer group that started this advocacy since 2006. Without their ongoing backing and expertise on how the law and public budget work, Li would not have been successful.

China's examples could be illuminating for democratization in other socialist states like Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea, as well as totalitarian regimes like Iran. All these states are under strict control of very strong governments where Internet use is under rigid control and censorship. The Chinese case shows that a manipulated ICT tool could still contribute to the democratization process if used skillfully. The paper also reveals that ICT is a tool in itself. ICT will not naturally lead to a thriving open society; neither will it be completely useless because of government manipulation. The influence of ICT tools has to be understood within specific political background and by knowing who is using it and how it is used.

Although the unorganized behavior of e-advocacy groups prohibits them from making more fundamental changes in government institutions, it also has the unexpected advantage of circumventing government suppression. Future studies on e-advocacy may need to refer to the research on civil society and NGO development in China. Those studies may provide valuable lessons on how civil society is shaped under the strict government control and may thus offer hints on how e-advocacy groups can strengthen their organization without encouraging suppression.

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DIGITAL DIPLOMACY: THE INTERNET, THE BATTLE FOR IDEAS & US FOREIGN POLICY

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Abstract

This paper explores how the Internet and new media technologies are playing a growing role in transforming US public diplomacy programs, as part of broader efforts to counter the "Grand Narrative" of radical Islamic extremism. The Internet is at the heart of "digital diplomacy," communicating ideas, promoting policies and fostering debate and discussion aimed at undermining support for Al-Qaeda and crafting a credible alternative narrative. Programmes such as Public Diplomacy 2.0 are becoming increasingly important as the US seeks both to revitalize its tools of soft power and reach out and engage the "youth generation" of the Muslim world. The paper examines the way in which Al-Qaeda has created a virtual battlespace that is growing in importance as Western military forces seek to dominate the physical battlespace. It explores how US policymakers have begun to grasp the importance of fusing soft power, public diplomacy and information strategies, an approach at the heart of the technologically-savvy Obama Administration. It advances the argument that the Internet and social media is emerging as a key lever of US power and influence, alongside traditional "hard" levers of state power but concludes by arguing that to be truly effective the administration's strategy must be backed up by much broader and deep-seated shifts in US foreign policy.

Keywords: Al Qaeda; digital diplomacy; internet; Obama; public diplomacy; soft power

How can a man in a cave outcommunicate the world's leading communications society?
- Richard Holbrooke[1]

We are in the midst of a war, and more than half of that struggle takes place on an information battlefield; we are in an information war for the hearts and minds of all Muslims.
- Ayman al-Zawahiri[2]

1. The Digital Age

On 11 September 2001 (9/11), millions around the world watched, stunned, as Al-Qaeda terrorists launched a spectacular attack on the United States, crashing airliners into high-profile targets in New York and Washington DC. The attacks on the World Trade Center in New York were played out in "real-time," captured live on major US news networks and instantaneously broadcast around the world, but they were largely organized and planned in cyberspace. Members of Al-Qaeda communicated through Yahoo e-mail and chat rooms prior to the attacks and conducted online research about the possible use of crop dusters. Images of the attacks, taken on hand-held recorders, digital cameras and mobile phones instantly found their way onto the Internet, spawning a virtual community dedicated to pondering and probing the causes and meaning of what had happened. Three years later, in April 2004, at the height of the Bush Administration's "War on Terror," photographs of US soldiers abusing detainees held at Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison were disseminated via the Internet. Although similar incidents had already occurred at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan and Guantanamo, it was not until members of the US military attached photos taken inside Abu Ghraib to emails that such incidents became the centre of an international storm of protest. In June 2005, Abu Musab Zarqawi, leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, unleashed an electronic jihad campaign, posting a 46-minute

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1   Richard Holbrooke, "Get the Message Out," The Washington Post, October 2001, B07.

2   Ayman al-Zawahiri, cited in Glenn E. Robinson, "Jihadi Information Strategy," in John Arquilla and Douglas A. Borer, Information Strategy and Warfare (Routledge: New York & Abingdon, 2007).

video entailed "All Religion will be for Allah" on the Internet, beginning regular Internet news broadcasts and posting images of beheadings online. Zarqawi's campaign helped fuel the insurgency in Iraq, further complicating US military efforts to defeat the insurgents. In June 2009, the US State Department contacted the social networking service Twitter and urged it to delay a planned upgrade that would have cut daytime service to Iranians. The request came in the midst of protests following the disputed Iranian elections, many of them coordinated via Twitter and Facebook in what was termed the "Twitter Revolution".

Such incidents highlight the extraordinary impact that the Internet is having on US foreign policy – and international relations more broadly, what Audrey Kurth Cronin has described as the 21st century's "levee en masse:"

> A mass networked mobilization that emerges from cyber-space with a direct impact on physical reality. Individually accessible, ordinary networked communications such as personal computers, DVDs, videotapes, and cell phones are altering the nature of human social interaction, thus also affecting the shape and outcome of domestic and international conflict.[3]

In a globalized international environment, ideas have become weapons and the Internet the principal means of delivery. As Western military forces have struggled to defeat the Taliban and Al-Qaeda on the battlefield, a growing discourse has emerged on the important of non-kinetic means of fighting radical Islamic terrorism and failing states. Concepts of soft power, public diplomacy and information strategy are viewed as crucial tools for countering radicalism, particularly as states like the US and UK search for more nuanced ways to counter Al-Qaeda's global reach. Moreover, the election of Barack Obama has done much to revitalize soft power approaches to US foreign policy. The concept of soft power was coined by the Harvard academic Joseph Nye in 1990[4] and further explored in his 2002 study *The Paradox of*

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3   Audrey Kurth Cronin, "Cyber-Mobilization: The New Levee en Masse," Parameters, Summer 2006, 77.

4   See Joseph S. Nye, Jr, "Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power," Foreign Affairs, Summer 1990.

American Power. Nye defined soft power as the ability to set the agenda in world politics by persuading others to want what you want, enticing and attracting them through the force of one's values, beliefs and ideas, rather than coercing them through the use of military or economic power. Nye noted how the US had harnessed soft power during the Cold War through its role in creating international institutions, fostering cultural and academic exchanges, and public diplomacy, but he argued that changes in world politics with the end of the Cold War had made it more important.[5]

At the centre of Nye's thesis was the information revolution and the Internet, which he argued would pose a major challenge to traditional notions of state sovereignty. Nye maintained that while

> cyberspace would not replace geographical space and will not abolish state sovereignty…it will co-exist with them and greatly complicate what it means to be a sovereign state or a powerful country. As Americans shape foreign policy for the global information age, we will have to become more aware of the importance of the ways that information technology creates new communications, empowers individuals and nonstate actors, and increases the role of soft power.[6]

The art of soft power in the modern world is the fusing of traditional tools of diplomacy and negotiation with the ability to harness the power and potential inherent in the new and emerging technologies that globalization has wrought. Technological developments have long had a profound impact on the conduct of international relations. The invention of the telegraph helped to catalyze mass movements in the late 19th century against slavery and colonial rule, while during the two World Wars, propaganda strategies and "strategic communications" proliferated, fuelled by emerging radio and telephone technologies. Electronic warfare also featured in WWII, with the jamming of airborne and ground-based radars, and radio

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5   See Joseph S. Nye, Jr, The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

6   Ibid., 62.

and television helped generate and sustain Cold War protest movements.[7] But it was the onset of the globalized "information age," with its rapid advances in information technologies and communications, that transformed the way states and non-state actors communicate most profoundly. The late 20th century saw the emergence of a networked world, a global village of imagined communities that began to challenge traditional notions of power and influence in world affairs.

If the 20th Century was the "American Century," one in which the American Leviathan exhibited an untrammelled military, economic and cultural hegemony, then the 21st Century is likely to be the Digital Age, where states will have to compete in "netwars" and against "networks", an age of digital diplomacy and social activism, of websites, blogs and "tweets." The end of the American Century and the advent of the Digital Age was dramatically ushered in on 9/11, an event that brought home the stark reality that the walls of the American Imperium could indeed be breached. The enemy was not a state, but a group of hijackers whose campaign of death and destruction was coordinated not in the machinery of government but in cyberspace. The attacks of 9/11 heralded a new kind of conflict, one between nations and networks, in which America's military might would not, contrary to the predictions of the Bush Administration, destroy the enemy. Arquilla and Ronfeldt have termed this development "netwar": conflict waged by networks of nonstate actors in which "numerous dispersed small groups using the latest communications technologies could act conjointly across great distances."[8] As the authors note, netwar does not take place *only* in cyberspace, but cyberspace is a crucial – and indeed central – component of netwar.[9]

In the weeks and months after 9/11 it became apparent that there were two battlefields in the "War on Terror" declared by the

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7   See Arquilla and Borer, Information Strategy and Warfare, 2-7.

8   John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy (Santa Monica, California: RAND, 2001), 2. See also Arquilla and Ronfeldt, In Athena's Camp: preparing for Conflict in the Information Age (Santa Monica, California: RAND, 1997).

9   Ibid., 11.

Bush Administration. The first was the familiar domain of the physical battlefield, and President Bush left no-one in any doubt of his intentions for Al-Qaeda when he announced that the US military would "smoke them out and get them running."[10] Yet whilst the American military and its allies began pounding the mountains and villages of Afghanistan, another battlefield was emerging, a virtual one, where Al-Qaeda and its affiliates were able to circumvent America's bombs and bullets, and promote their "Grand Narrative" to an audience of millions. According to the US Army's Counterinsurgency Manual, 'FM 3-24', such narratives are

> organizational scheme expressed in story form. Narratives are central to representing identity, particularly the collective identity of religious sects, ethnic groupings, and tribal elements…Insurgent organizations like Al Qaeda use narratives very effectively in developing legitimating ideologies. In the Al Qaeda narrative, for example, Osama bin Laden depicts himself as a man purified in the mountains of Afghanistan who is gathering and inspiring followers and punishing infidels. In the collective imagination of Bin Laden and his followers, they are agents of Islamic history who will reverse the decline of the umma [Muslim community] and bring about its inevitable triumph over Western imperialism. For them, Islam can be renewed both politically and theologically only through jihad [holy war] as they define it.[11]

It is within this ideological domain that Al-Qaeda's true centre of gravity lies. Despite the early military successes in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the ability of the enemy to resist conventional Western military supremacy has led to a renewed emphasis on information strategies as a means of countering Al-Qaeda. Information strategy is, according to Arquilla, a "still-forming phenomenon…the good information strategist must be the master of a whole host of skills: properly understanding one's

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10   See Brian Knowlton, "Terror in America / We're Going to Smoke Them Out: President Airs His Anger," The New York Times, September 19, 2001, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/19/news/19iht-t4_30.html

11   US Army Field Manual FM 3-24, Headquarters, Department of the Army, December 2006, 1-14, available at http://www.usgcoin.org/library/doctrine/COIN-FM3-24.pdf, accessed 29th March, 2010.

own information flows while disrupting the enemy's; crafting persuasive messages that shore up the will of one's own people and allies while demoralizing one's opponents; and, of course, deceiving the enemy at the right time, in the right way."[12]

2. Al-Qaeda's "Information War"

As Marc Sageman notes, "the Internet has enabled a new wave of terrorist wannabes, who now constitute the main -- but not the entire -- threat to the West."[13] Since 9/11 Al-Qaeda has become increasingly adept at waging what Ayman al-Zawahiri describes as an "information war," developing a growing number of websites and blogs espousing radical ideas, and unleashing a wave of online pictures, videos and sermons all designed to perpetuate Al-Qaeda's "Grand Narrative." Al-Qaeda is a truly globalized phenomenon, both a reaction to globalization, but also very much a product of it. The number of websites devoted to jihadist themes has exploded since 9/11, increasing from approximately 12 in 1998 to more than 4,700 by 2005[14]. In 2008 the FBI estimated there was somewhere between 5,000 and 10,000 radical websites existing on the web,[15] and it has also been estimated that the Internet is responsible for around 80% of the recruitment of youth for jihad operations.[16] Terrorist groups have also become more sophisticated in their use of the Internet; prior to 9/11 they would communicate via email, but in recent

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12   Arquilla and Borer, 1.

13   See Marc Sageman and Bruce Hoffman, "Does Osama Still Call the Shots? Debating the containment of Al-Qaeda's Leadership," Foreign Affairs, July/August 2008, available at http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64460/marc-sageman-and-bruce-hoffman/does-osama-still-call-the-shots, accessed December 29, 2009. See also Elaine Sciolino and Eric Schmitt, "A Not Very Private Feud Over Terrorism," New York Times, June 8, 2008, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/08/weekinreview/08sciolino.html, accessed December 29, 2009.

14   See Philip Bobbitt, Terror and Consent: The Wars for the Twenty-First Century (London: Penguin, 2008), 56

15   See Christina L. Madden, "Typing TERROR in a Crowded Chat," Policy Innovation, February 5, 2008, available at http://www.policyinnovations.org/ideas/briefings/data/000029, accessed 2 January, 2010.

16 Cited in Bobbitt, 56.

years they have learnt to encrypt messages by embedding invisible codes.[17]

The Internet has thus become a powerful propaganda tool, with Al-Qaeda constituting what Nye and others have termed an "imagined community," that is able to survive and prosper even as Western military forces seek to disrupt their physical bases in countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan.[18] Terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman also describes the Internet as a "virtual sanctuary" for groups like Al-Qaeda. Its main website, www.alneda.com, proved vital to Al-Qaeda's capacity to continue functioning after it was forced to flee Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom.[19] In this context the Internet has become an increasingly vital virtual safe-haven for terrorist groups, effectively constituting their "new base".[20] The new generation of terrorists have become technologically-savvy, with an expanded tool kit not limited to "simply the guns and bombs they always have used. Now those weapons include the Minicam and videotape; editing suite and attendant production facilities, professionally produced and mass-marketed CD-ROMS and DVDs; and most critically the laptop and desktop computers, CD burners and email accounts; and Internet and WWW access that have defined the information revolution today."[21] It is 21st century conflict waged as theatre, a drama in which the key operatives function as movie producers, writing and re-writing the script and carefully stage managing its production and performance.

While the essential character of terrorism might remain unchanged, there is much that is new and distinct about groups such as Al-Qaeda, Hamas and Hezbollah. In the '70s and '80s terrorist groups and organisations such as the IRA, ETA, the PLO

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17   See Timothy L. Thomas, 'Al Qaeda and the Internet: The Danger of 'Cyberplanning,'" Parameters, Spring 2003, 112-123.

18   Ibid. 58.

19   Cited in Bruce Hoffman, "The Use of the Internet By Islamic Extremists," Testimony presented to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, May 4, 2006, 7, available at http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/2006/RAND_CT262-1.pdf, accessed January 3, 2010.

20   Cited in Gordon Corera, "A web wise terror network," BBC News, 6 October, 2004, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/3716908.stm, accessed 2 January, 2010.

21   Bruce Hoffman, Inside Terrorism (Colombia University Press: New York, 2006), 197.

and the German Red Army Faction relied on the more traditional mass media to communicate their message, utilizing underground newspapers and clandestine radio stations, as well as mainstream television. The emergence of the Internet, however, provided groups like Al-Qaeda, Hamas and others, with the ability to "spread a message globally at a fraction of what it used to cost, and at the speed of light."[22] The decentralized and largely unregulated nature of the Internet has proven to be a powerful democratic tool, opening up avenues of communication and participation to anyone with a computer. From Georgia and the Ukraine to Iran, the Internet has allowed social activist and democratic protest movements to flourish, but it remains a double-edged sword that can be readily exploited by terrorists, hackers and criminals. Indeed, the laptop has become as much the weapon of choice for groups like Al-Qaeda as the suicide bomber and figureheads like Osama Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri have adroitly merged new technologies with traditional tribal cultures; videos of Bin Laden in a cave exhorting his followers to action, posted on the Internet just a few hours after US airstrikes commenced over Afghanistan, have become iconic images, a potent symbol of Al-Qaeda's ability to undermine the world's most powerful nation.

Such images are not simply iconic or symbolic, however; as Audrey Kurth Cronin notes, Al-Qaeda's cyber-mobilization is a powerful enabler, "effecting an underground uprising whose remarkable effects are being played out on the battlefield every day."[23] Abu Musab al-Suri, a senior Al-Qaeda thinker and a key figure behind Al-Qaeda's Internet movement has spoken of opening the "minds of the people"[24] which has been achieved not only by the sensationalist online video postings of al-Zawahiri and Zarqawi, but by jihadi web forums and blogs. Al-Qaeda's use of the Internet has become increasingly sophisticated in recent

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[22]   Frank G. Hoffman, "The psychological element of counterinsurgency warfare," available at http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/vp01.cfm?outfit=pmt&requesttimeout=500&folder=2914&paper=2988, accessed December 21, 2009.

[23]   Cronin, 85.

[24]   Cited in Jarrett M. Brachman, "High-Tech Terror: Al-Qaeda's Use of New Technology," Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, 30: 2, Summer 2006, 159.

years and the "virtual warfare" they have perpetuated has, as Stephen Ulph notes, served to compensate

> for the loss of Afghanistan as a major training arena in both the ideological and tactical senses… Jihadi web forums include da'wa (Islamic preaching), news from the front lines, official declarations from jihadist groups, audio-visual productions and photo essays on jihad, and a general text distribution section. All forums include general discussion sub-categories where highly detailed experiences mingle with material often of a banal nature. But the most interesting categories are the 'Jihadi cells' and 'electronic jihad' sections. In the first of these are found the detailed exchanges of participants requesting or providing specific information on military technology, requests for supplies or funding, or enquiries on how to join a cell on the front line. The 'electronic jihad' section hosts the cyber war and gives up to the minute instructions or warnings of website penetration, suggestions for targets or timing of attacks, with detailed advice on method.[25]

Jihadi computer programmers have created stand-alone web browsing software, similar to Internet Explorer, which searches only particular sites, while Al-Qaeda's online library provides over 3,000 books and monographs from *jihadi* thinkers which can be downloaded onto mobile phones.[26] Jihadi training manuals and CD-ROMS have allowed insurgent groups in Iraq and Afghanistan to perfect techniques on the military battlefield that are inflicting mounting casualties on coalition forces, while the latest software is used to embarrass the enemy and extol the virtues of those who, like the "Baghdad Sniper" or the "Sniper of Fallujah", humiliate coalition forces.

Websites like Al Battar, an online magazine published by Al-Qaeda, contain hugely detailed information on how to kidnap VIPs, conduct surveillance and fire rocket propelled grenades. Described as a "virtual training camp", Al Battar claims to be a

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25   Stephen Ulph, "A Guide to Jihad on the Web," Terrorism Focus Volume 2, Issue 7, available at http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=169&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=238&no_cache=1, accessed December 29, 2009.

26   See Brachman, 152-153.

> gift to the youth of Islam whose hearts burn in support of the religion by means of Jihad for the sake of Allah. . . .The basic idea is to spread military culture among the youth with the aim of filling the vacuum that the enemies of the religion have been seeking to expand for a long time. Allah willing, the magazine will be simple and easy, and in it, my Muslim brother, you will find basic lessons in the framework of a military training program, beginning with programs for sports training, through types of light weapons and guerilla group actions in the cities and mountains, and [including] important points in security and intelligence, so that you will be able … to fulfill the religious obligation that Allah has set upon you.[27]

One jihadist website contained instructions on how to use mobile phones as detonators for explosives, as was the case in the 2005 Madrid train bombings, while Al-Qaeda's "Encyclopaedia of Jihad," a lengthy volume that gives detailed guidance on training, communications and tactics, has also been distributed over the Internet.[28] Radical Islamic video games are being designed to reach out to a younger generation of Muslims, all extolling the virtues of killing American military forces, Jews or other "infidels", in the name of establishing a global Islamic caliphate. As Jarrett Brachman has argued "Al-Qaeda's harnessing of technology has been a calculated strategic move—the goal being to catalyze awareness of the need for Muslims to 'resist' and open new ways for them to participate in that resistance."[29] According to Hoffman, Al-Qaeda is unique among terrorist groups because its "leadership seems to have intuitively grasped the enormous communicative potential of the Internet and sought to harness this power both to further the movement's strategic aims and facilitate its tactical operations."[30]

It is against this virtual backdrop that US and Western policymakers are seeking to craft new strategies to win the "information war." In December 2009, US President Barack

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27   See "Al-Qaeda's Online Training Camp," Jihad Watch available at http://www.jihadwatch.org/2004/01/Al-Qaedas-online-training-camp.html, accessed January 2, 2010.

28   See Corera, "A web wise terror network."

29   Brachman, 155-158.

30   Hoffman, "The Use of the Internet By Islamic Extremists," 5.

Obama announced – after a lengthy deliberation – the deployment of 35,000 additional US military forces to Afghanistan in an effort to bring the full weight of America's military power to bear on an increasingly resistant Taliban. With Al-Qaeda and the Taliban continuing to prove a thorn in America's side in the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan, a military "surge", similar to the one deployed in Iraq in 2007, is widely seen as a last-ditch effort to salvage an 8-year war that has served to expose the limits of US military might. Much less heralded has been the Obama Administration's emphasis on "digital diplomacy," using the Internet to counter Al-Qaeda's ideology and promote US values and beliefs. While the increase in US forces is seen as vital to creating a secure and stable space that will allow for the eventual withdrawal of coalition forces, such a strategy will do little to defeat Al-Qaeda in the virtual battlespace, where it will continue to exist, disseminating its radical ideology and message, even as its foot soldiers are being killed in the Hindu Kush.

3. "The Internet is Killing Us"

In the words of one US government observer referring to radical Islamic web sites, "Never in history has there been an opportunity where propaganda is so effective."[31] Yet, remarkably, the most powerful nation in the world has thus far been outwitted in the "information war" being waged by Al-Qaeda. As Richard Holbrooke, former Clinton official and Obama's envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, asked: "How can a man in a cave outcommunicate the world's leading communications society?"[32] In 2004, images of US soldiers abusing detainees at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad were posted on the Internet. Originally sent as email attachments, the images unleashed a storm of controversy, fuelling anti-American sentiment and emboldening the insurgency in Iraq. In response to questioning from the US House Armed Services Committee on the treatment of Iraqi prisoners, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stated:

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31   Cited in Hoffman, "The Use of the Internet By Islamic Extremists," 5.

32   Richard Holbrooke, "Get the Message Out," The Washington Post, October 2001, B07

> We're functioning…with peacetime constraints, with legal requirements on a wartime situation in the Information Age, where people are running around with digital cameras and taking these unbelievable photographs and then passing them off, against the law, to the media, to our surprise, when they had – not even arrived in the Pentagon…….there's some other process that we haven't discovered yet that needs to be modernized to the twenty-first century, that needs to recognise the existence, in this case, of digital cameras. And trying to figure out what that is before it, too, causes something like this…this is my nightmare.[33]

David Schmidtchen observes that in the case of Abu Ghraib, "Twenty-first century networked digital technology simply short-circuited twentieth century organizational practice and the actions of a few soldiers undermined US government policy over Iraq."[34] In September 2009, another flurry of emails and photographs exposed the lewd behaviour of US embassy guards in Kabul prompting one member of the Commission on Wartime Contracting, an independent panel set up to investigate and monitor contractors working in Iraq and Afghanistan, to comment that the "Internet is killing us."[35]   Such incidents serve to illustrate that not only are al-Zawahiri and his cohorts using the Internet to propagate their message, but that Western policymakers can easily lose control over their own message with dramatic consequences. As Holbrooke has argued, the problem for the US is "the initial failure of our own message and the inadequacy of our messengers…The battle of ideas therefore is as important as any other aspect of the struggle we are now engaged in."[36]

When it comes to the Internet and new media technologies, US policymakers have failed, thus far, to harness their power and potential in the service of US public diplomacy and soft power. Yet in the domestic sphere, US politicians have deployed the

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33   Cited in David Schmidtchen, The Rise of the Strategic Private: Technology, Control and Change in A Network Enabled Military (Land Warfare Studies Centre, Canberra, 2006), 8.

34   Ibid., 8.

35   See "Embassy Scandal: A New Abu Ghraib?" MotherJones, available at http://motherjones.com/politics/2009/09/embassy-scandal-new-abu-ghraib, accessed December 14, 2009.

36   Holbrooke, "Get the Message Out."

Internet most effectively as a vital tool in waging and winning US election campaigns. In 2008, Joe Trippi, Howard Dean's campaign manager in the 2004 campaign, mused "It's the Network, Stupid!" as Barack Obama employed highly effective networked campaign warfare to outwit his opponents. Obama established lists for volunteers of local voters and recruited Chris Hughes, co-founder of Facebook, to help develop his technologies and put them at center of the campaign. Obama's campaign posted candidate speeches and multimedia material such as YouTube videos and songs on the campaign website, regularly sent out text-messages and had web links for small tasks voters could do from home, such as donating, making calls, writing letters and organising house-parties.[37] Obama, like many politicians, had also experienced the Internet's capacity to inflict negative publicity. In 2005, a right-wing commentator, Peggy Noonan, wrote a highly critical piece on Obama following an article he had written for TIME magazine on Abraham Lincoln, in which he expressed empathy with Lincoln's rise from poverty. The piece hit the Internet and became a favourite of right-wing websites who used it to denounce Obama's arrogance. For Obama, the episode "hinted at a more subtle and corrosive aspect of modern media – how a particular narrative, repeated over and over again and hurled through cyberspace at the speed of light, eventually becomes a hard particle of reality."[38]

4. Digital Diplomacy

Obama's presidency and his appreciation of the power of the Internet to communicate ideas and shape narratives has led to a renewed interest in "digital diplomacy," the use of the Internet to promote US values, ideas and beliefs. Obama is America's first "digital President," an individual who not only used cyberspace effectively to get into the White House, but who understands that the effective application of America's soft power requires the harnessing of these new technologies. Both during the campaign and in his first year in office, Obama has exhibited a steely

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37   See David Talbot, "How Obama Really Did It," Technology Review, September/October 2008, 78-83.

38   Barack Obama, The Audacity of Hope (Canongate Books: Edinburgh, 2008), 124.

determination to revitalize America's soft power and public diplomacy, and develop more effective information strategies to co-exist alongside the use of American military might, in stark contrast to his immediate Republican and Democrat predecessors. The Bush Administration paid little attention to concepts of soft power or public diplomacy; Donald Rumsfeld once famously declared he did not even know what soft power meant.[39] Bush exhibited a blind faith in the power of the US military to bomb Al-Qaeda out of existence. In the early years of the "War on Terror" waged by the Bush Administration, US military force reigned supreme, with Bush himself describing the US military as the "the greatest force for human liberation the world has ever seen."[40]

In the aftermath of 9/11, as the US military began operations in Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke lamented that America's public diplomacy programs were mired in a Cold War paradigm, and that "the American public information campaign is a confused mess. Despite our nation's overwhelming supremacy in modern communications, our government primarily communicates with the Muslim world through pathetically outdated or inappropriate technologies and a bureaucratic structure that is not remotely up to the task."[41] The bastion of US public diplomacy during the Cold War was the US Information Agency (USIA) established in 1953 with the principal mission being to combat Soviet propaganda and the spread of communism. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War in 1991, the USIA was marginalized and its resources slashed. It was finally abolished in 1999 as part of a post-Cold War bureaucratic reorganisation, and US public diplomacy efforts became the domain of the State Department. Although intended to provide for greater coordination and unity of effort in US public diplomacy, the reforms of the 1990s have been widely criticised, with many calling for the USIA or another similar body to be reborn. Carnes Lord has observed that "there is still no real evidence that the State Department has either the vision

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39   See Joseph S. Nye, Jr, "Think Again: Soft Power," Foreign Policy, February 2006, available at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3393&page=0, accessed June 4, 2009.

40   Cited in Tom Engelhardt ed., The World According to TomDispatch: America in the New Age of Empire (London & New York: Verso, 2008), xv.

41   Holbrooke, "Get the Message Out."

or the will to conduct effective public diplomacy."[42] Lord also notes the organizational culture of the State Department since the end of the Cold War has ensured public diplomacy is understaffed and underfunded, with US public diplomacy efforts lacking leadership. The Clinton administration did not accord public diplomacy a high priority, but 9/11 prompted a flurry of renewed interest in the subject. The Bush Administration signalled its intentions by appointing former marketing executive Charlotte Beers as Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, a position created by the organizational reforms of the 1990s. Beers, however, lacked foreign policy expertise and according to Carnes Lord, Secretary of State Colin Powell apparently took little interest in the subject.[43]

In the weeks and months following 9/11, the US State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) produced a pamphlet entitled *The Network of Terrorism*, intended to convey the horrors of the 9/11 attacks to foreign publics and persuade them of the importance of a broad international coalition against Al-Qaeda. The pamphlet was placed on IIP's website, allowing foreign embassies and media to download sections of the document.[44] The State Department also established an Office of eDiplomacy but the most notable developments were the establishment in 2004 of Radio Sawa, an Arabic-language radio network, and its TV equivalent, Al Hurra. Although some $12 million was spent on "rebranding" the United States after 9/11, such efforts continued to be undercut by the militaristic policies of the Bush Administration. With America mired in Iraq and a growing chorus of anti-American sentiment around the world, Bush was forced to admit in 2005 that "We're behind when it comes to selling our own story and telling people the truth about America."[45] In 2006 Donald Rumsfeld echoed Bush's comments when he commented "I would say we probably

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42   Carnes Lord, "Reorganizing for public diplomacy," in Arquilla and Borer, 117.

43   Ibid., 118.

44   See Christopher Ross, "Public Diplomacy Comes of Age," The Washington Quarterly, Spring 2002, 77.

45   Cited in Tony Smith, A Pact With the Devil: Washington's Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of the American Promise (New York & Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), xxiii.

deserve a D or a D-plus as a country as to how well we're doing in the battle of ideas that's taking place in the world…I'm not going to suggest its easy, but we have not found the formula as a country for countering the extremists' message."[46]

Part of the Bush Administration's difficulties lay in the message and ideas it was trying to "sell". The Bush Doctrine and National Security of Strategy of 2002 had set out the Administration's "Grand Strategy," rooted in 4 key assumptions: 1) that the principal threat to US national security was a potential nexus between terrorists, rogue states and WMD; 2) that deterrence was no longer useful and future threats had to be prevented from emerging; 3) that democracies were inherently peaceful and that it was a time of great opportunity to promote democracy and 4) that the US would work with others where possible, but alone if necessary. It was these assumptions that underpinned the 2003 Iraq war that divided the international community so profoundly and fuelled anti-American sentiment around the world. For all the arguments about the threat posed by Saddam's supposed WMD, a far grander ambition lay behind the NSS and the 2003 Iraq War: a desire to remake the region in America's image, based on a belief that spreading democracy would extinguish the fires of religious fanaticism. As Tony Smith argues, the goal of the Bush Administration was nothing less than "to make history by radically altering the political and social organization of a major region of the world," the most ambitious and controversial democratization agenda any US President had sought to undertake. Although democracy promotion and liberal internationalism are deeply rooted in America's foreign policy traditions, the Bush Doctrine was "a manifest case of imperial hubris," that sought not to promote democracy, but impose it, and in the process entrench America's global supremacy.[47] Fanning the flames of discontent still further was the Bush Administration's belief that it was legitimate to act outside of international laws and institutions when they threatened to

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46   Ibid. xxiii.

47   Ibid., xi- xxi

constrain America's freedom of action.[48] Along with the invasion of Iraq, events at Bagram Air Base, Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, Haditha and elsewhere inflamed Arab and Muslim opinion and helped fuel a growing backlash against the United States and its allies. Far from being seen as a benevolent hegemon, America was seen by many as a rogue state, a Pax Americana seeking to reorder the world in its own image.[49]

It was within this context that Beers's successor Karen Hughes established a program called Public Diplomacy 2.0 that sought to embrace social networking sites and other web tools to win the "war of ideas". As part of the program the State Department's Educational and Cultural Affairs Bureau established its own Facebook page, while a 10-person Digital Outreach Team (DOT) was established on blogs and websites in Arabic, Farsi, Urdu and other languages. The DOT was designed to help counter ideological support for terrorism on Arabic-language blogs and websites by posting online comments with the purpose of creating "engaging, informal personas for its online discussions instead of simply making dry policy pronouncements. It contrasts objective facts and analysis with the often emotional, conspiracy laden arguments of U.S. critics in hopes that online readers will take a fresh look at their opinions of the U.S."[50] In 2007, the State Department established its own official blog, DipNote, while blogs and exchanges have also included posts on the blog of the media adviser to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In August 2008, the DOT participated in an online exchange with Ali Akbar Javanfekr, the Iranian president's media adviser, on Javanfekr's blog, with the entire transcript of the blog subsequently published in Iran.[51] Colleen Graffy, a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of

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48   See Phillipe Sands, Torture Team: Deception, Cruelty and the Compromise of Law, London: Allen Lane, 2008.

49   For more on the debate over America's status as a "rogue state" see William Blum, Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower; Noam Chomsky, Rogue States: The Rule of Force in Global Affairs, Chalmers Johnson, The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy and the End of the Republic

50   See "Digital Outreach Team," http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/116709.pdf. See also Coleen Graffy, "The Rise of Public Diplomacy 2.0," The Journal of International Security Affairs, Fall 2009, No. 17, available at http://www.securityaffairs.org/issues/2009/17/graffy.php, accessed January 2, 2009.

51   See   http://blogs.state.gov/index.php/entries/public_diplomacy_bloggers_call/,   accessed December 22, 2009.

State for public diplomacy, has argued that the emergence of Public Diplomacy 2.0 is evidence that the US is "finally moving from a nostalgic longing for a recreation of the old USIA to its reincarnation in a new-look State Department where policy and public diplomacy are merged and the use of new technology second nature."[52]

Despite such innovations, by the end of the Bush years the US was continuing to massively under-fund its soft power capabilities and resources. Even Robert Gates, Bush's Secretary of Defense who was retained by Obama, has lamented the dearth of funding for soft power, claiming that "America's civilian institutions of diplomacy and development have been chronically undermanned and underfunded for far too long, relative to what we spend on the military." The result, he noted, has been the "creeping militarization of some aspects of America's foreign policy," and he has warned that "over the long term, we cannot kill or capture our way to victory."[53] Although increased funding for soft power resources and programs like Public Diplomacy 2.0 is needed, it will not overcome the fundamental problem afflicting US public and digital diplomacy programs that became evident during the Bush years. The "listening tour" that Hughes embarked on in 2005 which sought to reach out to the Arab and Islamic world betrayed the administration's cultural ignorance and insensitivity, and was, according to R Zaharna, widely perceived as a failure, demonstrating little understanding of how the US and its policies are perceived in the world.[54] The problem for Hughes and the administration was twofold: a hostile audience that was unreceptive to the aggressive marketing of the US, and policies that sat at odds with the "friendly" image the administration as trying to craft. As Zaharna has noted,

> U.S. public diplomacy appeared to have little understanding or appreciation for the intended audiences. The Muslim world, along with Islam, was viewed as a broad, monolithic

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52   Graffy, "The Rise of Public Diplomacy 2.0."

53   See William Matthews, "Can Obama Get Results From Soft Power"? January 19, 2009, DefenseNews, available at http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=3907876&c=FEA&s=SPE

54   R. S. Zaharna, "Obama, U.S., Public Diplomacy and the Islamic World," World Politics Review, 16 March 2009, 2.

mass, unfamiliar and undefined. By using religion as the lowest common denominator to identify its target audience, U.S. public diplomacy inadvertently united 1.3 billion people, who happened to be of a particular faith, in a shared fate and renewed sense of identity. Similarly, and equally ironically, U.S. public diplomacy's drive to promote American culture and values may have inadvertently fueled an awakening across the Islamic world to protect and promote their own cultures and values.[55]

5. Obama's Whiz-Kids and 21st Century Statecraft

With the coming to power of an administration that seems to have embraced concepts of soft power and public diplomacy, there are signs that the US is beginning to more effectively leverage new media technologies – although many of the problems that plagued the Bush Administration's efforts remain, not least audiences in the Arab and Islamic world that remain cynical and sceptical about America's policies and motivations. In 2009 Hillary Clinton, Obama's Secretary of State, launched the State Department's "21st century statecraft" initiative, using YouTube and text-messaging to engage American citizens. Alec Ross, Clinton's Senior Adviser on Innovation and Jared Cohen, a member of Clinton's Policy Planning Staff, are pioneering the State Department's technology-enabled approach to diplomacy. Cohen, brought into the State Department by Condoleezza Rice, has rapidly established himself as a specialist in the use of technology to advance and promote US interests worldwide. It was Cohen who intervened in June 2009 to request that the social networking site Twitter postpone a maintenance operation scheduled for the days following the Iranian presidential election, in order to allow those protesting to continue the "Twitter Revolution," using the network to plan anti-government protests. Although the Twitter outreach was important, it was also heavily symbolic, and Obama was widely criticized for having done little else to support Iran's burgeoning protest movement.[56]

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55   Zaharna, 3.

56   See for example Helle C. Dale, "The Iranian Elections and Public Diplomacy 2.0: A Tale of Untapped Potential," Heritage Foundation WebMemo 2497, June 19, 2009.

Despite the lacklustre efforts to support the protest movement in Iran, Nancy Scola argues that "together with an informal but growing band of like-minded staffers, Cohen and Ross are shaping a rebooted technology-assisted diplomacy that is laying the groundwork for human-to-human engagement."[57] Ross and Cohen's initiatives have included improving the DipNote blog and translating Obama's speeches and online "tweets" into dozens of languages. They have also helped establish a Virtual Student Foreign Service, which allows tech-savvy students in the US to work with US embassies around the world in building American web and social networking presence. In April 2009 Cohen led a delegation of social media developers to Baghdad, and efforts are increasing to "wire up" more remote parts of the world, promoting communications infrastructure such as the SEACOM undersea fibre optic cable linking East Africa to Europe and Asia. Obama's Cairo speech that called for greater respect for, and engagement with, the Muslim world was a classic example of how the administration is using social media technologies to promote its message and construct an alternative narrative to that offered by groups like Al-Qaeda. The speech was instantaneously wired around the world, via social networking sites, podcasts, and a live Webcast on the White House's Web site. Updates via text message reached 20,000 non-US citizens in over 200 countries around the world, with the texts being available in Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, and eight other languages. In addition, translated versions of the speech were available to download on YouTube, Facebook, and MySpace, and the South Asian social networking site Orkut. The White House used Facebook to conduct an international discussion on the event, while responses to the speech submitted via text messages were compiled and later posted on America.gov.[58]

Following the Haitian earthquake, Hillary Clinton identified communication technologies as playing a critical role in the US response effort. Not only did the US help set up a text "HAITI" campaign allowing Americans to donate funds to the relief effort via mobile phone, raising over $40 million, but interactive maps

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57   Scola, "The Next Diplomatic Cable."

58   See Dale, "The Iranian Elections and Public Diplomacy 2.0."

were established to help aid workers identify needs and target resources.[59] In November 2009, Clinton also launched the Civil Society 2.0 initiative in Morocco, which aims to offer training and advice to local NGOs around the world on how to use the Internet and social media more effectively. In Afghanistan, both the State Department and Pentagon are working with the private sector to expand mobile-phone banking in Afghanistan, as a means of facilitating the payment of police and security forces, something that has already been done with some success in Africa.[60] Both Ross and Cohen see mobile phones as critical tools to facilitate education, banking and election monitoring, and have sought to export the program in Afghanistan to the Congo. For Ross and Cohen, digital diplomacy is the future of US foreign policy; Ross has even gone so far as to claim "if Paul Revere were alive today, he wouldn't have taken a Midnight ride from Boston to Lexington, he would have just used Twitter."[61]

Such bold claims aside, Ross and Cohen are driving efforts to target the "youth generation" that has formed the bulwark of democratic protest movements in countries like Iran – and to which Al-Qaeda is increasingly is looking for its next generation of recruits. For Cohen

> there is this global youth identity that exists…because young people are the lowest common denominator, that's our avenue for engagement. Young people in these societies are extremely accessible, with the technology boom they are extremely reachable, they are open and willing to interact with other people and they're craving knowledge and craving alternatives in the absence of educational opportunities on the one hand, and social recreational opportunities on the other. The digital age is our opportunity…this is the very first generation socialised into societies with a high prevalence of

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59   See Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Remarks on Internet Freedom," The Newseum, Washington DC, January 21, 2010, available at http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/01/135519.htm, accessed January 27, 2010.

60   See "Afghanistan Central Bank and U.S. Advance Afghan Mobile Banking," USAID, available at http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/Article.736.aspx, accessed January 27, 2010.

61   Alec Ross, "U.S. Diplomacy in the Age of Facebook and Twitter: An Address on 21st Century Statecraft," The Brookings Institution, Washington DC, December 17, 2009, available at http://www.state.gov/s/c/remarks/135352.htm, accessed January 4, 2010.

> satellite TVs, mobile phones and Internet…they don't use the technologies so much to get information as much as to basically create alternatives and spaces for interactions and basic freedoms that they don't necessarily have in their societies. This is the most emancipated group of young people that we have ever seen in our lifetime…the digital opening that is provided for them gives them a space for them to create alternatives for themselves. [62]

But despite the progress made by the Obama Administration, it is also increasingly cognizant of the limitations of the Internet as a tool of US public diplomacy and foreign policy. It is certainly not a panacea; Internet penetration in the Middle East stands at 17%, lower than the global average.[63] Iran and Syria, leading state sponsors of terrorism, are among the countries least connected to the Internet, while the censorship of Google by countries such as China has also exposed the problems inherent in harnessing cyberspace to reach out to others.[64] Clinton recently made clear the Obama Administration's commitment to Internet freedom in a speech in Washington in which she asserted "Countries that restrict free access to information or violate the basic rights of Internet users risk walling themselves off from the progress of the next century."[65] For some, the Internet is now "a pawn in an international public policy debate that could create rifts between nations so deep they lay the foundations for future wars."[66] China responded to Clinton's criticisms with allegations of "information imperialism" and warnings that her remarks were considered "harmful to China-US relations."[67]

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[62]   Jared Cohen, "Children of Jihad on BBC Morning Show," YouTube, available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqksHJfOECI, accessed January 4, 2010.

[63]   See Kenneth Payne, "Winning the Battle of Ideas: Propaganda, Ideology and Terror," Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, Vol. 32, 2009, 114.

[64]   As little as 10% of Iran's population and 6% of Syria's population have access.

[65]   Clinton, "Remarks on Internet Freedom". See also Jane McCartney, "China set to ignore Google demands for end to censorship," Times Online, January 14, 2010, available at http://technology.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/tech_and_web/the_web/article6987377.ece, accessed January 14, 2010.

[66]   Aleks Krotoski, "Democratic, but dangerous too: how the web changed our world," The Observer, January 24, 2010, 28.

[67]   "China condemns 'groundless' US criticism of web control," BBC News, January 22, 1010, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8474011.stm, accessed January 27. 2010.

Moreover, as the US becomes increasingly dependent on the internet, it also exposes itself to the inherent risks it brings. Evgeny Morozov, an ardent critic of digital diplomacy, has accused Obama's whiz-kids of sweeping the dangers of Facebook and Twitter under the carpet, pointing out they empower America's adversaries as well as pro-Western groups. Cohen responded to Morozov's criticism by criticizing his calls for a more cautious approach, stating "What the Evgeny Morozov's of the world don't understand is that whether anybody likes it or not, the private sector is pumping out innovation like crazy…The 21st century is a terrible time to be a control freak."[68] Yet, there is little doubt the Internet has very real national security risks that cannot be ignored. Russia's cyber attack on Estonia in 2007, which blocked the web sites of a number of banks as well as the Prime Minster's own website, and a further one against Georgia during the 2008 conflict, fuelled debate over the potential for cyberwar.[69] A CSIS report claims there were 33 "significant" cyber events in the US between May 2006 – August 2009 affecting government agencies, defense and high tech programs, or economic crimes with losses of more than a million dollars, including reported North Korean attacks against South Korean and US government websites.[70] In January 2008 the Bush Administration published the Comprehensive National Cyber Security Initiative, designed to protect government agencies and departments from attacks and anticipate future threats. In May 2009, following a major review of America's digital infrastructure, Obama described America's digital networks as a "national strategic asset," and appointed Howard Schmit to the new position of Cyber Coordinator, tasked with coordinating cyber

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68   See Jesse Lichtenstein, 'Digital Diplomacy,' The New York Times, July 12, 2010, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/18/magazine/18web2-0-t.html

69   See for example Kertu Ruus, "Cyber War I: Estonia Attacked from Russia," European Affairs, Winter/Spring 2008, available at http://www.europeaninstitute.org/Winter/Spring-2008/cyber-war-i-estonia-attacked-from-russia.html; Greg Bruno, "The Evolution of Cyber Warfare," Council on Foreign Relations, February 27, 2008, available at http://www.cfr.org/publication/15577/evolution_of_cyber_warfare.html; "FBI: U.S. facing 'cybergeddon,'"Homeland Security Newswire, January 7, 2009, available at http://homelandsecuritynewswire.com/fbi-us-facing-cybergeddon

70   "Significant Cyber Events Since 2006," Centre for Strategic and International Studies, June 12, 2009, available at http://csis.org/files/publication/090717_cyber_events_since_2006.pdf

security policy across the federal government.[71] In 2009, the Pentagon also established the first ever Cyber Command designed to protect the US military's networks and launch offensive cyber attacks against potential enemies. Richard Clarke, the Former Special Adviser on Cybersecurity to President Bush, has argued that "No nation is as dependent on cyber systems and networks for the operation of its infrastructure, economy and military as the United States. Yet, few national governments have less control over what goes on in its cyberspace than Washington. And these major lapses in our defense present a threat we ignore at extremely high cost." For Clarke, the US has yet to develop an effective cyber defense strategy, with the new Cyber Command focused mainly on protecting the Defense Department, leaving the Department of Homeland Security to focus on private-sector infrastructure, which at present, it is ill-equipped to do.[72] Whether the appointment of Obama's Cyber Coordinator will result in a more comprehensive approach and an effective cyber strategy remains to be seen, but there is little doubt that doing so will be vital to ensuring the United States does not find its growing reliance on cyberspace undermined by hackers, criminals and terrorist networks.

6. Blogs and Bullets

Given the potential for America's enemies to launch cyber attacks, promote jihadi propaganda and stifle Internet freedom, new media technologies are certainly not, as Clinton noted, an "unmitigated blessing,"[73] and America's increasing reliance on the Internet as a central tool of its foreign policy is fraught with dangers. Digital diplomacy and the use of social media technology is no magic bullet, but in a world that, as Ross notes, has "gone

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71   Barack   Obama,   "Remarks   by   the   President   on   securing   our   nation's cyber   infrastructure,"   May   29,   2009,   The   White   House,   available   at http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-on-Securing-Our-Nations-Cyber-Infrastructure/, accessed January 27, 2010.

72   Richard Clarke, "War from Cyberspace," The National Interest Online, December 22, 2009, available at http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=22340, accessed January 28, 2010.

73   Clinton, "Remarks on Internet Freedom."

past the tipping point of global connectedness,"[74] it is not whether but how the US embraces it that will ne key. While digital diplomacy is being pioneered by the State Department, the Pentagon has also become increasingly cognizant of the importance of information strategies and new media technologies. General David Petraeus, architect of the "surge" strategy in Iraq and now CENTCOM Commander, has played a key role in pioneering strategic communications and "Information Operations" (IO). For Petraeus, the heart of strategic communications is being "first with the truth – even on bad days," presenting a compelling and truthful message about US operations in countries like Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, in an effort to convince locals that their interests lie with the US, and not insurgent and terrorist groups.[75] In June 2009, Richard Holbrooke, Obama's Special Envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan and a long-time advocate of more a more robust propaganda strategy to counter Al-Qaeda, claimed before the House Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs that

> Under General Petraeus' and my leadership, we are implementing a new integrated civilian-military strategic communications effort in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This effort will focus on three simultaneous goals: redefining our message; connecting to the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan on the ground in new ways through cell phones, radio, and other means; and identifying and supporting key communicators who are able, through local narratives, to counter extremists' propaganda and present a positive alternative.[76]

A recent report entitled "*Blogs and Bullets*" by the US Army War College has also observed – remarkably – that "Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and blogs have become as important to the strategic outcome of military operations as bullets, troops and air power."

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74   Ross, 'U.S. Diplomacy in the Age of Facebook and Twitter: An Address on 21st Century Statecraft.'

75   See "What I learned in Iraq, and how it applies to Afghanistan," The Christian Science Monitor, available at http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Global-News/2009/0422/petraeus-what-i-learned-in-iraq-and-how-it-applies-to-afghanistan, accessed January 27, 2010.

76   Cited in John Brown, "Strategic Communications and the Graveyard of Empire," available at http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/vp01.cfm?outfit=pmt&folder=3132&paper=3150, accessed December 22, 2009.

The report describes new media as a "warfighting enabler" and today's generation of solider, sailor, airman and marine as "digital natives," but led by a generation of "digital immigrants" deeply ingrained in the schools of conventional combat and kinetic means of warfighting.[77]

In many respects, the Pentagon has been ahead of the State Department in its recognition of the importance of new media. As early as 2003, the Pentagon, under the leadership of Donald Rumsfeld, wrote an "Information Operations Roadmap," which called for the military to be able to conduct information operations and electronic warfare. The report noted that

> Effectively communicating US Government intentions and capabilities is an important means of combating the plans of our adversaries. The ability to rapidly disseminate information to diverse audiences to directly influence their decision-making is an increasingly powerful means of deterring aggression. Additionally, it undermines both senior leadership and popular support for employing terrorist or using weapons of mass destruction.[78]

It argued that Psychological Operations (Psyops) personnel should utilize a range of technologies to disseminate propaganda in enemy territory, including unmanned aerial vehicles, miniaturized, scatterable public address systems, wireless devices, cellular phones and the Internet, and called for the US military to "Fight the net" as it would an enemy weapons system.[79] In recent years the US military has come to recognise that the centre of gravity in the current operational environment is public opinion, and not Kandahar, Helmand, Tora Bora or elsewhere. In 2008, the Pentagon launched an IO initiative involving the setting up of a global network of foreign-language

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77   Deirdre Collings and Rafal Rohozinski, Bullets and Blogs: New media and the warfighter, Center for Strategic Leadership, US Army War College, 2009, ix, available at http://www.csl.army.mil/usacsl/publications/Bullets_Blogs_new_Media_warfighterWeb_20_Oct_09.pdf, accessed December 19, 2009.

78   Information Operations Roadmap, US Department of Defense, October 2009, 3-4, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/27_01_06_psyops.pdf, accessed December 19, 2009.

79   See Adam Brooks, "US Plans to fight the net revealed," BBC News, January 27, 2006, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/4655196.stm, accessed December 19, 2009.

news websites, including an Arabic site for Iraqis, Mawtani.com. It has also begin hiring local journalists to write current events stories and other content designed to advance US interests and counter enemy propaganda.

The Iraqi site builds on previous Pentagon-sponsored native-language news websites in Africa and the Balkans, the purpose of which is to "control the message." Michael Vickers, Assistant Secretary of Defense in charge of special operations and stabilization efforts, has commented "It's important to & engage these foreign audiences and inform. Our adversaries use the Internet to great advantage, so we have the responsibility of countering (their messages) with accurate, truthful information, and these websites are a good vehicle." The websites are part of the Pentagon's "Trans Regional Web Initiative," which is establishing news websites to be run by the Pentagon's regional military commands. Based on the premise that "Youngsters on the street are into the World Wide Web — that's how they communicate, how they learn what's going on in the world, how they stay informed…" the Pentagon believes that "We have to be involved in that in order to communicate effectively."[80] The task for the military today, according to the Blogs & Bullets report, is not to "remove the message" by taking down enemy websites or blocking radio and satellite TV transmissions, but to "respond to the message." Military bloggers are being encouraged to shape the narrative by telling their story to those back home, while for hostile audiences, third party validators – messengers trusted by their home audiences, independent of the US military but generally supportive of US positions and policies – are seen as "force multipliers," enhancing US strategic communication efforts.[81]

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80   See Peter Eisler, "Pentagon launches foreign news websites," USA Today, April 30, 2008, available at http://www.usatoday.com/news/military/2008-04-30-sites_N.htm, accessed December 19, 2009.

81   Collings and Rohozinski, Bullets and Blogs, 4. For a discussion of the impact of military blogs see also Major Elizabeth L. Robbins, "Muddy Boots OI: The Rise of the Soldier Blogs," Military Review, 87: 5, Sep/Oct 2007, 109-118.

7. Words and Deeds

Despite the various efforts of the State Department and Pentagon to harness new media technologies and put them at the centre of US foreign and defense policy, the challenges facing the US and its allies remain daunting. This reality was starkly reinforced when Obama's Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy Judith McHale sat down with a Pakistani journalist in a hotel in Karachi in August 2009, as part of Obama's strategy to convince the people of Pakistan the US is "their friend". Following a presentation by McHale on building bridges between America and the Muslim world, the Pakistani journalist is reported to have responded: "You should know that we hate all Americans. From the bottom of our souls, we hate you."[82] No amount of digital diplomacy, blogging or tweeting is likely to undo decades of hostile anti-Americanism or convert the hard-line radical terrorist into a Western-loving peacemaker. As Ross himself has admitted, you cannot "just sprinkle the Internet on a foreign policy challenge and get a good outcome."[83] It will take more than Clinton's admonitions to students at Barnard College to "get busy on the Internet," following the sentencing of two TV reporters in a North Korean labour camp, to counter terrorist propaganda on the Internet; and it will take more than simply allowing Americans to text $5 donations to refugees in Pakistan's Swat Valley.[84] Such efforts will be futile if US policy and strategy does not match the rhetoric and narratives being disseminated through cyberspace. While investing energy and resources into public diplomacy and information strategies is critical in providing an alternative narrative to that propagated by Al-Qaeda and radical Islamists, words will only resonate if backed up by deeds. As Patrick Porter notes, "messages and images are not free-floating commodities. They rely on actions for their currency. Statements of good intentions have limited value if they clash with behaviour."[85]

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82   Cited in James K. Glassman, "It's Not About Us," Foreign Policy, September 1, 2009, available at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/09/01/its_not_about_us, accessed January 3, 2010.

83   Cited in Lichenstein, 'Digital Diplomacy.'

84   See Scola, "The Next Diplomatic Cable."

85   Patrick Porter, "Long wars and long telegrams: containing Al-Qaeda," International Affairs, 85: 2, 2009, 292.

Hostility towards the United States from terrorist groups, as well as public opinion in some Arab and Western nations, stems from a complex array of factors, including long-standing support for Israel, the US military presence in the Middle East, its enormous cultural reach and influence, and military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. To be truly effective the efforts of both the State Department and the Pentagon must be backed up by much broader and deep-seated shifts in US foreign policy. The Obama Administration has gone some way towards doing this, but the structural impediments to substantive policy change in US foreign policy run deep, and it is likely to take more than a year or two before the efforts of Obama and his administration begin to demonstrate tangible results. As Owen Barron notes, in the US political system "the synthesis of public diplomacy and communication with policy revision is a tricky marriage and one that tends to result in more incremental, minor changes instead of large shifts in policy."[86] The promotion of democracy and other Western liberal values all too often sits at odds with US support for repressive regimes. For all the rhetoric about a more even-handed approach to the Israeli-Palestinian question, the limits of Obama's approach were harshly exposed by Benjamin Netanyahu's resistance to administration demands for it to stop construction of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as by Hamas' continued use of missiles, in spite of Obama's condemnation.

For narratives to be credible, they have to be believable. The Bush administration's digital diplomacy efforts failed largely because US actions and the rhetoric coming from the administration were at odds with the message the State Department was trying to craft. President Obama has gone some way to closing this gap between words and deeds. With his African heritage and Indonesian upbringing, Obama certainly has a very different worldview from his predecessor, one grounded in greater respect for, and sensitivity towards, other cultures.[87] As

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86   Owen Barron, "A New Approach: Engaging the Muslim World Through Public Diplomacy," Harvard International Review, Winter 2007, 33.

87   For more on how Obama's background has shaped his world view see David Remnick, The Bridge, London: Picador, 2010; Carl Pederson, Obama's America, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.

Zarharna notes, the message the Obama Administration is sending through its digital and public diplomacy programs is "one of open hands rather than clenched fists."[88] Despite the legal difficulties Obama has encountered in closing Guantanamo Bay, the administration's outlawing of torture techniques pursued by the Bush Administration and its emphasis on due process and the rule of law has gone some way to giving substance to Obama's pledge that "we reject as false the gap between our safety and our ideals." On the other hand, however, the continued use of military force in Afghanistan and the administration's stepping up of the predator drone program threaten to undermine the narrative the administration is trying to promote. Balancing such narratives with the requirements of national security is no easy task and Obama is treading a delicate path between his desire to change America's image and the realities of a dangerous and unstable world. Despite pursuing a policy of constructive engagement with Iran, Obama's efforts have thus far been met with an iron fist, while Obama's cautious response to the Iranian election protests would hardly have encouraged the "youth generation" the administration's whiz-kids are trying to reach out to.

There is a further problem for the advocates of digital diplomacy. Not only do words need to be backed up by shifts in policy and approach, but there also needs to be a demand for the narratives they are trying to create. As Evgeny Morozov has argued, "By shifting their outreach campaigns to Facebook, Twitter, and blogs, the government may be trying to do the impossible, i.e. to plant carefully worded and controlled messages on platforms that sprang up precisely to avoid the kind of influence that the State Department seeks to exert via them." Morozov remains skeptical, as do many others, as to the actual impact such efforts will have, suggesting that simply increasing the number of staffers sat at their computers tweeting and blogging away, "obfuscates the real problem, which is the lack of demand for these ideas in the first place, especially after the Iraq debacle. One of the goals of Public Diplomacy 2.0 should then be to create and then augment this demand rather than to infinitely grow the supply side of the

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88   Zaharna, 4.

equation."[89] The very values that the US seeks to export and promote through Public Diplomacy 2.0 – democracy, individualism and free-market capitalism – are often those which arouse such hostility in the audiences they are trying to reach. During the Cold War such values were aspired to by millions living behind the Iron Curtain, but their projection into the Arab and Muslim world has fuelled resentment and anger, with the United States all too often guilty of assuming that the values that underpin the American Creed are universal ones, readily exportable to the rest of the world. The ubiquity of American culture and the secular, commercial and material values that underpin Western societies, coupled with often aggressive, militarized policies, have meant that American exceptionalism no longer has the allure it once had in many quarters of the world. As the Indonesian defense minister, Juwono Sudarsono, protested to Donald Rumsfeld in 2006, "The United States is overbearing and over-present and overwhelming in many nations and cultures."[90] This is something Obama intuitively understands. Rhetorically, he remains wedded to the American exceptionalist discourse, proclaiming like others before him that America is the "last, best hope on earth." There are indications, however, that Obama understands the limits to America's power and reach in an increasingly "post-American world". "Respect" and "listening" have thus far been the buzzwords of the administration's effort public diplomacy efforts, and there has been a clear emphasis in Public Diplomacy 2.0 on "engagement" rather than "controlling" the narrative. Unlike the Bush administration, the Obama administration appears to grasp that the social networking technologies at the heart of these programs facilitate multidirectional conversations, not one-way attempts to "control" the message. The very nature of the Internet mitigates against such control; the proponents of digital diplomacy intuitively understand that "You do not actually control the message, and if

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89   Evgeny Morozov, "The future of Public Diplomacy 2.0.", Foreign Policy, June 9, 2009, available at http://neteffect.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/06/09/the_future_of_public_diplomacy_20, accessed January 3, 2010.

90   Cited in Nathan Gardels and Mike Medavoy, American Idol After Iraq, Wiley-Blackwell: Chichester, Sussex, 2009, 61.

you believe you control the message, It merely means you no longer understand what's going on."[91]

8. Conclusion

The coming to power of the Obama administration heralded a much needed reinvigoration of America's public diplomacy and a recognition that the Internet and social media should be at the forefront of efforts to craft an alternative narrative to that propagated by Al-Qaeda and other radical Islamists. Obama's Whiz-kids have taken to heart the notion that "it is not whose Army wins, but whose story wins."[92] However, the challenge for the administration remains coordinating, both within the US machinery of government and with allies, a more intensive and focused effort on crafting a message that will appeal to the disaffected youth of the Muslim world and elsewhere. The US must also ensure that its public diplomacy efforts work in sync with its foreign and defense policies and that words are backed by meaningful and appropriate actions, so that the US "story" does not, once again, become part of the problem. As Zaharna notes, "…the most daunting hurdle for U.S. public diplomacy is not developing innovative ways to reach out to the Muslim world, but rather, reconciling inconsistencies between U.S. foreign policy and U.S. public diplomacy."[93] Given the challenges the US faces, recommendations to re-create a separate institution dedicated to public diplomacy must be taken seriously, one that can coordinate the myriad of information operations being carried out and with particular emphasis on the use of the Internet and social media technologies. Such an institution should "be charged with monitoring, analysis, exposure, and countering of adversary propaganda and disinformation activities – an occasional USIA function in the past, mostly in wartime, but now arguably required on a sustained basis."[94]

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91   See Lichtenstein, 'Digital Diplomacy.'

92   See "US Faces Challenges and Weaknesses in Foreign Perceptions," Voice of America, March 5, 2010, available at http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/US-Faces-Challenges-and-Weaknesses-In-Foreign-Perceptions-86582372.html, accessed March 9, 2010.

93   Zaharna, 6.

94   Lord, "Reorganizing for Public Diplomacy," 122-123. See also Hoffman, "The Use of the Internet By Islamic Extremists," 20.

It is ultimately in the strength and appeal of the message, rather than the sheer volume of tweets, blogs and texts, that the US will begin to shape – and not control – the narrative in a more favourable manner. It is clear that since coming to office in January 2009, Barack Obama is committed to changing the very idea of America around the world. Instead of lecturing to others about the superiority of American values, the Obama administration is seeking to craft an alternative message that presents the United States as a benign force for good in the world, one power amongst many, rather than a bullying hegemon dictating to, and dominating, others. The US State Department – as part of the 21st Century Statecraft initiative – is using new media technologies to engage in "digital conversations" with those who have often felt alienated and bullied by grand assertions that "freedom" is the answer to the world's problems. While the Internet is no "magic bullet," it does have an important role to play in a world that is increasingly wired up, in which new and emerging technologies are transforming global communications. As Anne-Marie Slaughter, Director of Policy Planning for the US State Department has argued, "The emerging networked world of the twenty-first century, however, exists above the state, below the state, and through the state. In this world, the state with the most connections will be the central player, able to set the global agenda and unlock innovation and sustainable growth."[95] Digital diplomacy is only likely to grow in importance as a key lever of state power and a vital tool of US foreign policy, one cog in a large wheel that sits alongside the more traditional "hard" levers of state power. Digital diplomacy is an important innovation but it does have its limits: it will not prevent terrorist attacks nor will it eliminate deep-seated and hostile anti-Americanism, the causes of which are many and varied. But if used appropriately, the Internet and social networking technologies can play an important part in reaching out and engaging those who perceive America to be part of the problem, rather than the solution, and can help foster a debate

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[95]   Anne-Marie Slaughter, 'America's Edge: Power in the Networked Century,' Foreign Affairs, January/February 2009, available at http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63722/anne-marie-slaughter/americas-edge

and a discourse that discredits the message of radical Islamist extremists, while shaping a compelling and credible alternative.

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THE POLITICS OF FACEBOOK FRIENDSHIP: THE INFLUENCE OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURATION OF THE SNS UPON THE NOTION OF THE POLITICAL

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Abstract

This paper deploys Jacques Derrida's meditations upon the writings of Aristotle in order to suggest a direct relationship between the traditional concept of friendship in European civilization and the Western notions of politics and democracy. It thereby proposes the dependence of the democratic ideal upon the ideal of friendship. Through interviews with researchers and staff at Facebook, and through an empirical experiment which employs a dummy account to monitor the establishment of social relationships through Facebook, the paper suggests that the world's most popular social networking site is redefining the popular concept of friendship and thereby changing the ideal of friendship upon which the concept of political democracy has traditionally been based.

Keywords: Facebook, friendship, democracy, Derrida, Aristotle.

1. Introduction

On 8 April 2010, four weeks before a British parliamentary election, the *BBC News* website reported that

> Social networking website Facebook has been brought in to get unregistered voters into the polling booth. In a tie-up with the Electoral Commission, Facebook users who visit the site over the weekend will be asked if they have registered to vote. If they say 'No' they will be sent to a page linked to the Electoral Commission that lets them enter details online.[1]

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1 "Facebook targets unregistered voters," BBC News Interactive. Available at news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/election_2010/8610730.stm

It remains unclear whether the use of such a social networking site (SNS) as Facebook can promote participation in democratic processes. On the face of things such high profile political endeavours as Barack Obama's electioneering pages on Facebook would seem to suggest that such sites can foster democratic activity. There remain, however, significant questions as to whether the fundamental ideological perspectives underlying and advanced by these homogeneous media forms are themselves consistent with Western notions of democracy and socio-political engagement.

On 15 April 2010, immediately after the UK's first ever televised election debate featuring the leaders of the country's three main political parties, Rory Cellan-Jones, *BBC News*'s Technology Correspondent, posted on his Twitter page the news that 36,483 people had posted a total of 184,396 messages onto the Twitter site in relation to (and during) that debate.[2] In an article on the *BBC News* website (14 April 2010) Cellan-Jones had pointed out that Facebook would meanwhile run "its own digital version of the leaders' debates"[3] – and that all three party leaders had "agreed to answer questions submitted by users." The morning after the first debate (16 April 2010), on the BBC's *Breakfast* news programme, Cellan-Jones added that Facebook had experienced a server overload as a result of online activity related to the debate: "Facebook had so many people […] they couldn't quite cope." Yet Jones also suggested that this activity did not represent a step change in political participation – it had merely shifted extant offline debates onto these sites. It remains uncertain, however, whether the limitations and structures of these sites allow for the range and freedom of debate possible offline – or whether they offer a regulated imitation of and replacement for such participation practised in the non-virtual public sphere.

During the British general election campaign of April-May 2010, the company producing the yeast-based spread Marmite

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2   Rory Cellan-Jones, Twitter. Available at twitter.com/bbcrorycj

3   "Social media and the leadership debates," BBC News Interactive. Available at news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/election_2010/8618700.stm

advertised its parallel Facebook sites for the Marmite Love Party and the Marmite Hate Party, complete with slogans ('Spread the Love' and 'Stop the Spread' respectively) and campaign statements, manifestos, pledges, and profiles of the party leaders – as well as links to the Marmite News Network which kept readers updated with the latest campaign news.[4] Users with strong positive or negative opinions on the product could log onto Facebook to register their vote for or against the spread. On 22 April 2010 *BBC News Interactive* reported that "the maker of Marmite is threatening legal action against the British National Party to stop it from using a jar of the spread in a party broadcast."[5] The yeast spread's spoof campaign had itself been hijacked by the anti-democratic extreme of British political opinion; the parody of democratic processes had become a tool for forces actively seeking to undermine those processes. This seems an appropriate, if absurd, model for the effects of hypermediation upon political processes.

If political participation through Facebook or other online activities is meaningful and empowering, then such activity would bias democratic processes in favour of those groups in society (the economically, technologically and educationally advantaged) who least need that empowerment. But if such participation is not empowering and merely offers an illusion of socio-political agency, then it in fact undermines the desire, and therefore the potential for, real empowerment and meaningful agency. The Internet user feels as though she is at the centre of the universe, and this interpellation, this imaginary repositioning, pre-empts the subject's struggle towards such centricity and significance. The Facebook member sits at the heart of a social web which promises to mirror society but which is not the world of material relationships.

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4   Marmite Love Party available at www.facebook.com/Marmite?v=app_10339498918. Marmite Hate Party available at www.facebook.com/pages/Marmite-Hate-it/301129306908#!/MarmiteHateParty?ref=ts. Marmite   News   Network   available   at www.marmitenewsnetwork.com/?WT.mc_id=new_hope_facebook_aklove2.

5   "BNP facing Marmite legal action," BBC News Interactive. Available at news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/election_2010/8637473.stm

This paper suggests that it may not only be the opportunities for traditional Western modes of political participation which such new technologies are subverting. It argues that these new technologies, in their radical reshaping of the conditions of social subjectivity and of social relationships, are eroding the very possibility of politics itself – insofar as the Western concept of the political has, since Aristotle, been based upon an ideal notion of friendship, and insofar as social networking sites are redefining their users' perspectives upon friendship and society.

2. The subject of Facebook

On 16 September 2009 the *BBC News* website quoted Facebook's vice-president of engineering, Mike Schroepfer, on the company's mission "to get as much of the entire world on the social network communicating with the friends and family and the people they want to communicate with."[6] More than five per cent of the entire population of the world already subscribe to Facebook, and that figure is growing. Facebook's ambition is overtly directed towards global domination and by implication the homogenization of contexts and structures of social interaction.

Facebook's own Facebook page announces that "Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected."[7] On his own Facebook page the site's founder Mark Zuckerberg lists his personal interests as "openness, making things that help people connect and share what's important to them, revolutions, information flow, minimalism."[8] Facebook as such represents a revolutionarily minimalist notion of information flow. This is a structure in which the flow itself, the processes of connection and of sharing, and the condition of openness which affords that possibility, signify more, absolutely more, than the content – insofar as what is

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6   "Facebook grows and makes money," BBC News Interactive. Available at news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8258117.stm

7   Facebook's own corporate page on the Facebook website. Available at www.facebook.com/facebook?ref=ts#!/facebook?v=info&ref=ts

8   Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook. Available at www.facebook.com/facebook?ref=ts#!/markzuckerberg?v=info&ref=ts

important to the Facebook user, as to its founder, are these processes themselves. Facebook emphasizes the significance of the act of expression rather than what is expressed. Despite its promises of interactivity, its own processes thereby define its users as the subjects of essentially empty and necessarily banal monologues.

Petitioning its user for a status update, the empty field at the top of one's Facebook homepage asks: "What's on your mind?" Not *what are you doing?* – the life of the user may have become too passive, too solipsistic, to countenance such a call to action or to material interaction: the voice of the Facebook user expresses itself and only itself, a subjectivity defined by the processes of Facebook use. The subject of Facebook, the site's mediated user, is delineated by Facebook parameters (gender, relationship status, political views, religious views, interests in movies, books, television, and music) and by an ideology of online friendship (friendship as process, friendship as social capital, but not friendship as moral commonality). One's political views are no longer prescribed by the site's default settings (as they once were), but one's relationship status is strictly limited to: *single*, *in a relationship*, *engaged*, *married*, *it's complicated*, *in an open relationship*, or *widowed*. One might be *looking for* a very limited (and limiting) range of things out of Facebook use: *friendship*, *dating*, *a relationship* or *networking*. These teleological limits are in themselves both epistemologically and ideologically defining. Oymen Gur has suggested that, while social networking websites offer their users the illusion of personal liberation, they effectively seize control of their users' subjectivities: "even though social networking sites seem transparent, users are still mediated through them […] the more people are liberated with wider and more transparent networks, the more they are constrained."[9]

3. Status update as status symbol

Facebook users' dependence on this site appears increasingly influential in their definitions of identity. Within a few months of

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9   Oymen Gur, "Comparing social network sites and past social systems," Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association Conference, London School of Economics, 6-8 January 2010.

its launch on 23 September 2009 a Facebook page entitled 'I will name my son Batman if this page gets to 500,000 Fans'[10] had garnered nearly a million supporters – resulting in the announcement that the offspring of the page's owner had indeed been named 'Batman'. This is an extreme example and yet it seems resonant of Facebook's influence on the lives of its users and their offline networks.

Eager to report the most enthralling status updates, it is not unknown for Facebook users, like diarists or autobiographers, to lead their lives and frame their identities according to the needs of their narratives. Paul de Man wrote that "the autobiographical project may itself produce and determine the life and that whatever the writer *does* is in fact governed by the technical demands of self-portraiture."[11] Although this activity may in part relate to an internal process of self-narrativization – a coming to subjective integrity through the reconstruction of one's life within the logic and aesthetic of the narrative form – it is surely also an outward-facing expression of one's own public identity and social status.

Although the status update announces and performs the identity of the user, it is the user's number of Facebook friends which provides material evidence for the success and status of that user's constructed identity. Danah Boyd supposes that one's "actual collection of [Facebook] Friends [...] provides space for people to engage in identity performance."[12] While Boyd has argued that "the public display of connections that takes place in social network sites can represent a teen's social identity and status,"[13] it seems apparent that this need for validation is not unique to Facebook's teenaged users (nor indeed to Facebook users). Boyd suggests that "the public nature of [social networking] sites requires participants to perform their

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10   This Facebook page, perhaps as a result of its notoriety, has since been deleted.

11   Paul de Man, The Rhetoric of Romanticism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 69.

12   Danah Boyd, "Friends, Friendsters, and MySpace Top 8: Writing Community Into Being on Social Network Sites," First Monday 11:12 (2006), 13. Available at firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1418/1336

13   Danah Boyd, Taken Out of Context: American Teen Sociality in Networked Publics, (University of California, Berkeley, 2008), 213. Available at www.danah.org/papers/TakenOutOfContext.pdf

relationship to others [...]. Based on an internal understanding of the audience, participants override the term 'Friend' to make room for a variety of different relationships so that they may properly *show face*."[14] In other words, this process of identity construction, performance, affirmation and validation, insofar as its success is measured by the numeral accumulation of friends as a valorizing commodity, redefines the nature of friendship itself in order to accommodate the relational inflation which this global and virtual medium promotes. It used to be the case (as Dunbar[15] has suggested) that one needed tens of friends to prove one's social and personal worth (to oneself as to others); within the psychological economy of Facebook one needs hundreds... thousands. (And on Twitter, where friends are possessed as followers, hundreds of thousands.)

Boyd proposes that "by having a loose definition of Friendship, it is easy to end up having hundreds of Friends [...]. Because of how these sites function, there is no distinction between siblings, lovers, schoolmates, and strangers. They are all lumped under one category: Friends."[16] Boyd may be overstating the case that Facebook does not offer such distinctions (in some fields it clearly does); yet it seems to be the case that Facebook prioritizes its concept of friendship above these distinctions. Indeed it might be argued that it is only possible to accumulate these hundreds of friends by amending (or relaxing) one's definition of friendship.

4. The geography of friendship

Dunbar has argued that, although social networking sites may have value in supporting ongoing offline relationships, relationships conducted entirely via such sites are neither as stable nor as strong as relationships which take place in the material world "because you're not interacting face to face." He has added that "until they invent virtual touch you will never have

14   Boyd, "Friends, Friendsters, and MySpace Top 8," 4.

15   Robin Dunbar, "How many friends does one person need?," Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, London, 18 February 2010. Available at www.thersa.org/events/audio-and-past-events/2010/rsa-thursday-how-many-friends-does-one-person-need

16   Boyd, "Friends, Friendsters, and MySpace Top 8," 10.

networked relationships that are in any way like the ones you have in real life."[17]

One of Western civilization's first theorists of the nature of friendship, Aristotle criticized a false mode of friendship which is not based on actual physical proximity: "they are not really friends because they do not spend all their time together or enjoy each other's company: things that are considered to be the best evidence of friendly feeling."[18] From Aristotle's perspective there appears to be a real correlation between physical and emotional closeness.

Meditating on Aristotle's position, Jacques Derrida has argued that "if absence and remoteness do not destroy friendship, they attenuate or exhaust it […]. Question: how would this discourse have handled telecommunication […]? People can speak to each other from afar – this was already possible, but Aristotle took no account of it."[19] Derrida's suggestion is that Aristotle did not ignore the possibility that friendships might be sustained through contact via media of telecommunications because such media did not exist in his time (as Derrida points out, they did: there were, for example, such things as letters – which, for Derrida at least, are literally modes of telecommunication, communication at a distance); Derrida implies that Aristotle ignored these possibilities because he did not consider them a viable way to maintain friendships.

New technologies have not abolished distance, although they can allow us to forget its enduring significance. When we interrogate the notion of online relationships, geography therefore seems both a banal and an essential factor in the contemporary and ongoing shift in the concept of friendship. The moral or spiritual aspects of traditional notions of social and emotional intimacy seem paradoxically dependent upon the material conditions of that intimacy. From this perspective the limits to the possibilities

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17   Dunbar, "How many friends does one person need?"

18   Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics (London: Penguin, 2004), 210.

19   Jacques Derrida, The Politics of Friendship (London: Verso, 2005), 222.

of virtual friendship therefore appear insurmountable and definitive.

5. The nature of Facebook friendship

Boyd writes that "in everyday life most teen friendships are never formalized or verified except through implicit social rituals. Social network sites change this by forcing participants to publicly articulate and display their social connections […]. While these lists display 'Friends', the connections teens have on a social network site are not necessarily the same as 'friends' in the everyday sense. The reasons to connect with others are countless and participants use the term 'Friends' to label all connections, regardless of intensity or type."[20] Boyd therefore suggests that, within the social networking site, "there seems to be little incentive to be selective about Friendship […]. As far as most participants are concerned, Friendship doesn't mean anything really, so why not?"[21] There are modes of selectivity within the systems of a social networking site (Facebook friends can, for example, be categorized in terms of the levels of their access to one's pages; other sites allow rankings of friends or contacts), and yet the headline structures of Facebook tend to emphasize the homogenization of friendships over such discriminatory practices. One might therefore ask whether an increasingly non-selective view of online friendship (if "Friendship doesn't mean anything") is changing traditional views of friendship in offline interaction – or whether SNS users are able consciously to distinguish between these modes of online and offline relationships.

In an interview conducted for the purposes of this study Danah Boyd (17 February 2010) has responded that "fundamentally […] people know the difference between a Friend (as in social network sites) and a friend (as in the intimate connection). This is why I go out of my way to differentiate them."[22] Yet the need to

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20   Boyd, Taken Out of Context, 211-212.

21   Boyd, "Friends, Friendsters, and MySpace Top 8," 10.

22   Full texts of interviews conducted for this study are available upon request to the author: alec.charles@beds.ac.uk

differentiate between these modes of friendship might suggest that these differences are not quite so clear. The globalizing structures of such social networking sites as Facebook are imposing a homogeneous cross-cultural notion of friendship upon the post-industrial world; and insofar as users interact and exist in a primarily online environment, their ability to distinguish between online and offline modes of friendship seems increasingly irrelevant. The fact that Boyd views the Facebook friend as a 'Friend' (with a capitalized 'F') in an attempt to differentiate this phenomenon from offline manifestations of friendship may suggest by this translation of the term into a proper noun that there is something absolute, definitive or seminal about this mode of friendship (in parallel, say, to the differentiation of 'god' from 'God').

Facebook's own statistics (as of July 2010) suggest that fifty per cent of the site's 400 million active users log onto Facebook each day.[23] On average a Facebook user has 130 Facebook friends. More than 60 million status updates are posted by 35 million Facebook users each day, and the average user spends more than 55 minutes on the site every day. This latter statistic suggests that, even if Facebook users remain able to distinguish between modes of online and offline friendship, many are actively prioritizing and committing significant social investment to their online relationships.

A member of Facebook's Data Team[24], Adam Kramer, in an interview conducted for the purposes of this study (3 February 2010) has commented that

> it's important to remember that the vast majority of friendships on Facebook are actually traditional relationships that happen to also have a Facebook representation which is termed 'friend'. As far as friendship-like social dynamics are concerned, there's a decent amount of empirical evidence

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23   Facebook statistics available at www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics

24   Facebook's Data Team, according to its own Facebook page, "builds scalable platforms for the collection, management, and analysis of data" and uses "these platforms to help drive informed decisions in areas critical to the success of the company." See www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics#!/data?v=info&ref=ts

suggesting that communication through Facebook serves to strengthen 'weak-tie' bonds, or relationships among people who are not very close. But most broadly, it is my belief that Facebook and social networking sites are a facilitator of social interactions, and do not indicate anything 'new' about the psychology of human interaction. Rather, they serve as tools to encourage social interaction in new ways via new means of communication, much like the printing press, telephone, and television did in their day.

Without being overtly technologically determinist, one might suggest that Gutenberg, Bell and Baird's inventions did more than facilitate and accelerate communication; one need not be a disciple of Marshall McLuhan to imagine that these media technologies radically affected the nature and content of social interaction. When such socially influential new media technologies (such as the Internet and the mobile telephone) converge, one might expect their impact to be even more intense than that of one such technology functioning on its own.

Facebook statistics reveal that more than 100 million users access Facebook through mobile devices, and that those who use Facebook on their mobile devices are twice as active as non-mobile-device-using Facebook users.[25] The engineer who designed the hugely successful 'Facebook for iPhone' package, Joe Hewitt has commented in an interview conducted for the purposes of this study (2 February 2010) that

> Facebook hasn't affected contemporary notions of friendship significantly. Unlike some other social networks where one is encouraged to 'friend' people they've never met, Facebook works best when it is a mirror of the real world, and your friends are people you know in real life. The biggest effect Facebook has had on contemporary friendship is merely to keep friendships alive that might have otherwise faded due to time and distance.

Both Kramer and Hewitt see Facebook as merely a facilitator for traditional offline friendships. The medium is, it seems, no longer the message; the nature, content and meaning of a

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25   Facebook statistics available at www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics

communication act are no longer affected by that act's own conditions of process and possibility. In a paper entitled "Social network activity and social well-being" Burke, Marlow and Lento similarly suppose that "social networking sites complement the network of relationships present in the offline world."[26] However, in an interview conducted for this study (15 February 2010) Moira Burke has commented:

> Social networking sites certainly changed the threshold and nuance that most people experienced in the face-to-face definition of 'friend'. This is primarily because they force people to make relationships explicit, and 'friend' status was often simply an access control mechanism for content. Since early SNSs didn't have tiered relationships or faceted privacy controls, all kinds of social roles were collapsed into a single term. Between the awkwardness of having to explicitly deny someone's friend request and the publication of one's friend count on the profile, many users hoarded friends, in a socio-economic way.

One might therefore suggest that one's focus upon the modes of friendship promoted and defined by social networking sites may change the nature of one's friendships offline, and that the amount of time spent involved in these online processes of social interaction, the number of 'friends' one has online and the emphasis one places not only upon these modes of interaction but also upon the significance of the quantities of friendships achieved and maintained online may fundamentally affect one's notion of friendship itself.

6. The genealogy of virtual friendship

For the purposes of this research an exercise was conducted to test the extent to which Facebook users exercise discrimination in their acceptance of friends.[27] A dummy Facebook account was created under a name which, although ordinary and even bland

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26   Moira Burke, Cameron Marlow, Thomas Lento, "Social network activity and social well-being," Proceedings of the 28th international conference on human factors in computing systems, Atlanta, Georgia (2010). Available at portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?doid=1753326.1753613

27   Data from this exercise is available upon request to the author: alec.charles@beds.ac.uk

(by English-language standards) did not exist on Facebook – nor (according to a Google search) anywhere on the Internet. This name was chosen specifically to avoid the possibility that it might be interpreted as a real known friend: the name was generated randomly by searching directories for common Anglophone given names and surnames and combining these, and continuing this process until a name appeared that gave no results on a Google search. The Facebook account did not include any images of the account-holder nor any profile information. In stage one of the exercise 100 Facebook users were sent friend requests: the names of these users were generated randomly by searching directories for common Anglophone given names and surnames and combining these. Within five days 18 per cent of these Facebook users had accepted the dummy user as a friend.

Figure 1. Facebook friend exercise conducted January / February 2010: numbers of friends / day of exercise. Stage one: random friends.
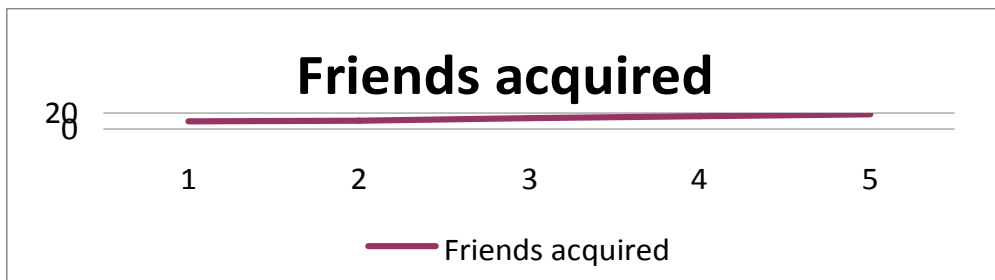
In the second stage of this exercise a further 100 friend requests were sent to Facebook users. These recipients were all contacts generated by Facebook itself as suggested friends – in other words they were friends of those who had already accepted the dummy user as a friend. Within five days 74 of these friends of friends had befriended the dummy user.

Figure 2. Facebook friend exercise conducted January / February 2010: numbers of friends / day of exercise. Stage two: friends of friends.

Friends acquired
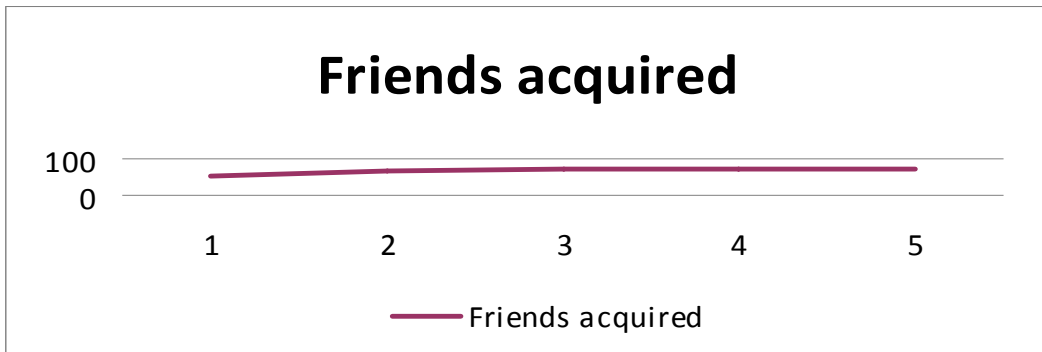
In the third stage of this exercise a further 100 friend requests were sent to Facebook friends of those who had accepted Facebook friendship in stage two (i.e. friends of friends of friends). Within five days 84 of these friends of friends of friends had befriended the dummy user.

Figure 3. Facebook friend exercise conducted January / February 2010: numbers of friends / day of exercise. Stage three: friends of friends of friends.
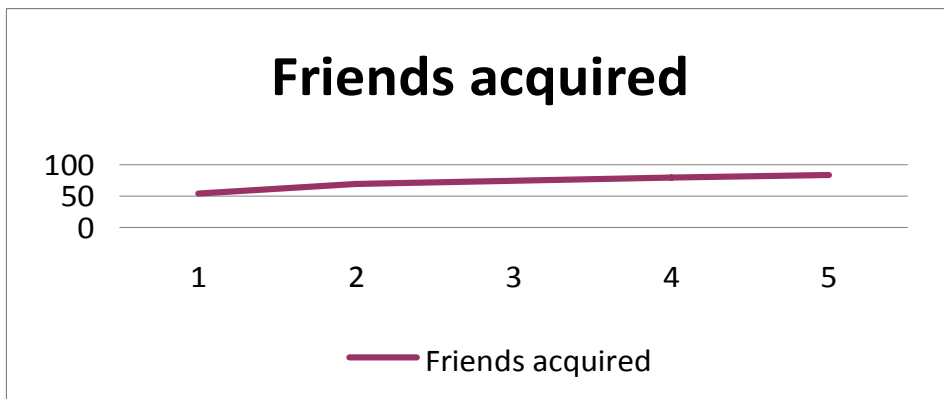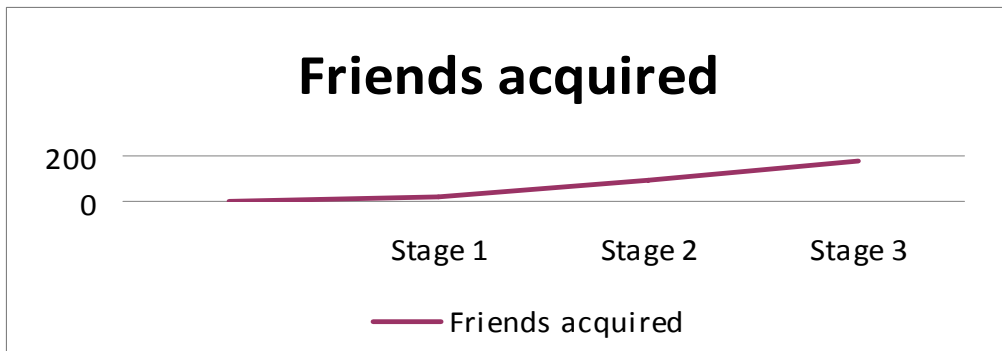

Friends acquired

Figure 4. Aggegrate results of stages one, two and three.

Friends acquired

These results appear to demonstrate that while the majority of Facebook users are relatively discriminating in accepting the friendship of completely unknown contacts, the majority are also willing to accept such friendship on the implicit recommendation of one of their current friends; that is, if they know someone who knows the person requesting friendship, they are likely to accept that friendship. Indeed, they appear to be even more likely to accept that friendship if more than one friend is already shared, and if the petitioner already possesses a number of friends. This mode of friendship is ostensibly one based entirely upon quantifiable notions of social capital: the quantity of social capital possessed by the seeker of friendship (the number of shared friends or their total number of friends) is directly related to the probability of the success of their petition. The petitioner's perceived level of social capital may therefore be seen as adding to the social capital accumulated by the petitioned party. This inference is further evidenced by the fact that during the second and third stages of this exercise the dummy account received seven unsolicited requests for friendship from friends of friends who had not been contacted – as this non-existent user accumulated social capital he came to be perceived by third parties as a commodity worth investing in. In Aristotle's terms this is therefore a mode of friendship based upon utility rather than upon virtue or moral commonality or proximity. Aristotle argued that "people describe as friends those who are attracted to one another for reasons of utility […] or of pleasure […] but [...] friendship in the primary and proper sense is between good men in virtue of their goodness, whereas the rest are friendships only by analogy."[28] If this SNS experience represents a form friendship, then it is one which falls far short of Aristotle's ideal. It may therefore be postulated that social networking sites' utilitarian commodifications of friendship in terms of the quantity of friends accumulated and that quantity's relationship to social capital have affected the concept of friendship *per se*, in as much as contemporary friendship may appear in this context to have become more a matter of socio-economic functionality than of emotional or moral idealism.

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28   Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics, 207.

7. The arithmetic of friendship

In a Facebook blog entry of 5 October 2009 Adam Kramer described a process whereby Facebook's team of data scientists have sought to quantify the sum total of American Facebook users' happiness: "Every day, through Facebook status updates, people share how they feel with those who matter most in their lives. These updates are tiny windows into how people are doing […]. Grouped together, these updates are indicative of how we are collectively feeling."[29] Kramer thus goes on to explain how "data scientists at Facebook started a project to measure the overall mood of people from the United States on Facebook, based on the sentiment expressed in status updates." However, it is not only the tone but it may in fact be the very existence of one's updates that allows for a quantification of one's emotional and social well-being: what one might call one's level of happiness. In their paper on 'Social network activity and social well-being' Burke et al. argue that the "use of these sites has been associated with greater levels of social capital or benefits made possible by the existence of a social structure. These benefits include *bridging social capital*, or access to new information through a diverse set of acquaintances, and *bonding social capital*, or emotional support from close friends." Their study of Facebook specifically suggests that "overall SNS activity, particularly friend count, was positively correlated with both kinds [bridging and bonding] of social capital."[30]

One's social capital and therefore one's social well-being can be seen to relate to one's level of activity on Facebook and in particular (and as a result of this level of activity) to one's number of Facebook friends. A Facebook user's number of friends appears (for Burke et al.) to be related to their social well-being (or at least to their own perception thereof). If friends are a commodity whose quantity enhances one's level of happiness, they are clearly one to be valued, and one whose integrity is to

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29   Adam Kramer, Facebook Blog. Available at blog.facebook.com/blog.php?post=150162112130

30   Moira Burke, Cameron Marlow, Thomas Lento, "Social network activity and social well-being."

be officially regulated and therefore closely guarded by the appropriate authorities. On 20 November 2009 the *BBC News* website reported that "Facebook has threatened legal action against a service that sells friends on the social networking site […]. Customers of USocial use it to boost follower and friend numbers on social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter. On micro-blogging site Twitter, followers can be bought in blocks starting at £53 for 1,000. The biggest block USocial is selling is 100,000 people."[31] Friendship has clearly become an economic commodity whose quantification is a crucial concern. In a Facebook blog entry of 8 April 2009 Facebook's Chief Operating Officer, Sheryl Sandberg wrote:

> One of the most common questions we're asked at Facebook is, 'How many friends can you have?' It's an increasingly important question as more people around the world share and connect on Facebook and on the Web overall, but it's also difficult to answer. While the average user on Facebook has 120 confirmed friend connections, that number doesn't account for all the different types of relationships people have in their lives […]. When our Data Team measured active networks for users on Facebook, it found that, in any given month, users keep up with between 2 times and 4 times more people than through more traditional communication.[32]

A technology which can increase one's quantities of friendship – and therefore one's levels of happiness – fourfold is clearly one which is to be cherished. Yet when one increases one's number of friendships fourfold it seems unclear that each of those friendships remains as valuable as when one had fewer friends. It also appears uncertain that friendship can exist in its offline form within a virtual environment which excludes the degree of material (spatial and temporal) commitment, devotion and even sacrifice which in the physical world tests, tempers and defines it. Indeed it may be argued that friendship as a quantifiable commodity is no longer friendship at all.

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31   "Facebook acts on follower trade," BBC News Interactive. Available at news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/8370302.stm

32   Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook Blog. Available at: blog.facebook.com/blog.php?post=72975227130

8. The quantification of friendship

Robin Dunbar famously postulated what is known as Dunbar's number – the number of people with whom one can maintain social relationships. He has suggested that this number is about 150. Dunbar proposes that one can maintain close relationships with an inner core of only about five people, and that concentric sets of relationships demonstrating lesser levels of intimacy radiate from this core: "as you go out you include more people but you're including relationships at a lower quality. That ties up very closely with the amount of time you spend with those people. The layers scale in very consistent patterns, they occur at 5, 15, 50, 150, 500, 1,500." Indeed Dunbar extrapolates the next level in these relationship sets to agree with Plato that "the ideal democracy size is about 5,300."[33]

Dunbar has suggested that "it has become a kind of competition to see how many friends you can have on Facebook" and argues that if you have hundreds of Facebook friends "you probably don't know most of these people – they're just voyeurs into your life." This, he says, is both because of human cognitive limits ("the size of the inner layers of your social network is directly related to the size of key areas of your brain") and because "you just don't have time in everyday life to invest in each of those people to the extent where you can have a real relationship with them."[34] Although Dunbar speaks of the impossibility of ultimately defining the nature of social relationships, he maintains the possibility of the quantification of friendships. While he notes Plato's arithmetical delineation of socio-political relationships, he fails to take into account an Aristotelian tradition which differentiates between politically utilitarian notions of friendship and a notion of friendship which is defined not by utility (or for that matter by pleasure) but by commonality of virtue – a friendship which resists (and is alien to and extinguished by) quantification and commodification.

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33   Robin Dunbar, "How many friends does one person need?"

34   Robin Dunbar, "How many friends does one person need?"

Aristotle proposed that "those who have a great many friends […] are felt to be friends of nobody."[35] He suggested that "there is a limit to the number of one's friends; and probably this would be the largest number with whom one can be on intimate terms […] one cannot be intimate, and share oneself, with a large number of people."[36] Aristotle is reputed (by Erasmus and Montaigne amongst others[37]) to have announced: "O my friends, there is no friend!" Or, in the words of Jacques Derrida, "my friends, if you want to have friends, do not have too many."[38] But also: if you want to have friends, do not try to count them. When you try to quantify friendship as an economic commodity (and therefore when you try to increase your number of friends in order to increase your social capital, the utility adhering to those friendships) then they are no longer friends in Aristotle's (or Derrida's) purest sense: as Derrida suggests, "the units in question are neither things […] nor numbers. […] one must not have too many friends, but [friendship] nevertheless resists enumeration […] or even pure and simple quantification."[39]

Boyd argues that "for many, the category of friend carries an aura of exclusivity and intimacy unlike the categories acquaintance or contact, which suggest familiarity but not closeness."[40] Aristotle and Derrida would agree. The corollary of this proposal is evident: that the Facebook friend is, within such traditional definitions, not a friend as such, not in the absolute and definitive sense. The meaning of friendship is therefore in the process of changing: it is not only that the concept of Facebook friendship (a new and radically different sense of friendship) is overwhelming that of offline friendship, it is also that the practice of offline friendship is being overtaken by the practice of friendship online.

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35   Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics, 251.

36   Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics, 250.

37   Michel de Montaigne, The Complete Essays (Harmondsworth: Penguin: 1981), 214.

38   Derrida, The Politics of Friendship, 22.

39   Derrida, The Politics of Friendship, 21.

40   Boyd, "Friends, Friendsters, and MySpace Top 8," 3.

9. The politics of friendship

The virtual friend on Facebook takes place beyond material history, beyond what we used to call the 'real'. The new reality is, according to Jean Baudrillard, a realm without depth and without difference. This is a world in which there are neither friends nor enemies, because we have lost the absolute and irreducible discrimination of friendship, insofar as – as Derrida suggests – "the collapse of the friendship concept […] carries off the Friend too."[41] We appear to have entered, as Derrida puts it, "the time of a world without friends, the time of a world without enemies" – "a 'world without politics' […] abandoned by its friends as well as its enemies […] a dehumanized desert."[42] We return, then, to Baudrillard's "desert of the real" – the waste land of the new, virtualized reality.[43]

The loss of the concept of friendship, and therefore of its essential and inevitable counterpart *enmity*, fosters a reality without political orientation. Derrida laments the loss of these "enemies without which […] our subject […] would lose its political being; it would purely and simply depoliticize itself. […] without an enemy, and therefore without friends, where does one find oneself […]?"[44] Where there are no real enemies, Derrida suggests, there are no real friends. The enemies provoked and imagined to reinforce the ruins of democracy can sustain only an illusion of that democracy. Friendship seems essential not only to the maintenance of the political but also specifically to the endurance of the democratic. Aristotle, for example, supposes that "while in tyrannies friendships […] are little found, they are most commonly found in democracies because the citizens, being equal, have much in common."[45] Friendship is as such a prerequisite for political existence and a symptom of democracy.

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41   Derrida, The Politics of Friendship, 302.

42   Derrida, The Politics of Friendship, 76, 130.

43   Jean Baudrillard, Simulacra and Simulation (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 1.

44   Derrida, The Politics of Friendship, 77.

45 Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics, 220.

The Facebook generation founds friendship upon a lesser ideal (a virtual network) than that performed in real-world relationships – in contrast to the attempts of the Aristotelian tradition to base the concept of friendship upon a higher or more ambitious ideal than that generally encountered in the physical world. Not only does it set a lesser goal for friendship than the metaphysical ideal: it sets its target lower than friendship in non-virtual society. Rather than aiming towards the philosophical heights, it ends up aiming lower than its actual starting point. The uses of world's most popular social networking site have resulted in the development of an increasingly prevalent tendency to quantify and commodify friendship. The consequent redesignation of the name of friendship, the essential shift in its meaning, may signal the loss of an ancient ideal upon which, from the perspectives of such thinkers as Aristotle and Derrida, the society, politics, and democracy of Western civilization are intimately grounded. To lose sight of this ideal, this aspiration, might therefore be to diminish the possibilities of social, political and democratic existence.

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THE TWO WAVES OF CYBERPOLITICS IN MALAYSIA: WHAT DOES THE BY-ELECTIONS BAROMETER TELL US?

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Abstract

This paper explores the political spectrum of Malaysia leading to the reformasi period in view of tracing the causes of the rise of the Internet as a source of disseminating and consuming alternative media. It attempts to answer why there was a sudden decline in alternative media during the 2004 general elections followed by the Internet revolution in the 2008 general elections. The 11 by-elections held in Malaysia since 2008 is tabulated and analyzed, to ascertain whether the ball is still in the opposition's court. Through analysis of the available data gathered from the Elections Commission, it could be concluded that the Barisan Nasional would still be the current valid government.

Keywords: *Malaysian Politics, Democratization, Deliberation, Participation and Polarization*

1. Introduction[46]

A spectacular 450 million users or 31 percent of the world's social media population originates from Asia.[47] The ever popular Facebook has over 350 million active users in 180 countries, with over 70 percent of these users outside the United States (U.S.).[48] Twitter's popularity spread like a forest fire, with an increase of 3,700 percent in 2009 alone.[49] It was cited in a Nielsen Company

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[46]   The author would like to the two anonymous reviewers for their contributions made in improving this article. In addition, the author would also like to acknowledge Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sivamurugan Pandian, Dr. Mohd. Zaini Abu Bakar,Chor Foon, Tang and Parthiban S. Gopal of USM for their insightful contributions to this paper.

[47]   OgilvyInsight, "Can Brands Have a Social Life?", 2008, [database on-line]; available at http://www.the-open-room.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/ogilvyone_brands-sociallife_2008.pdf last accessed in 3 March 2010

[48]   Facebook.com, [database on-line] Available at http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics last accessed in December 9, 2009

[49]   Rick Cole, "Social Media: What Does it Mean for Public Managers?," *Public Management*, vol. 91 no. 9 (2009): 8-12.

report that the 2010 Haiti earthquake changed the landscape of aid and relief organizations as they used Twitter as a pivotal channel for information dispersion and gathering of information, whilst the latter being the source of information in general.[50] DiMaggio et. al urged sociologists to broaden and intensify their efforts to understand this new technology. Politicians and political parties worldwide have used the Internet as a medium in recent times for campaigning and information dissemination activities, primarily to engage the grassroots.[51]

Bell[52] appears to have been the first sociologist to write about the social impact of social communications, contending that the social impact would derive from the intervention of miniature electronic and optical circuits capable of sending information through networks, and the impending integration of computer processing and telecommunications. In recent times, populist political figures calling for change have gotten voter support all over the world, as seen in the United States and Malaysia. Barrack Obama's call for change enabled him to win the popular vote and was decisive during the primaries. The tech-savvy Democratic candidate was quick and foresighted in cultivating the Internet and its possibilities.[53] Similar use of the Internet is seen throughout the globe. In recent times, a single email by William Hague from the Conservative Party was enough to raise £100,000 while the party's web campaign brought in more than £500,000.[54]

As in the case of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim and his supporters were contentiously forced by the controlled media landscape in

50   Ti Leberecht, "Twitter grows up in aftermath of Haiti earthquake," *CNET News*, 2010, [database on-line]; Available at http://news.cnet.com/8301-13641_3-10436435-44.html. Last accessed in January 24, 2010.

51   Paul DiMaggio, Eszter Hargittai, W. Russell Neuman, and John. P. Robinson, "Social implications of the Internet", *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 27, no. 1 (2001): 307-336.

52   Daniel Bell, "Teletext and technology: new networks of knowledge and information in postindustrial society" in *The Winding Passage: Essays and Sociological Journeys*, 1960-1980, ed. Bell Daniel, New York: Basic 34–65. (1977) [1980].

53   Davey Winder, "Obama wins the Internet vote for tech President," *iTWire,* (27 June 2008) [database on-line]; Available at http://www.itwire.com/business-it-news/networking/19066-obama-wins-the-internet-vote-for-tech-president. Last viewed in 1 June 2010.

54   Matt Warman, "The online election strayed off-message: There had been much talk that this would be the first 'digital' General Election, but traditional media still had the biggest role to play," *Consumer Technology*, (13 may, 2010), [database on-line]; Available at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/7718409/The-online-election-strayed-off-message.html last accessed in 1 June 2010.

Malaysia to resort to alternative media, particularly the Internet as a mechanism to disseminate information.[55] Nikolaus contends that '*alternative media, such as subculture magazines, oppositional radio stations, and newspapers for ethnic minorities, are the product of an editorial production process that is part of the media system*' and that '*they are positioned at one end of a continuum with mainstream media on the other end*'. [56] In her analysis of Malaysiakini.com, Steele claims that alternative media is a by-product of the media system.[57] Therefore, it was the alternative media that garnered him as the figure of democracy in Malaysia. Hence, this paper scrutinizes available data on the rise of the cyber-politics in Malaysia after the sacking and incarceration of Anwar Ibrahim in 1998 and his role in the cyberpolitical war. The first part of this article is concerned with the necessity to ascertain the root causes of cyber-politics in Malaysia and the continuous struggle to win the hearts of citizens.

To the best of the author's knowledge, several published articles have documented that the internet made an impact on the general elections.[58] However, there has not been an empirical study done thus far on the actual impact of the Internet on the general elections, especially the by-elections. This article attempts to stipulate events and issues that spurred cyberpolitics in Malaysia. It then attempts to use the information that was plotted based on the majority votes of the by-elections to argue whether it can accept the hypothesis that the opposition is still gaining momentum for the upcoming general elections expected in 2013. Data presented in this paper is based on findings from previous literature such as books, articles, newspapers, and

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55   Abdul Rashid Moten, "2004 and 2008 General Elections in Malaysia: Towards a Multicultural, Bi-party Political System?" *Asian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2009): 173-194; Graham Brown, "Democratization and Communication in Asia," Pacific Affairs, University of British Columbia, vol. 78, no. 1 (2005): 39-56.

56   Nikolaus Georg and Edmund Jackob, "No Alternatives? The Relationship between Perceived Media Dependency, Use of Alternative Information Sources, and General Trust in Mass Media", *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2010): 589–606.

57   Janet Steele, "Professionalism Online: How Malaysiakini Challenges Authoritarianism", *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, vol. 14, no.1 (2009): 91-111.

58   James Chin, "Malaysia's Electoral Upheaval," *Journal of Democracy*, vol20 no3 (2009):71-85. Abdul, "2004 and 2008 General Elections in Malaysia…; Jason P. Abbott, "Vanquishing Banquo's ghost: the Anwar Ibrahim affair and its impact on Malaysian politics" *Asian Studies Review,* vol. 25, no. 3 (2001): 285-308; Graham Brown, "Democratization and Communication in Asia ….

political blogs to gauge whether the opposition is "still winning the cyber-political war". After proving that it is an ongoing struggle to win the cyber-political war, the main aim is to shed light on the by-elections that were held and the lack of analysis done on their outcomes based on majority vote. This is to prove the assumption that the ruling government is still the valid government for Malaysia in the next general election.

2. Literature Review

Choucri[59] provides an appropriate definition of the term *cyberpolitics*.[60] The relationship between blogs, regularly updated web pages consisting of posts in reverse chronological order, and political behavior have been of interest to political scientists across the globe. The relationship between behavioral aspects and blogs has also spurred the interest of politicians alike. Deliberative theorists believe that it is conducive for individuals to refine opinions, develop greater tolerance for different opinions and idealistically identify common objectives. Deliberative theorists often lament that the polarization of American politics has strengthened and thickened opinions, leading to the decrement of tolerance and the inability to reach consensus[61], whilst others believe that partisan organizations can achieve beneficial deliberative outcomes.[62] Consequently, the increase of socio-political blogs has intrigued sociologists, political scientists, and communications and media experts worldwide. Macedo and Alex-Assensoh argue that increment in participation and civic engagement leads to a more legitimate, responsive polity, increasing the quality of lives of the citizenry.[63] Prior contends

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59   Nazli Choucri "Introduction: CyberPolitics in International Relations," *International Political Science Review, Sage Publications*, vol. 21, no. 3 (2000): 243, [database on-line]; Available at http://ips.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/21/3/243.pdf. Last accessed in 5 June

60   Choucri contends that cyberpolitics is "in practice this refers also to the use of advanced electronic technologies for purposes of shaping ideas, exchanging information, exploring options, and broadening access to knowledge, evidence, and alternative modes of reasoning and reflection..... in the sense of reducing barriers to entry and increasing the empowerment of people through enhanced ability to express views, contentions, or simple reflections", 244.

61   B.A.Ackerman and J.A.Fishkin, *Deliberation Day* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

62   Joshua Cohen, "Deliberative Democracy and Democratic Legitimacy" in *The Good Polity*, eds. Hamlin Alan and Pettit. Philip (Oxford: Blackwell 1989): 17-34.

63   Stephen Macedo and Alex-Assensoh, Yvette. M. eds, *Democracy at risk*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005).

that media choice affects both political polarization and participation [64] Rational individuals that are interested in politics would be more likely to patronize political blogs for news and information. Those who are not so interested in politics will be less likely to read political blogs whilst interchangeably causing further increase in polarization and decrease in political participation. This increase in polarization and lack of political participation would affect deliberations and consequential fruitful outcomes.

Romsdahl contests that the Internet poses challenges for fair and equal involvement[65] for all participants, such as the digital divide[66]. Romsdahl further argues that quality and inappropriate information posted in blogs is an area of concern. Another issue of concern triggered is that users of social blogs may have an uphill task of contemplating between facts and opinion[67]. In his study, he found that 96 percent of Internet users only follow blogs that they believe in, hence, the plausibility of not being able to analyze the credibility of the facts presented on the blogs.[68]

Underestimation of the ferocity of the blogsphere in the Malaysian context prior to the Malaysian general election in 2008 was a sheer miscalculation by many politicians of the ruling government[69]. Chadwick[70] contends that the Internet is not only swiftly changing the landscape of existing political institutions but also introducing new norms, rules and procedures. He contends that ideological reinforcements occur and network structures are hardened and extended through the Internet, contending that it

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64   Markus Prior, *Post-Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality* in *Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

65   Rebecca, J. Romsdahl, "Political Deliberation and E-Participation in Policy-Making," *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, Purdue University Press vol. 7, no. 2 (2005): 1-11..

66   Romsdahl contends that the digital divide is the dichotomy between citizens who have access to computers and the Internet compared to those with limited access.

67   Rick Cole, "Social Media: What Does it Mean for Public Managers?".

68   Rebecca, J. Romsdahl, "Political Deliberation and E-Participation in Policy-Making ….

69   A Malaysian government official described bloggers as "karaoke singers who take pleasure in their own singing but have no influence although they claimed to have received millions of hits" and "although there were numerous bloggers, the mainstream newspapers would ultimately hold sway over the majority of the people (Bernama, 2007)."

70   Andrew Chadwick, *Internet Politics: States, Citizens, and New Communication Technologies*, (NY: Oxford University Press, 2006).

is not only a meager medium.[71] Chin argues that this new phenomenon of rallies and bloggers was the tipping point in challenging the status quo in Malaysia during the March 8, 2008 general elections.[72]

The rise of authoritarian[73] rule is fundamentally due to multi-ethnicity in Malaysia and the desire of the majority party to consolidate its position and protect its supremacy. Crouch derives two distinct hypotheses in his argument; the juxtaposition that it is difficult for an authoritarian government to rule effectively in a pervasively divisive multiethnic society as the ruling majority community would be cautious of upheavals, and that the prevalence of multi-ethnicity in Malaysia contributes to the balance of power through bargaining and negotiations.[74] Secondly, the class struggle between the bourgeois and the government instigates democratization. However, in the case of Malaysia, the domestic capitalist remains predominantly held fortress amongst the Chinese and the Malays (who are beneficiaries of the new economic policy vis-a-vis patronage of the politically entrenched). However, the rise of the bourgeois class, albeit the capitalist Chinese and Malays, did not play a democratization role in Malaysia prior to the 2008 elections, arguably due to their lack of independence from the government. Scholars have also argued that the "Asian Way" of authoritarianism defended and coined by Mahathir and Lee Kuan Yew were the reasoning for authoritarian rule in Malaysia and most East Asian countries[75]. This is concomitant to the resilience of the economies of both countries. The 1997 Asian Financial Crisis had made an impact on the region and its robust economy. It also spurred developments that led to dissidents engaging the

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71   He further argues that the Internet "allows previously marginalized or even new parties to emerge and compete with established players" (p.148) and that "psychologically disempowered spectators will feel their political efficacy increase, not only by physically turning out for rallies and meetings but by contributing to and learning from a much richer online public debate" (p. 149).

72   James Chin, "Malaysia's Electoral Upheaval …

73   Crouch (1996, 149) argues that Malaysia "retained a democratic constitutional framework" whilst, "the system gradually acquired a widening range of authoritarian characteristics" Crouch (1996) also says that the "democracy was more than a mere facade" (p. 149). The democratic opportunities were available for non-governmental organizations and pressure groups to transmit their arguments and subjugating the government of Malaysia to respond accordingly

74   Harold Crouch, *Government and Society in Malaysia*, Cornell University Press. United States, 1996.

75   Khoo Boo Teik, "The value(s) of a miracle: Malaysian and Singaporean elite constructions of Asia", *Asian Studies Review*, vol. 23, no. 2 (1999): 181-192.

Internet as a trajectory to disseminate information and garner support from other Malaysians, including the diaspora. This, we argue, was the first wave of cyberpolitics in Malaysia.

3. The first wave of cyberpolitics

3.1 Issues

For further analysis of the role of blogs in Malaysia, a review of a popular personality, Anwar Ibrahim is necessary. After taking power from Hussein Onn in 1981, Mahathir Mohammad was confronted with the problem of power consolidation as his allies were also his contenders for power, Musa Hitam and Razaleigh Hamzah. Razaleigh Hamzah was an aristocrat and unlike Musa Hitam was not deemed a rank and file politician like Mahathir. An important development before the day of the 1982 general elections was the call for Anwar Ibrahim, who resigned as President of ABIM (Anggota Belia Islam Malaysia) and joined UMNO on the eve of the nomination day in order to contest for a parliamentary seat during the 1982 elections. Musa Hitam, who was once Mahathir's ally, was seen as a perfect combination during their administration as prime minister and deputy prime minister, popularly referred to as to as the 2Ms (Mahathir later claimed that it stood for Mahathir Mohamad). Their falling out was arguably contributed to by Musa's handling of the Memali incident that took place during Mahathir's absence from the country[76]. After Musa resigned as deputy prime minister in 1986, he alluded that he was 'open' to joining an anti-Mahathir coalition. This arguably led to the foundation for the formation of Team A (Mahathir – Ghafar Baba) and Team B (Razaleigh-Musa) within UMNO. An offspring of this fallout was the formation of UMNO Baru and Semangat 46' (the year UMNO was founded by the Team B faction). Anwar Ibrahim played an integral role during the UMNO fallout in 1987 in support of Mahathir's faction.

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76   Robert Stephen Milne and Diane K Mauzy, *Malaysian politics under Mahathir* (Routledge:London, 1999).

Table 1. Summary of apex events that led to the 2004 general elections

1978	The Star moved to Kuala Lumpur to become a national newspaper and concomitant rival to The News Straits Times
1981	Upon Hussein's resignation, Mahathir becomes prime minister and president of UMNO. Mahathir announces his "Look East" policy
1982	Anwar Ibrahim, standing as a UMNO candidate, wins a seat at the general election
1984	The Star first to reports that the Agung requested Musa Hitam (deputy minister) to apologize to him in the mosque, followed by other news carriers.
1986	Musa Hitam resigns as deputy prime minister; replaced by Ghafar Baba
1987	Government loses the prohibition of Aliran Monthly, albeit a social action periodical.
1987	Razaleigh founds a breakaway party, but Mahathir's UMNO defeats it at the general elections of 1990 and 1995
1987	The Star is suspended for 6 months and the first Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman and Dr Tan Chee koon are suspended from contributing in the columns section
1993	Anwar replaces Ghafar Baba as deputy president of UMNO and deputy prime minister
1994	Launch of second private network: Mega TV
1996	Razaleigh dissolves his party and rejoins UMNO
1996	Astro launch—the major launch of satellite television with 20 channels & 8 radio Channels
1996	Launch of MSC (Malaysian Super Corridor) Project
1997	An economic crisis severely affects Southeast Asia, including Malaysia
1998	Mahathir dismisses Anwar as Minister of Finance and as Deputy Prime Minister; Anwar expelled from UMNO, arrested and his trial begins.
1998	Mushrooming of *reformasi* websites such as Mahazalim (the Great Oppressor), Minda Rakyat (the People's Mind).
1999	Founding of Malaysiakini.com, the first independent commercial Internet website.
2001	15 top *reformasi* activists detained, including Raja Petra Kamaruddin of Free Anwar Campaign, which he runs and maintains the freeanwar.com website.
2001	Huaren Holdings (MCA Investment arm that also owns The Star) buys over Nanyang Press Sdn. Bhd. and the China Press

2003	Mahathir steps down as prime minister and passes the baton to Abdullah Badawi.
2003	The office of Malaysiakini.com raided by police.
2003	American invasion of Iraq
2004	Landslide victory by the ruling government, Barisan Nasional held on March 21, 2004.
2004	Anwar freed from jail on 2nd September, but is not be allowed to return to politics because his appeal on the supposed completion of jail term for the corruption charges was completed. He can only return to political activities in April 2008. Important to note that the 2008 elections were held on March 8.
2004	Raja Petra Kamaruddin affectionately known as RPK formed Malaysiatoday.com which gains notoriety for his columns and criticism on his blog

After the formation of Semangat 46' and its inability to garner momentum in Malaysian politics during the early 1990's, Musa vanished from politics, automatically putting Mahathir at the prime of his premiership. However, the deputy minister position was still a "hot" seat, between an aspiring young gentleman and a dainty experienced gentleman. As the Minister of Finance, Anwar Ibrahim, concomitantly a leading figure during the 1987 fallout, was vying to campaign against Ghafar Baba for the deputy minister position. His strategic campaign made him an inevitable candidate under the new ruling administration. During the 1993 triennial UMNO elections, the Wawasan Team or Vision Team that accorded Anwar Ibrahim as Deputy Minister of UMNO and the three Vice Presidents of the party, Najip Tun Razak, Muhyiddin Yassin and Muhammad Muhammad Taib was a political strategy amongst the top shots vying for the top UMNO party positions. The other fraction, Ghafar Baba, Abdullah Badawi and Sanusi Junid did not band together as cohesively as the other team. A few years later rumours were lingering whether Anwar was going to challenge Mahathir for the "hot seat" in 1996. These rumors were quickly discarded by Mahathir and Anwar as overtly expressed. After the 1996 triennial UMNO General Assembly, Ahmad Zahid Hamidi was the incumbent UMNO Youth Leader and Rafidah Aziz outweighed by Siti Zaharah for the UMNO Women

Presidency[77]. Muhiyyidin Yasin, Najib Tun Razak of the Wawasan Team and Abdullah Badawi won the vice presidency positions. It is still not confirmed whether Ahmad Zahid Hamidi was acting on his own accord or on the advice of Anwar Ibrahim when the uttered dissentient messages against Mahathir's administration criticizing the existence of "cronyism" and "nepotism", similar to the case of Suharto in June 1998.[78]

On September 2, 1998 Anwar was fired as deputy prime minister of the country and subsequently two days later as deputy minister in UMNO. The fallout between Mahathir and Anwar (who was also the Finance Minister of Malaysia) was rumored among others to be attributed by the latter's willingness to endorse the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) neoliberal fiscal-austerity prescriptions rather than Mahathir's unorthodox approach centered on currency control. Scholars contend that the decision for Anwar's dismissal was actually due to the hostility between him and Mahathir.[79]

This led to the brewing of a non-governmental organization (NGO) led reform movement eventually transcending into an opposition party. Wan Azzizah, wife to Anwar Ibrahim, would eventually form a coalition with the DAP and PAS, alongside other parties, albeit under the Barisan Alternatif (BA) or Alternative Front, adopting a common platform campaigning against "corruption, collusion and nepotism"[80]. However, Keadilan operating on electoral margins did fairly well, winning only five parliamentary seats in the 1999 elections and withered in 2004 winning 1 parliamentary seat during the general elections.[81]

Nevertheless, the Pakatan Rakyat was not the first attempt of a coalition party in Malaysia. There were five of such attempts prior

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77   Khoo Boo Teik, "Democracy and Transition in Malaysia: An Analysis of the Problems of Political Succession," *Macalester International*, [database online] vol. 12, no. 11 (2002).

78   Ibid.

79   William Case, Politics beyond Anwar: what's new?, *Asian Journal of Political Science*, vol.27, no.1 (1999): 1-19; Jason, P. Abbott, "Vanquishing Banquo's ghost: the Anwar Ibrahim affair.

80   Jason, P. Abbott, "Vanquishing Banquo's ghost: the Anwar Ibrahim affair.

81   Abdul Rashid Moten, "2004 and 2008 General Elections in Malaysia .

to the before the GE 12.[82] The fourth of which was between the DAP and Semangat 46' under the Gagasan Rakyat (Malaysia's People Front) and the PAS in the Angkatan Perpaduan Umah (APU) or the Muslim Community Unity Movement.[83] The inability of Semangat 46' to make inroads in Malaysian politics, coupled with the Gagasan being disbanded in 1995 and APU in 1996, and most intrinsically Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah jumping ships to join UMNO alongside his counterparts, led to an inevitable displacement of the third attempt of an opposition coalition.[84]

The fifth attempt for a coalition was the BA. However, the BA and the DAP were not able to make inroads during the 2010 general election in Malaysia, forging a greater push by PAS for greater Islamization policies by the party, forcing the exit of the DAP from the BA in 2001[85]. The formation of such a coalition was deferred from its erstwhile attempts as the distribution of parliamentary seats among the opposition parties was in favor of the Malay-led, multiracial and moderate party, PKR, acting as the balance of power between the ethnic based DAP and PAS.[86]

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82   Ong (2010) argues that this was the third attempt by the opposition. In fact there were five such attempts before the GE 12. The first of such an attempt was by Partai Rakyat (later the Partai Sosialis Rakyat Malaysia) and the Labor Party that was handicapped by being suspected of being a front for communist representation and to garner the support of the Chinese and Malay because the former was rural based and had the support of the Malays while the later was urban based and had the support of the Chinese (Milne and Mauzy, 1999). The second attempt was after the inclusion of Singapore and the results of the general elections after Malaysia was formed (two more elections were held in 1955 and 1959 under Malaya, before the inclusion of Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore in September 1963). After the unimpressive results of the elections, the PAP decided to hold unofficial talks for the promulgation of 'Malaysian Malaysia', henceforth forming the Malaysian Solidarity National Conference, together with the People's Progressive Party of Malaya, the United Labour Party (ULP) and pivotal parties in Sabah and Sarawak to form a cohesive and comprehensive opposition front (Vasil, 1965). The DAP, PPP and Gerakan formed an electoral pact prior to the 1969 general elections, spurring the surprise win for the opposition.

83   Kim Hong Khong, *Malaysia's General Election 1990: Continuity, Change, and Ethnic Politics*, (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies: Singapore, 1991).

84   In Won Hwang, *Personalized Politics: The Malaysian State under Mahathir*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003).

85   Patricia Martinez, "Malaysia in 2001: an interlude of consolidation", *Asian Survey*, vol. 42, no. 1 (2002): 133–140.

86   Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 411.

3.2 BN Curtailment Mechanisms of the Printing Press and Broadcast Channels

The rise of the Internet as a means was due to the curtailment laws that restrict alternative viewpoints. Raja Aziz Addruse[87], the former chairman of the Malaysian Bar Council argues that the Official Secrets Act (OSA) is a hindrance for freedom of speech and citizens' right to discourse on government misconduct and incompetence[88]. Under the vague OSA provisions, any documents labeled an 'official secret' cannot be revealed to the public, thus, providing the government muscle to prevent anything deemed 'secret' being released to the public. The Internal Security Act (ISA) introduced by the British during the colonization periods, is still used as a mechanism to incarcerate political dissidents for extensive periods. An example of the the use of this draconian law was during the Operasi Lalang (Operation Lalang) in 1987 when political dissidents, members of advocacy groups and religious bodies were incarcerated without proper court proceedings.

The Printing Presses and Publications Act of 1984 provides enormous powers to the minister for home affairs fiat to grant or to withdraw printing licenses. Asian Wall Street Journal was suspended for three months in 1986 for unveiling the Bank Bumiputra Finance which was intriguingly linked to the ruling government. Dailies such as The Star and Sin Chew Jit Poh, and the Watan (Malay bi-weekly) had their licenses revoked for six months in 1987. Malaysia as a developing country embraced the potentials of Information Technology by launching the National Technology Agenda (NITA) and Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).[89] Other curtailment laws include the Sedition Act, Defamation Act, Communications and Multimedia Act. Renong Group (before Renong the newspapers were owned by Fleet

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87   Raja Aziz Addruse, "The Erosion of Press Freedom", in *Media Watch: The Use and Abuse of the Malaysian Press*, ed. Kua Kia Soong, (The Resource and Research Centre. Kuala Lumpur, 1990).

88   Addrusse further contends that "in a democracy no government can claim to be a credible government if it seeks to operate in secrecy. A government in a democracy must be prepared to account for its actions and to subject its acts and policies to public scrutiny and discussion", 24.

89   M. Rozhan Idrus and Hanafi Atan, "Closing the Digital Divide in Malaysia – Catching Them Young," *Malaysian Online Journal of Instructional Technology (MOJIT)*, vol. 1, no. 1, (2004): 33-40.

Group), a UMNO controlled group, owns the Utusan Melayu and The News Straits Times.[90] Whilst Huarem Holdings (investment arm of MCA) owns The Star and MIC owns the Indian medium national circulations. The Broadcasting Act, which licenses and controls broadcast activity, providing the relevant minister powers to dictate licensees in broadcast matters.[91] RTM (Radio Televisyen Malaysia), runs two terrestrial television channels in Malaysia and has denied opposition party interviews.[92] The introduction of *Sistem Televisyen Malaysia* in 1985 did little to shed a more liberal media vehicle in Malaysia as it was controlled by Fleet Group, which happened to be an investment arm of UMNO. The mid-90's marked speculations of an "open sky" policy by the ruling coalition when cable and satellite was introduced to Malaysia, but the government legislated to restrict the size of the satellite dish to prevent reception from outside the country. Only license for domestic satellite television was permitted to a government linked conglomerate, while similarly cable television was permitted to a politically linked businessman as in the case of licenses of two more terrestrial channels.[93]

3.3 The tidings of a miscalculated policy

The "Father of Modernity", Mahathir Mohammad was the driving force behind embracing the promising technology and possibilities of the Internet to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) to achieve his developmetalist Wawasan 2020 (Vision 2020). Nevertheless, it was never imagined that the Internet would pose a potential political threat in years to come. The MSC "Bill of Guarantees" included a pledge for non-censorship of the Internet. During the periods of street protests in October to December 1998 a plethora of vociferous *reformasi* websites surged in the Internet domain. Most interesting was Malaysiakini.com, Malaysia's first news portal that was set up in 1999 with funding

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90   Edmund Terence Gomez and Jomo Kwame Sundram*, Malaysia's Political Economy: Politics, patronage and profits*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

91   Graham Brown, "Democratization and Communication in Asia".

92   Justifying it as "the official channel of the government of the day [which] conveys official information to the people" (Dewan Rakyat Report, 1999, 4).

93   Naim Zaharom, "The structure of the media industry: implications for democracy" in *Democracy in Malaysia: Discourses and Practices*, eds Loh Kok Wah and Khoo Boo Teik (Richmond, UK: Curzon, 2002).

from overseas foundations in support for more democratization and transparency and liberalization of the media. Another Internet site was the freeanwar.com blog managed by Raja Petra Kamaruddin. After a crackdown on Malaysiakini.com in December 2002, freeanwar.com moved to Australia and malaysiakini.com was given a firm warning.[94] The dissidents of Anwar Ibrahim's camp were the impetus in cyberpolitics. The trajectory of the Internet was a means to an end, the end being getting their voices heard. However, a benign gentleman was chosen by Mahathir to replace him as the Malaysian premier on October 2003. The war on terror and the United States invasion of Iraq arguably played a role in the Malaysian political spectrum where the majority of voters are Malay Muslims. Hence, issues that were portrayed on the cyberpolitical spectrum in Malaysia shifted from domesticated affairs to international affairs.

Therefore, the sentiments that circulated the Malaysian blogspehre were centered on Islam and other religiously inclined issues. As a result, most Malay dominant constituencies were won over by the Barisan Nasional[95]. Most importantly this election was held in the absence of Anwar Ibrahim, who as exhibited prior to this, was the cause of the Internet dissent mechanism. This simmered the proliferation of a domesticized cyberpolitical war for a short period. It can be argued that the events that transpired between the 2004 and 2008 general elections spurred the second wave of cyberpolitics, as scrutinized below.

4. The Brewing of the next Cyberpolitical Storm

The choice of the fifth prime minister of Malaysia proved to be pivotal during the balloting. His milder and more moderate tone and personality[96] was well accepted by the Malaysian populous.

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94   Graham Brown, "Democratization and Communication in Asia".

95   Mohamad Marzuki, "Malaysia's 2004 General Elections: Spectacular Victory, Continuing Tensions," *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies*, vol. 19 no. 2 (2004): 25-53.

96   Sivamurugan (2010) provides a deeper analysis of Badawi's leadership style, with a retrospective analysis of the latter's upbringing and its influence on the fifth prime minister.

Sivamurugan[97] argues that consensus, accommodation and participation are the characteristics of Badawi's leadership style and this was a hindrance for him to remain in control. Nevertheless, the choice of Badawi was arguably a wise choice as the results of the general election reveal. Keadilan won only one seat during the 2004 general election, a parliamentary seat that the wife of Anwar Ibrahim won in his former constituency. This general election proved to be the biggest victory of all for the ruling government[98].

Badawi faced several impediments during his tenure as prime minister. The Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission were not established as he persevered with resistance from senior police officials. His Oxford-educated son-in-law was in the limelight a lot. After causing a stir with Mahathir, by cancelling some of latter's pet projects, Badawi's predecessor embarked on a string of attacks against the fifth prime minister by insinuating that the "Fouth Floor Boys" – referring to Khairy Jamaluddin and his circle – were actually "running" the country.[99] Mahathir continued to correct Badawi on his blog Chedet.com. Mahathir was not Badawi's only problem in the blogsphere. Several ethnosectarian issues, as in the case of conversion to Islam for marriage purposes, and renouncing the religion were considered not properly addressed. Scandals such as the Port Klang Free Trade Zone (PKFZ) and a member of the Selangor State Assembly building a mansion for himself without the requisite municipal approval were prevalent during Badawi's administration[100]. Several politicians and a minister were implicated in the murder of a Mongolian model, making headlines in the blogs. On November 10, 2007 a rally was held when 26 NGO's and five opposition political parties formed a coalition for Clean and Fair Election (known as BERSIH) demanding immediate reform on at least three issues: the use of inedible ink, the

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97   Pandian Sivamurugan, Omar Rusdi and Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani, "Work with Me, Not for Me: Malaysia under Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (2003-2009)", *Asian Culture and History, Canadian Center of Science and Education*, vol. 2, no. 1, (2010): 97-107.

98   The BN "won 62.37 percent of the popular votes, 4.430,908 ballots out of 7.10 million who cast their votes, and 90.4 percent of the seats in Malaysia" (Ong, 2010).

99   James Chin, "Malaysia's Electoral Upheaval ".

100   Abdul Rashid Moten, "2004 and 2008 General Elections in Malaysia" .

abolition of postal voting and the cleansing of the electoral role[101]. November 25, 2007 marked another event in Malaysian politics when the Indian community, under the Hindu Rights Action Force (HINDRAF), held a rally to demand their rights. The police managed to calm the situation and five of the leaders were charged under ISA. Another issue perplexing the Malaysian public was the rise of fuel prices by 20 cents in 2005 and by 90 cents in 2006. The Malaysian populous was further disheartened by the developments that were pervasively transpiring and the blogs were quick to respond to make allegations and contentious remarks. Furthermore, to the despair of the Malaysian populous, it was well established that the ruling government owns the media, displayed in the tables below.

Figure 1. The NSTP corporate structure in 1990
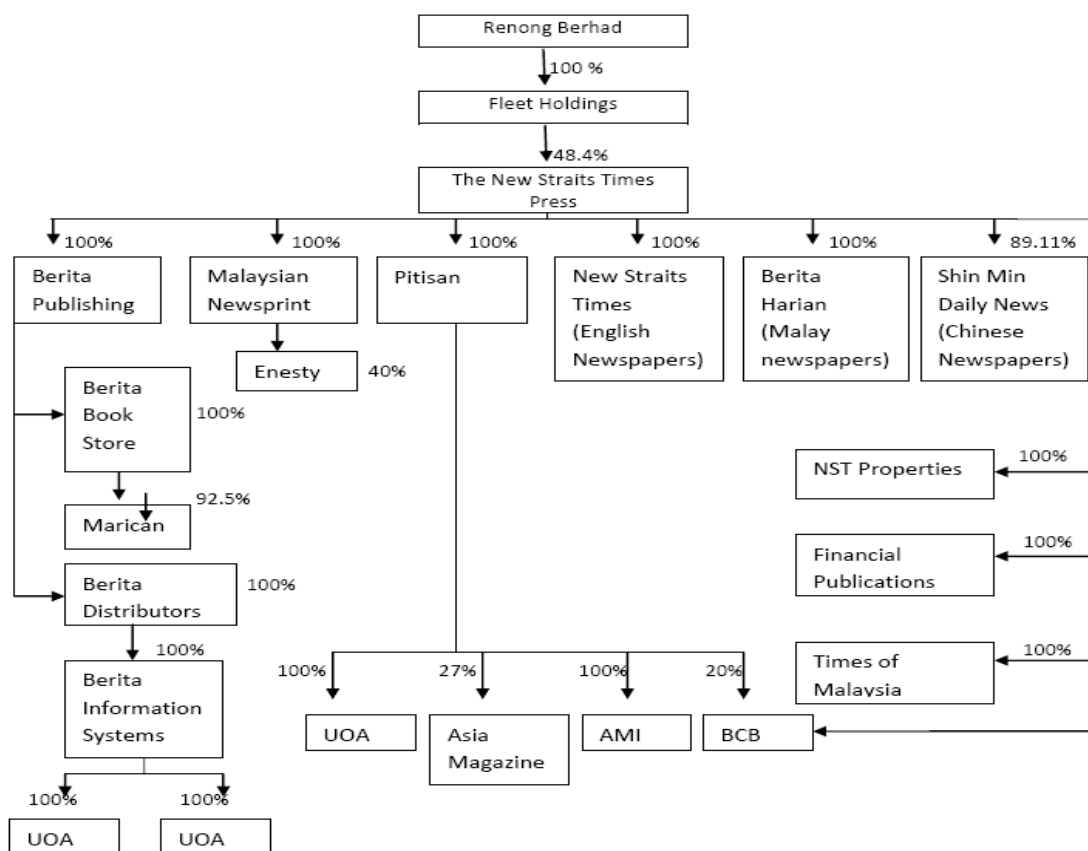
Source: Edmund Terrence Gomez, *Politics in Business: UMNO's Corporate Investments* (Forum, Kuala Lumpur, 1992), 92.

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101   Ibid.

Figure 2. TV3 corporate structure
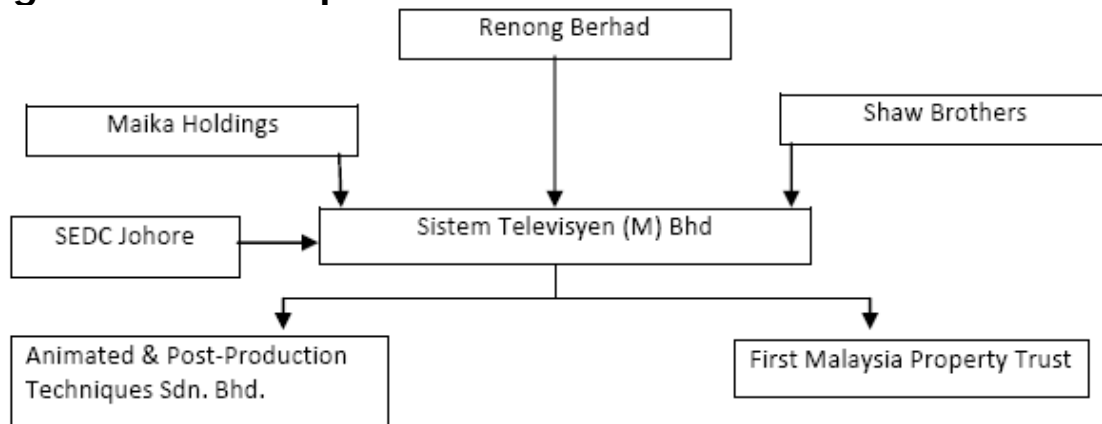
Source: Edmund Terrence Gomez, *Political Business: Corporate Involvement of Malaysian Political Parties* (James Cook University of North Queensland, Australia, 1994), 82

A survey conducted by the Merdeka Centre for Independent Opinion[102] during the periods after the elections found that the Malaysian populous was perturbed by the lack of independence of the media in Malaysia, as indicated below.

Figure 3. The Distribution of Answers about Media Ownership
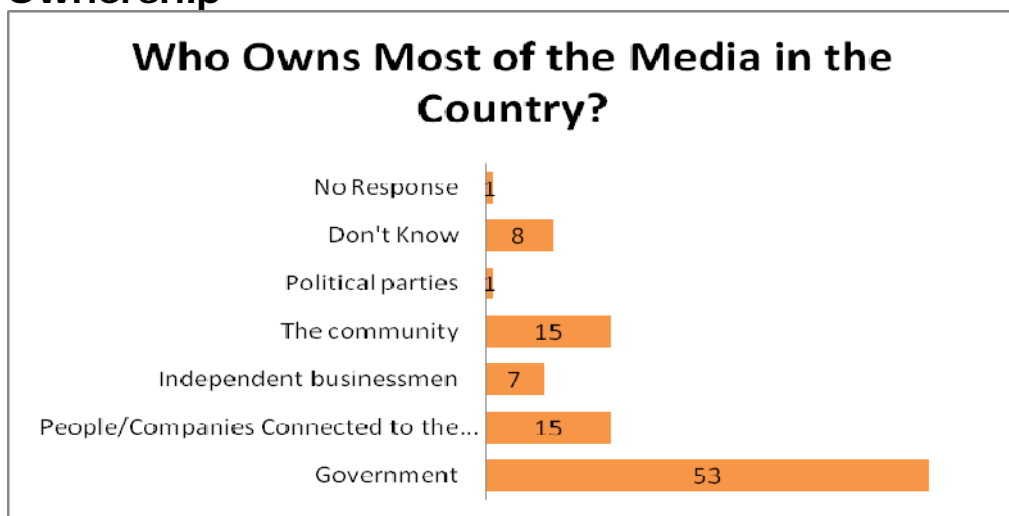
Source: Centre for Independent Journalism

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102   The Merdeka Centre for Independent Opinion is an opinion research firm established to concentrate the capabilities of a team of dedicated social scientists and professionals in the field of economics, political science, communications, marketing management and civil society.

The survey also concluded that the mainstream media was biased towards the ruling government in Malaysia.

Figure 4. The Distribution of Reporting Perceptions during Election Day
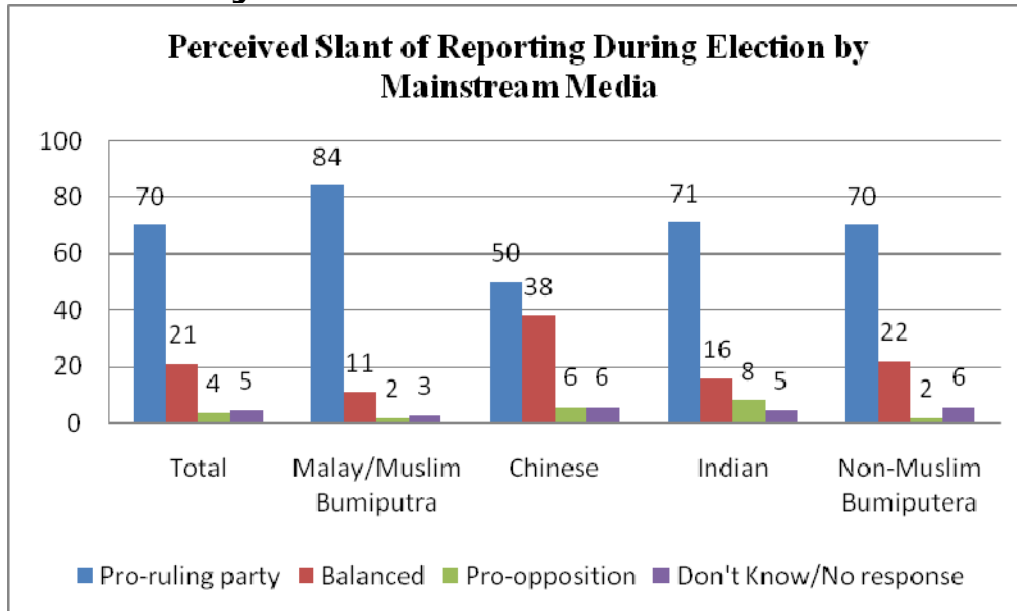
Source: Centre for Independent Journalism

Hence, based on the indications provided above, we can make an assumption that Internet played to significant role in the outcome of the general election in 2008, in support of prior studies of the Malaysian political arena[103]. This revolution did have significant outcomes on the 2008 general election, as discussed below.

5. The 2008 General Election Internet Revolution:

While scholars and observers alike may differ on the determinant role of knowledge, everyone agrees that we have already embarked on a transformation of such pervasive importance that it may be compared to the agricultural revolution (independently in different parts of the world around 8,000 B.C.) or of the Industrial Revolution of

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103   Abdul Rashid Moten, "2004 and 2008 General Elections in Malaysia… ; Graham Brown, "Democratization and Communication in Asia … ; Jason P. Abbott, "The Internet, reform and democratization in Malaysia", in *The State of Malaysia: Ethnicity, Equity and Reform* ed. Edmund Terence Gomez (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004); James Chin, "Malaysia's Electoral Upheaval " .

eighteenth-century Europe. And, if "knowledge is power," as is commonly believed, then the global economy at the end of the twentieth century is increasingly reliant on the use of cyberspace facilities for fueling the world economy and accelerating transformation of knowledge into power.[104]

The March 2008 general election (GE) was a bruise on the face of the Malaysian political landscape, as it was the first time since independence that the ruling coalition, known as Barisan Nasional (BN) or National Front, lost its two-thirds parliamentary majority that endowed coalition leaders to change the constitution at will. Paramount to the 2008 GE was the opposition's ability to win control of five of the thirteen state governments. Adding injury to the wounded tiger was the loss of parliamentary seats by three presidents of the BN component parties: the long serving President of the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), Samy Vellu, President of Gerakan and Chief Minister of Pulau Pinang, Koh Tsu Koon, and the President of the Peoples Progressive Party (PPP) and Deputy Minister M. Kayveas.[105] The list of casualties includes ministers such as Shahrizat Jalil, Zainuddin Maidin and Aziz Shamsuddin and several former deputy ministers, including UMNO's Zainal Abidin Zin, MCA's Fu Ah Kiow, Gerakan's Chia Kwang Chye and MIC's K. Sothinathan. The Pakatan Rakyat (PR) or People's Pact was a coalition between the Parti Rakyat Malaysia (PKR) or Malaysian People's Party, the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and Parti Se-Islam Malaysia (PAS). The coalition building was necessitated to rule four out of five states (excluding Kelantan, as it has been won by PAS with an absolute majority to form a government since 1990) as none of the opposition parties won an absolute majority to form state governments in the four states. As highlighted by James Chin[106]:

> The opposition's state-level victories may be its most impressive feats. Fully 43 percent of Malaysia's registered voters live in the five states that elected opposition governments, and two of the five – Penang and Selangor –

104   Nazli Choucri, "Introduction: CyberPolitics in International Relations" .

105   Tunku Mohar Mohktar, "The Twelfth General Elections in Malaysia", *Intellectual Discourse*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2008): 89-100.

106   James Chin, "Malaysia's Electoral Upheaval " .

are the richest in the country. Opposition notched a near-sweep in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur (which is located geographically within Selangor), and now fill all but one of the capital territory's eleven House seats.

Thus, this paper contends that the Internet was the impetus to the disheartening of the Malaysian populous. The Malaysian populous is concentrated, with most of its citizenry living in developed states such as Penang, Johor, Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. These states are generally more developed and access to the Internet is available through broadband and dial-up services, which are readily accessible through a magnitude of avenues. The most accessible to the general public are the cybercafés.

6. The by-elections: What does it spell out?

The first of the by-elections was held for the parliamentary seat in Permatang Pauh. Wan Azizah who held the seat in the 1999, 2004 and 2008 GE, emptied the seat for Anwar Inbrahim to be re-appointed in the constituency in August 2008[107]."Umno can claim a moral victory," according to a Monash University Malaysia political scientist Prof James Chin[108] with reference to the Manik Urai by-election. Nevertheless, it can be argued that after one former aide to the current prime minister made racial remarks on the two major races in Malaysia, it had an impact on the eleventh by-election held in Sarawak. The perplexities of the word God when translated into Malay lingered in the minds of the predominantly Chinese Christians in Sibu, Sarawak. Though there was a ban on the word "Allah" by the home minister in 2007, there was a sudden uproar when it was used again in the Herald (Catholic Newspaper), followed by the confiscation 15,000 copies in which the word "Allah" was used. In December 2009, after the Kuala Lumpur High Court overruled the earlier ban, there were

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107   This seat was held by Anwar before he was sacked and incarcerated in 1998.

108   Zedeck Siew, "PAS's slim victory in Manik Urai," *The Nutgraph*, 15 July, 2009, [database on-line]; Available at http://www.thenutgraph.com/pass-slim-victory-in-manik-urai in 29 May 2010.

Table 2. Summary of the by-election results after the March 2008 General Election

No	Constituency Name	Ethnic Composition	Incumbent	Winner	Change in popular vote for winning part (%)
1	Permatang Pauh (P)	69% M, 25% C, 6% I	Pakatan-PKR	Pakatan-PKR	66.8% from 64.2%
2	Kuala Terengganu (P)	88% M, 11% C, 1% I	BN-UMNO	Pakatan-PAS	51.95% from 48.9%
3	Bukit Gantang (P)	64% M, 27% C, 9% I	Pakatan-PAS	Pakatan-PAS	53.8% from 50.9%
4	Batang Ai (S)	95%Iban, 4%C, 1%C	BN-PRS	BN-PRS	65.6% from 57.0%
5	Bukit Selambau (S)	50%M, 19% C, 1% I, 1% O	Pakatan-PKR	Pakatan-PKR	52.8% from 52.2%
6	Penanti (S)	73% M, 24% C, 3% I	Pakatan-PKR	Pakatan-PKR	86.5% from 58.9%
7	Manek Urai (S)	99% M, 1% O	Pakatan-PAS	Pakatan-PAS	50.3% from 57.0%
8	Permatang Pasir (S)	72% M, 26% C, 1% I, 1% O	Pakatan-PAS	Pakatan-PAS	65.5% from 66.4%
9	Bagan Pinang (S)	63% M, 11% C, 21% I, 5% O	BN-UMNO	BN-UMNO	75.7% from 61.1%
10	Hulu Selangor (P)	53% M, 26 I, 19% I	Pakatan-PKR	BN-MIC	51.7% from 49.8%
11	Sibu (P)	67% C, others 33%	BN-SUPP	PKR-DAP	50.5% from 45%

Source: Ong, K. M.(2010) 'Pakatan Rakyat: What is Different This Time?', The Round Table, Routledge, London 99:407, 141-152

demonstrations and arson attacks on more than 10 churches. [109]
It can be contended that this made an impact on the majority of voters. Interestingly, most blogs were enthusiastically debating the issues that were religiously inclined. Rumors of dissatisfaction on the part of the ruling government's unfulfilled promises were also partially a factor. The opposition was no different in insinuating racial remarks, as in the case of Jeff Ooi, Member of Parliament, Jelutong[110]. He has since made a public apology for his aici lipseste ceva, poate este in versiunea precedenta.
and Elections Commissions of Malaysia.

Figure 5. Tabulation of Change in Voting Patterns of the Parti Rakyat (with the exception of Penanti)
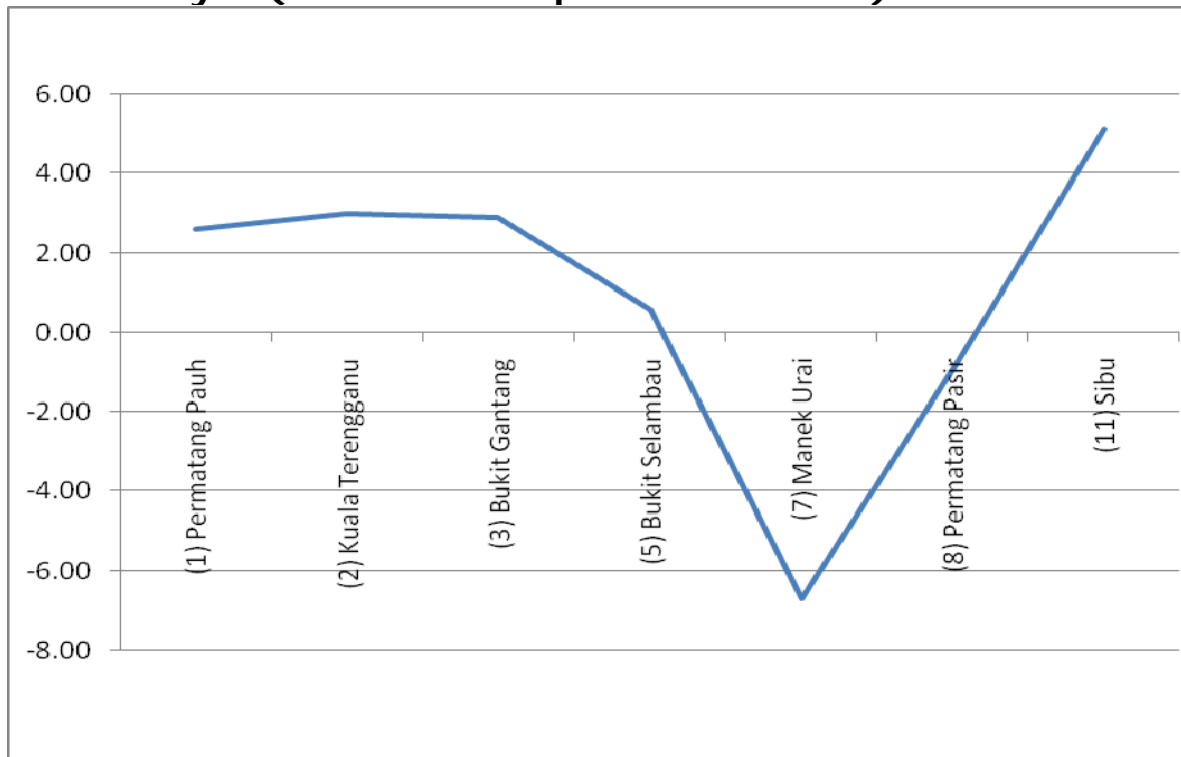
1 09   Anwar Ibrahim, "Muslims have no monopoly over 'Allah'", *Wall Street Journal*, 2010 [database on-line]; Available at http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704375604575023813383421900.html?mod¼googlenews_wsj last accessed in 25 May 2010; Baradan Kuppusamy, "Can Christians say 'Allah'? In Malaysia, Muslims say no", *Time*, 8 January 2010, [database on-line]; Available at http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1952497 last accessed in 26 May 2010; Robert Piggott, "Malaysia withholds 'Allah Bibles'", *BBC News*, 4 November 2009, [database on-line]; Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/8343626.stm. Last accessed in 26 May 2010.

110   Kian Ming Ong, "Pakatan Rakyat: What is Different This Time?," *The Round Table, Routledge*, London vol. 99, no. 407 (2010): 141-152.

remarks. It is noteworthy that his comments were stipulated on blogs, especially the pro-BN websites. The table below shows the by-elections that were in held Malaysia with the exception of Hulu Selangor and Sibu.

Figure 5 and Table 2 suggest that there was a decline in majority vote for the opposition party with reference to the by-elections. A major decline is noticed during the by-election in Manek Urai, Kelantan. Most importantly, the by-elections saw the opposition winning eight out of eleven by elections. 73 percent winning ration translates to a big victory for the opposition parties in Malaysia. However, they were only able to win two parliamentary seats from the ruling government. Whereas the ruling government was able to take the Hulu Selangor parliamentary seat from the opposition party. Closer scrutiny of the by-elections after excluding the spoilt votes and votes of independent parties reveals that the Pakatan Rakyat has still an uphill task in gaining momentum for the next general elections. It also reveals that Anwar's promise of failed switchovers irked the Malaysian populous to form a shadow cabinet was never fulfilled. The figures reveal a downhill trend since Bukit Gantang. Will the momentum continue for the Pakatan Rakyat? It is argued that the East Malaysian political landscape is different from the Peninsula[111]. East Malaysian voters are more concerned with issues that are relatively domesticated (peninsula Malaysia being perceived as the others), arguably due to economic circumstances and unfulfilled promises.[112] Hence, excluding the Sibu by-elections, it could be construed that the opposition is not doing as well as most people perceive, according to the anaalysis used in this study. Nu stiu de ce au inceput notele de la inceput.

Hence, it is contended that it was a cyberpolitical war as the ruling government and opposition were quick to debate on insolated issues, while character assassination was at its best during the by-elections. An example was the Hulu Selangor by-

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111   James Chin and Arnold Puyok, "Going Against the Tide: Sabah and the 2008 Malaysian General Election", Asian Politics & Policy, Wiley Interscience, vol. 2, no. 2 (2010): 219–235.

112   "Local issues cost Barisan Sibu seat", *The Star*, (May 18, 2010), [database on-line]; Available at http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/5/18/sibu/20100518150002&sec=sibu. Last accessed in May 25, 2010.

election, when Zaid Ibrahim from the opposition was accused of alcohol drinking lost the by-election, arguably costing him the parliamentary seat.[9] His supporters were also prompt in defending Zaid Ibrahim on their blogs, claiming that he indulged in immoral activities while he was still part of UMNO. This is exemplary of cyberpolitics and its active role in the Malaysian political sphere. Further empirical analysis would be necessary for sociologists and political scientists wanting to gauge the actual impact of cyberpolitics in Malaysia.

7. Conclusions

As discussed in the previous sections, the turn of events during the 80's led to the rise and fall of certain key political figures. Most importantly were the rise of Mahathir and Anwar Ibrahim and the fall of Semangat 46' led by Razaleigh Hamzah and Musa Hitam. The importance of the media control in Malaysia can be seen during the 1990 general elections when Razaleigh was shown using a peculiar hat on which resembled a cross. The cross was a Kadazan symbol and not Christian symbol, and was worn by members of Team A in Sabah, but due to obvious reasons it was never highlighted during the elections in the Utusan newspapers, similar to the kind of limelight that was shed on Razaleigh. Nevertheless, Mahathir's fondness of Anwar grew stronger and in due time, he quickly became a protégé of the former. As a result, Anwar became Deputy President of UMNO and Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia in 1993.

The fallout between Mahathir and Anwar was due to several reasons, nevertheless it led to the former's incarceration and political career freeze. This was momentous for the birth of *reformasi* and cyberpolitics in Malaysia. Through arrests and subjugation of the press, the fire that was ignited was kept cold for a while. The international highlights that were garnering much attention in cyberpolitics during the 2004 general elections such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks and America's invasion of Iraq were contributory to the outcomes of the electoral outcomes. Domestically, Mahathir resigned as prime minister and passed the baton to Abdullah Badawi, who was portrayed by the media as a clean and determined figure to fight against corruption. This was

the reason for the decline of cyberpolitics in Malaysia during the 2004 general elections.

Cyberspace is increasingly becoming a vital source of socialization and information seeking. It has proved to spur the interest in two waves of political uproar in the Malaysian political scene. In ten years, it has made a once irrelevant Internet newspaper a leader in alternative news portal (malaysiakini.com). The impact it had in the Malaysian political sphere can be overtly seen during the *reformasi* movement, HINDRAF and BERSIH rallies. Added with that, five well-known bloggers were elected to parliament during the 2008 general elections, furthering the argument that it was a victory for the power of online media.

The results of the general election may be a revolt against "the increasing fragmentation of the ethnic communities" along side the emergence of "new politics" going beyond ethnic politics ignited through the Anwar led-*reformasi* movement in 1998. The two coalition or two-party system is found in many democracies, including the United States and Canada.

Nevertheless, an analysis on the by-elections suggests that the opposition may be losing the cyberpolitical war. A retrospect analysis done proved that the opposition through Anwar Ibrahim as a figure of democracy was able to use the Internet to gain vital votes during the 2008 GE. Ironically, winning 8 out of 11 by-elections was not enough proof that the opposition had won credibility in the Malaysian populous. With the exception of Sibu, the tabulation suggests that the Malaysian populous will just re-elect the BN.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Norbert Götz and Jörg Hackman (eds,), *Civil Society in the Baltic Sea Region* **(Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003).**

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Civil Society in the Baltic Sea Region is a collection of articles on civil society as a national and border-crossing concept, and a combination of theoretical and empirical study and analysis. It is informative, broad, analytical, hopeful and inspiring, albeit somewhat unclear at times. It is a relevant study in times of European integration, globalisation and increasing potential for non-state action, and a good addition to the study of civil society. In its first chapter the book states that its purpose is not to be just another contribution to the theory of civil society, but that it first and foremost aims to provide empirical material for comparative analysis. And this, it does. However, it also claims to aim to inspire theorizing, and does quite a bit of it itself too. Mentioning the first chapter again, "Civil society in the Baltic Sea region: towards a hybrid theory" is the best and most comprehensive theoretical input of the book, introducing "a theory of civil society as a hybrid and fuzzy society" which "rather than representing a clear-cut sphere – will appear as a perspective on society at large, focusing on private, non-commercial networks and initiatives in the public realm, which are connected to features of 'civility'" (p. 5).

The second and third parts of the book concentrate on facts and realities of civil society from historical and contemporary perspectives. Part 5, "Limits of civil society" is an enlightening contribution which, partly does what it says on the tin, i.e. elaborates on the limits of civil society, e.g. in the case of the Russian mafia and the partial ethnic exclusion from civil society in the Baltic states. However, it also adds to the notion that civil society is a reflection of society at large. The historical and contemporary account of Swedish child day-care shows how civil initiatives have functioned as substitutes to public welfare, and

how the former has influenced the latter and how the latter has supported the former. To this reviewer it remains unclear why the chapter is placed under the heading "Limits of civil society", as the development between the civil and public initiatives, arguably implies a limitation of the state, or, simply, a relatively smooth relationship between civil society and the state. Child day-care, as presented here, thus exemplifies a hybrid of state and civil society-led effort, which may be regarded as a partial reflection of Swedish society. As is pointed out numerous times throughout the book, the Northern societies have not seen the antagonistic relationship between civil society and the state, as Eastern societies have.

The chapter on the Russian mafia is undoubtedly a good illustration of how the emergence and function of the mafia as a slightly unusual "civil" initiative and generator of trust and security reflects a flawed relationship between different actors in Russian society, especially between businesses and the state. However, this "civil society" is also a kind of reverse reflection of what the Russian society is not, and the mafia in this way constitutes a substitute for the regulations and structures that sustain trust and functioning relationships between different actors in society (state, businesses etc.).

The last section of the book, on trans-national cooperation on the civil level is an inspiring elaboration on cross-border civil society, progress and improvement. This is illustrated partly as a necessary "traditional" development for the sake of survival and strength, such as in the case of the Saami people of Norway, Sweden and Finland, who have had to cross borders in order to unite against years of discrimination. The potential of cross-border civil cooperation is also explained as a so-called "post-civil" (p. 238) phenomena where, in the globalised world in which we live, regional and international civil society overtakes the relationships and priorities of and between states. In the very last paragraph it asks "what would the outcome be once the 'civil' is thought of in post-binary terms, without the burden of state-related concerns?" (p. 238). And again, the very existence and expansion of regional and transnational civil cooperation reflects the regional and international society at large, fuzzy and

intertwined, on so many levels. The trans-national perspective underlines the character of civil society as a large, changeable and not an immediately definable concept. The book does very well in illustrating this, through the spread of sub-topics within the topic covered.

There is, however, something confusing about the book, especially when it comes back to theorizing or defining civil society. For example, chapter 2 discusses three different approaches to understanding civil society: a general conceptual framework; analyzing different civil societies in the context of different political cultures, and approaching the relevant region as one and identify common social and political problems. The author also states a clear preference among the approaches, favoring the latter. Firstly, in the spirit of the book, it seems unnecessary to grade the different approaches, as they by no means are mutually exclusive and as they all serve a perfectly valid purpose. A common conceptual framework or theory certainly does not hurt, as long as it is inclusive and flexible. And the importance and relevance of political culture in understanding civil society, including at the regional level, is repeatedly pointed out elsewhere in the book. Secondly, it seems somewhat premature to focus on civil society as a regional phenomenon only.

Moreover, and in connection with the above mentioned confusion, the book could perhaps have done with a conclusion, if for no other reason than to re-state and re-clarify some theoretical suggestions about civil society.

However, essentially lacking an introduction, this book does not promise anything. In the first chapter it states: "With its empirical approach, this publication even aims to inspire theorizing. Despite numerous differences in the perception and understanding of civil society, we are convinced of a common theory implicit in these articles, as suggested by regional experience; namely, a theory of civil society as a hybrid and fuzzy society" (p. 5). Essentially, this is exactly what it does. However, it might be suggested that the individual chapters have more value as free-standing articles, and maybe that is, first and foremost, how they should be read.

Melissa S. William and Jeremy Waldron (eds.), *Toleration and Its Limits* **(Nomos XLVIII Yearbook of the American Society for Political and Legal Philosophy) (New York: New York University Press, 2008).**

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Toleration, alongside many other recent and not so recent terms like multiculturalism or respect for values of others, is a contemporary catchword dear to everyone's hearts with (almost) everyone having different idea of what the word entails in practice. Those who would like to justify the status quo as well as those looking to get their own way and/or normalize unpopular or previously unaccepted practices are all raising the flag of toleration in furtherance of their goals.

The collection of essays *Toleration and Its Limits,* edited by Melissa S. Williams and Jeremy Waldron, includes contributions of a host of renowned names in political science, philosophy, and legal theory. Editors profess that they will not fully answer the question of why toleration and its limits has suddenly became such a debated issue, yet reasons are obvious: the state of affairs in a post 9/11 world and immigration issues in Europe (almost implying the world was a rather peaceful place before said events). From there on, both temporally and geographically (with some exceptions), the essays aim at re-examining the question of normative and epistemological sources of toleration and (more importantly) its practical limits; theoretical and practical virtues and vices of toleration as such; and its relationship as a concept and practice to other ideals of human society like justice, legal equality and images of life worth living.

The book is organized around four thematic parts. Toleration as a concept in the western canon of political philosophy is discussed in the first part. There, Jeremy Waldron discusses Hobbes' perspective of a desirable state-governed public religious worship without a distinctly modern sensitivity and calls for neutrality and "all worldviews included" chuspah. Michael Rosenthal and Rainer Forst analyze the position of toleration in works of Spinoza and

Pierre Bayle, respectively, whereas Alex Tuckness focuses on the universalisation argument in Locke's *Letters on Toleration* and treatises on government. This is followed by Glyn Morgan's analysis of J.S. Mill's "no harm" and "other-regarding action" principles as commonly and somewhat mistakenly, assumed foundations for the toleration of unpopular practices. Instead of the two said principles, Morgan argues, Mill held that security and equality are *the* criteria for differentiating tolerable from intolerable – hence Mill is again happily a good guide for resolving contemporary problems.

In the second part, with contributions of David Heyd, Kathryn Abrams and Andrew Sabl, the position of toleration as a political and moral virtue in both theory and practice is analyzed. The authors devote much attention to the incommensurability of values and the demographics of value pluralism, as well as the interrelationship between value holders, which tends to fluctuate from indifference to mutual engagement.

In the third part, a renowned law and religion scholar, Steven D. Smith, criticizes what he thinks is an "ultraliberal" stance in contemporary (American) politics, law and public discourse, arguing that the rhetorically professed liberal commitment to "neutrality" between value systems (notably religious and nonreligious ones) produces a somewhat schizophrenic split between personal and public, causing "impoverishment" and ultimately confusion and disorientation in the legal arena and politics. Reiner Forst resists Smith's thesis on epistemological grounds by contrasting worlds of "faith knowledge" to "reason knowledge." Unsurprisingly, Forst allows the latter into the public sphere while leaving the former out as inaccessible to everyone, though Forst does not explain fully what to do with persons holding to the first type of knowledge, especially if they are many. Glyn Morgan, responding to Smith, argues that no "impoverishment" of religious life has been noted in a contemporary democracy such as the US, allegations of "ultraliberalism" notwithstanding, and in fact, Morgan argues, things seem to be moving in opposite direction. Finally, Lawrence Alexander shares comments on all three essays, wondering

whether the idea of toleration belongs to a moral map rather than a "purely" political or practical one.

The nexus between toleration, politics and the individual and group identity is analyzed in part four of the book. Ingrid Creppell's argument for the toleration between conflicting identities on the principle of "mutuality" – a willingness to relate to each other - is countered by Glen Newey, who thinks (using Northern Ireland as an example) that good fences make good neighbors and that, in the presence of a Hobbesian sovereign, opposing identities living next to each other rather than with each other is best we can hope for (what he terms "murality"). Noah Feldman examines the relationship between self-interest, politics of toleration and morality in the messy world of Iraq, showing that the sincere knowledge of what toleration implies does not necessarily bent before self-interest, even if that entails a path towards joint destruction. Finally, in a most interesting essay, Wendy Brown shows, relying on Foucault, that toleration itself can become a tool of governance paradoxically producing the opposite of what it's meant to be on any commonsensical definition of toleration.

The book is well written, rich with details and raises many pertinent questions. Its strongest contribution is a fresh reexamination of some well entrenched theoretical foundations of toleration in the canon of Western philosophy, as well as its current utility. An example will suffice. Locke's "true belief" argument (holding that the disestablishment of a state church is necessary as no sincere religious belief can be compelled by force) is his most famous and stands easily against the background conditions Locke was dealing with (a more or less Protestant population and few rules and doctrinal demands). In the absence of background conditions, however, the argument will have to be remodeled and Tuckness brings a fresh perspective when showing that Locke's universalisation argument (holding that doctrinal establishment has to be opposed in one place so that it can be opposed in all places, differences notwithstanding) was the one Locke thought to be more persuasive.

On the other hand, throughout many parts of the book, relapses from theory to practice show ambiguity and inconsistency of all theories of toleration – and this is a fault of the subject being dealt with rather than the fault of authors. Unsurprisingly, one finds toleration a useful tool for curbing racial and ethnic discrimination, legalizing same-sex marriage, and so on; and, willingly or not, it is a tool for promoting hideous forms of de-facto segregation and ghetoization, since consistently tolerating and "respecting" other people's practices on the condition (or, rather, with the aim) that they do not disturb others might lead exactly there – and this is where things could end. Yet, as Stanley Fish's "first law of toleration" states, toleration between conflicting groups and identities is inversely proportional to there anything being at stake; and (my own restatement first) calls for toleration are directly proportional to neither side being able to prevail in the long run. The contemporary problem, to my mind, is twofold: how to find unity in the midst of plurality and in the light of demise of any sufficiently powerful Hobbesian sovereign that will impose peace while stakes are getting higher.

The book is an important contribution and it is very highly recommended, especially for those looking to find new perspectives and raise new questions about this old subject.

Russell Hardin, *How Do You Know? The Economics of Ordinary Knowledge* **(Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009).**

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Some people know that drinking a glass of red wine every night is good for their health. Others know the contrary, that any quantity of wine damages one's health. Assuming health is the only thing these groups care about, and they behave according to their convictions, they will perceive each other's behavior as irrational. Nevertheless, given the difference in knowledge, from an individual point of view, both behave perfectly rationally. It is the same with religion: some people bend over on the floor in the

direction of Mecca at sunrise, others move their heads up-and-down toward a wall, while again others move their hands rapidly over their chests depicting a cross. This all looks rather odd to some, but for those who do it, it makes perfect sense. Regardless of who 'is right', it is highly interesting to try to understand why different people are convinced of their knowledge and beliefs. Russell Hardin intends to give an economic theoretical account of such highly relevant, under-researched 'ordinary knowledge'.

Hardin analyzes different sources of knowledge, the overwhelming bulk of which is untraceable, but probably has been accepted on authority of some kind. His approach is to apply his theory to different types of knowledge, with chapters devoted to scientific, political, religious, moral, institutional and cultural knowledge. He takes a micro-economic perspective, with knowledge as a valuable economic good. Individuals search to maximize their utility functions, and will put relatively much effort into obtaining knowledge that is highly relevant for them (e.g. medical knowledge). Sometimes people deliberately search for knowledge, sometimes they happen onto it, or it is imposed on them. Frequently, people rely on experts in acquiring knowledge, because there is no way to obtain knowledge in all desired areas without some division of labor.

There is no meaningful distinction between factual and moral knowledge for the ordinary person, Hardin argues, as they both guide one's behavior. Religious belief, for example, just as other knowledge, depends on the cost and benefits of discovering bits of knowledge. Hardin convincingly challenges the usual functional account, arguing that it serves to explain why people proclaim to believe, but it fails to explain why people truly believe. He presents an alternative explanation, connecting the functionalist account and his theory of ordinary knowledge. At first, people might well adopt a belief not to be excluded from their societies. Subsequently, as a result of participating in the group, they hear many things which support their pretended belief. At some point, all this acquired confirmative knowledge actually makes them believe the things they only pretended to believe.

Hardin further discusses the complications of ordinary knowledge in institutional settings. Institutional knowledge differs from individual knowledge. Individuals can come to know you in a way, of potential great importance for your welfare, which institutions cannot. It is only 'on the whole' that an organization may be superior to aggregated individuals in handling certain problems.

For political scientists, the most relevant – but probably not the most innovating – chapter is the one on democratic participation. Basically, here, Hardin argues the median voter model of candidate placement does not apply. Reasons for this include that voters are ignorant about issues of importance, and that stances of candidates are multidimensional. Hardin further dismisses the theoretical argument that it is irrational for people to vote because costs outweigh benefits. People vote, Hardin argues, because they do not calculate rationally, or vote for other reasons than for impacting the outcome. More enlightening is the closing chapter, where Hardin discusses how fanatism can be intensified inter-generationally, but also through exit of its moderate members. They are shunned by others in the group, have greater opportunities outside, or simply because the group's mindset became stultifying for them.

The book takes an ambivalent stance on whether there is a truth out there, or not. On the one hand, Hardin notes "[e]ven once rock-solid intuitions about the geometry of space have been chiseled down by Einstein's theory of relativity and later advances in physics. To suppose that one could have a correct intuition about the rightness of always telling the truth seems utterly preposterous." (p. 105) This seems to contradict the frequently normative tone of the book. For example, Harding speaks of "crippled belief systems" of extremists (p. 204). Hardin seems especially preoccupied - and rightly so - with "the Taliban, the Ayatollahs, and many other fundamentalist groups" (p. 100). This concern seems to be one of his principal drives in writing the book, and pops up even in chapters only loosely related to these issues. The section on evolution reads more as a lengthy defense of evolution theory than as a focused building-block of his key argument. It seems not key to the development of an economic theory to judge, but rather to analyze how people obtain certain

beliefs and how it impacts their actions. I think this is a problem throughout the book. The claimed focus is on "… the use and subjectivity of knowledge, not on justification of any claim that it is "true" knowledge. It is subjective because it is about *your* knowledge or *my* knowledge, not about knowledge per se." (p.4) Nevertheless, in fact, Hardin gives opinions on everything and everyone. From arrogant popes (p. 47), to open-minded liberalists (p. 93). He depicts the latter to be superior to ideologists from the 'extreme left or right', because they take their own beliefs into doubt. This assertion is easily dismissed when only looking at 'uncompromising', 'absolutist' liberalists such as Ayn Rand (The Economist, 24-30 October 2009). Actually, this is an illustration of one of many questions left uncovered: why do religious groups usually know they are open to new knowledge, while outsiders usually know they are not? In short, Hardin's often normative approach need not be problematic, if only he would analyze *why* he himself holds these beliefs, but he fails to do so.

Related, the book is not always focused on answering the question it claims to answer. This is especially confusing in concluding chapters, which you would expect to re-state how the chapter contributes to answering the principal question: "How do you know?". It is sometimes hard to see how they do. Examples include conclusions such as that it is not meaningful to say of culture that it is bad or not, that people's interest are not represented by democracy, etc. Incoherence could be caused by the fact that chapters have been published earlier as separate articles.

Overall, this book is a good choice for anybody with broad interests, as Hardin is highly knowledgeable on an impressive broad scale of issues. It Is well-written, and the many international examples give this book a rare global perspective. As can be expected from such a complex topic, it is disappointing for those who expect clear-cut answers in understanding why people know what they know. Nevertheless, as a starting point for understanding different dimensions of knowledge-gathering, it is an essential reference that serves as an excellent guide to a fast, multidisciplinary theme. You will certainly economize on your

resources by relying upon this authoritative source in expanding your ordinary knowledge.

Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

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The book is an ambitious attempt to offer tentative answers to some age-old questions in political economy and political science. Questions such as what makes a country a democracy? Why does democracy persevere and consolidate in some countries and crumble in others? How do we understand and analyze the establishment and consolidation of democracy? Acemoglu (Kindleberger Professor of Applied Economics at MIT) and Robinson (Professor of Government at Harvard) build a three-pillar unified framework in an attempt to answer the what, why and how questions. First, based on game theory, they adopt an economic approach to understand political attitudes; In other words, the authors argue that people's political attitudes are economically driven and strategically chosen based on economic incentives. For example, democracy is preferred by the majority because it puts the allocation of power and resources in the hands of citizens rather than elites. However, the elites tend to oppose democracy but they might be compelled to engage in a process of democratization in order to ensure social stability and avoid social disorder. Second, the authors highlight conflict of interests between different social groups as an important factor in determining political outcomes. They argue that the opposing interests of different social classes (elites & citizens) translate into different forms of political institutions which determine political outcomes. Third, the authors claim that the role of political institutions remains important for solving the problem of commitment through redistributing political power. For instance, it is necessary for the elites to reduce their political power to show credible commitment to pro-citizen policies rather than offering bare promises. The process of transferring or

redistributing political power among different groups (elites & citizens) is connected to the process of democratizing political institutions through allowing a greater involvement of citizens in their policy endeavors.

In sum, the authors' three-pillar modal seem to describe the struggle for democracy as a strategic game between two players; namely, citizens and elites. These players are rational and sagacious, economically rather than ideologically driven, and their opposing interests translate into different forms of political institutions resulting in different political outcomes: Democracy, dictatorship, or an oscillation between the two. Surprisingly enough, Acemoglu & Robinson treat the players as if they constitute one entity and represent one decision maker; however, elites and citizens can represent various social, economic and ideological strata which might affect the overall game and the process of decision making.

Using only four cases, the authors ambitiously attempt to use their abstract highly mathematical model to explain the lanes that democratic and non-democratic countries usually go through to attain democracy. Their explanation might appeal to political scientists, political economists, and especially the champions of game theory; however, it might enrage historians and anthropologists or, at least, grab their attention. Britain and Sweden epitomize the path to a consolidated democracy; Argentina exemplifies a path of oscillation between democracy and non-democracy. Singapore illustrates a stable dictatorship with a little repression and few concessions; in contrast, South Africa during the apartheid typifies a dictatorship that survived using repression. While the proposed three dimensional model might explain the selected cases, one might question the case selection, especially that the authors provide little or no justification for selecting these particular countries. In so saying, it is fair to argue that the authors can be easily accused of falling into a kind of selection bias that might affect the predictability and generality of the model. To put it differently, it is not clear whether designing the model precedes selecting the cases or the other way around, although the authors begin their book presenting their cases and proceed with creating a framework

that fits these cases. Apparently, the countries were not randomly selected, at least geographically speaking. As a result, a series of queries might be posed: How representative are the selected cases? Can we use the model to predict or expect a particular path of democracy versus another in other countries? Is the model generalizable? Answers to these questions might shed light on the empirical strength of the findings in this book. In fact, the model sounds ingenious but the case studies seem more like a tool to illustrate the model than empirical findings owing to their sparse distribution throughout the book.

In addition to the problem of case selection bias, one might wonder whether there are other variations for the paths of political development apart from the ones indicated by the authors and embodied by the four selected countries. For instance, I cannot categorize most Middle Eastern and North African countries in one of these four paths, although a lot of MENA experts would classify them into the fourth category which is characterized by a surviving dictatorship thanks to repression. However, repression is often relatively defined and the line between repression and freedom can be too fine to draw due to cultural factors. This might result in a kind of reductionism as it is too parsimonious to reduce numerous paths of political development to four only. Similarly, reductionism does also extend to explaining political attitudes as the authors adopt a one-dimensional approach guided by economic interests.

Despite these few anomalies, the book is well-written and structured as well as innovative and newsworthy, allowing Acemoglu & Robinson to win a general audience from political science. Additionally, the book can be useful for graduate students from economics with a focus on political economy.

Talani, Leila Simona (ed.), *EU and the Balkans: Policies of Integration and Disintegration* **(Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008).**

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The European Union's (EU) current enlargement into the Balkans has raised important questions about the changes, which for numerous Balkan countries can be drastic, that candidate countries must undergo in order to accede to the EU and the effectiveness of EU polices regarding these changes. Candidate countries must incorporate new political and economic regulations and assimilate to foreign cultural expectations while the EU must delicately implement the inculcation of its values and directives on potential and new member states. Lecturer in European Political Economy at the University of Bath Dr. Leila Simona Talani has enlisted a team of political scientists and analysts from the Balkans and Western Europe to address the EU accession procedure and its integrating and disintegrating consequences for candidate countries. Dr. Talani has published their findings in *EU and the Balkans: Polices of Integration and Disintegration*.

Talani claims in the introduction that the authors' main concern is to question whether the integration of the Balkans into the EU will cultivate or depress the integration of the region itself and the internal ethnic relations of individual countries. Focusing on social, political, and economic integration, the authors attempt to examine the effects of the accession process on candidate countries. The purports conclusion that the current process for accession to the EU is dismantling the consensus within candidate countries that is essential to the completion of the expensive and demanding process.

Literature on the expansion of the EU is extensive and the debate over the integration of the Balkans is not new. Nevertheless, the negative effects of the accession process on integration development are often not tackled by committees when assessing individual country qualifications and lack a significant presence in the literature on EU expansion. During debate on the accession

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process, the possible retarding and invalidating effects of the process itself on integration and consensus are often overlooked. Because the current candidate countries and potential candidate countries within the Balkans all have troubled histories in regards to ethnic integration and political consensus, the effects of the accession process on these is significant. In this respect, *EU and the Balkans* can be commended for dealing with the issue of accession; however, the end result presents neither a manageable framework for examining the effects of the accession process nor strong support from its separately authored chapters for its conclusion that the accession process breaks down consensus.

Despite a title incorporating the entire region, Talani et al. offer five chapters focusing largely on Macedonia and Bulgaria in relation to the EU accession process, and one chapter on Bulgaria's accession to the Economic Monetary Union (EMU), that focus on minority rights, nationalism, public opinion, and economics. Only chapters one, four, and five, which focus on the EU's stance on minorities within candidate countries and the resulting possibility of nationalist tendencies, offer support for the book's concluding claim that the accession process breaks down consensus within candidate countries. The final chapter presents an analysis of predicted winners and losers from Bulgaria's future accession to the EMU, but neither details the effects of the process of accession to the EMU nor the similarity between the accession processes for the EU and the EMU, which need to be addressed for the chapter to support the final conclusion. Chapters two and three appear out of place as they both maintain that there is currently consensus within Macedonia both from the government and the public for EU accession and that the issue of the Albanian minority will not affect this consensus. Although the claims in chapters two and three are compelling and relevant to the larger debate on EU expansion into the Balkans, they challenge the stated overall argument of the book by claiming that the process will not threaten consensus within the country. Overall, the book lacks sufficient support for its central claim and presents multiple solid claims against it.

A comparison with the accession processes of non Balkan countries could have established the uniqueness of the Balkan candidate countries' situations, and inclusion of case studies from other Balkan nations could have presented stronger support for the book's central argument. Romania would have been an ideal subject for the claims on minority rights and nationalist tendencies. The same applies to Bulgaria, whose accession to the EU itself should have been scrutinized and not just the country's potential accession to the EMU. Chapter five provides a general overview of the EU's Stabilization and Accession Process for the countries of the former Yugoslavia, but the absence of an examination of Croatia specifically, which is a candidate country and would provide a good comparison with Macedonia, leaves the central claim of the book with unbalanced support. The dearth of material and examples related to these countries leads the reader to question the methodology used.

The book's methodology is further suspect because a significant amount of the source material is attained from unofficial and informal Internet sites. The most troublesome example is the repeated citing of Wikipedia by Zhidas Daskalovski in chapter two. Daskalovski cites Wikipedia for all information regarding Kosovo's declaration of independence. Such an important and controversial issue requires more reliable sources and the author's disregard for the use of credible and sound source material, as well as the editor's acceptance of this disregard, lead the reader to question the credibility of the entire book.

The book also contains significant grammatical and stylistic errors. Typographical errors are sprinkled throughout and there are numerous cases of notably absent punctuation. The concluding sentence to the first chapter is one example of incomprehensible syntax that is repeated multiple times.[1] In regards to style, citations are inconsistent, altering between footnotes and in-text citations, and many quotes have no citation.

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1   Maria Bakalova, "Balkan Nationalism in the European Integration Processes: Ambiguous Impacts and Controversial Outcomes," in EU and the Balkans: Policies of Integration and Disintegration, ed. Leila Simona Talani (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 5-17, 16. "Indeed Balkan nationalisms are not, in the opinion of the author, any special or different form other nationalisms [sic]"

The multiple tables and graphs presented in chapter three are often incoherent and repetitious. The same summary paragraphs for each chapter are unnecessarily repeated in the book's introduction, the abstract of each chapter, and in two cases, in the introduction to the chapter. Chapter six begins with the same paragraph repeated practically verbatim, once in the chapter abstract and once in the chapter introduction that immediately follows. All these errors and stylistic blemishes make the work appear rushed and lacking editorial review.

Although the effects of the process of accession to the EU on candidate countries is an important and under-examined topic, the lack of a strong argument, the use of questionable methodology and unreliable sources, and the high frequency of grammatical and stylistic errors make *EU and the Balkans* a mostly unhelpful and uncritical piece of scholarship. There appears to have been little collaborative strategy among the authors for supporting the claim that the process of accession dissolves consensus in candidate countries and the relationship between the chapters is obscure. Because of its numerous shortcomings and lack of merit, the book is unworthy of recommendation.

Karl-Heinz Nassmacher, *The Funding of Party Competition. Political Finance in 25 Democracies* **(Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2009).**

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In this book, Karl-Heinz Nassmacher presents comprehensive cross-national research which aims to assess the long-term impacts of party funding on the democratic process. Not only does his study employ data previously not available, but he also offers evidence about three important areas of political finance: party spending, sources of political revenue and the impact of funding on party competition.

This empirical study is a valuable contribution to the field, taking further and complementing previous research on party finance presented either in the form of comparative studies (relatively scarce) or country monographs published by Grant (2005), Pierre, Svåsand and Whidfeld (2000), van Biezen (2010), Austin and Tjernstrőm (2003) or Walecki (2005). Nassmacher's comparative analysis focuses on 25 European, mainly Western established democracies. If one combines his study with the latest books on Central and Eastern Europe edited by Smilov and Toplak (2007), Roper and Ikstend (2008) the result is a comprehensive picture of party finance in Europe. The number of countries considered in the book is not constant across chapters and cases outside Europe such as Canada, United States, Japan, Mexico and Israel also feature in various parts of the book. The time frame also varies from chapter to chapter, but notwithstanding these, the contribution to comparative politics lies in the richness of material compared across time and also in the testing of many previous assumptions and hypotheses in relation to party finance.

A reader's knowledge about political spending (chapters II to V) will be greatly extended by the information provided in the book. Whilst growth of electorate and inflation have made many believe that we are dealing with a cost explosion, the empirical evidence of the book shows a less worrying picture. Paid TV, new campaign technology or growing party apparatus with skilled professionals 'may be a symptom for changes in political competition, but [they] are not the unavoidable cause for financial needs' (p. 192). The book concludes that due to donations, state subsidies or corrupt exchanges, parties can afford to spend large amounts of money and it introduces a supply-side theory of spending. According to this theory, the pace of political spending in recent decades is not out of step with the general standard of living. Parties are spending more, proportional with the increase in the general standard of living.

Regarding party revenues (chapters VI to VIII), the book presents empirical evidence from Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the U.S. pointing to the fact that considerable amounts of parties' revenues still come from grass-

roots membership, though these will never suffice to cover all the costs of politics. Various strategies, such as recruiting party members, direct mail drives, Internet campaigns or local social events (p. 237) have proved to be successful for raising and increasing party revenues. The study also concludes that corporate donations are not a real danger for democratic politics. Their amount has declined and has been partly substituted by public subsidies. As for the latter, they are portrayed as desirable but not problem-solving sources of political revenue, because they come with problems such as specific rules for access and distribution. The research confirms in a comparative setting that the petrification hypothesis, according to which state aid preserves the party system, does not hold because new parties have entered parliament in countries with and without public subsidies.

As for the influence of money on the political competition (chapters IX to X), the study shows that "the influence of money is not strong enough to make the competitor who can dispose of the most funds the likely winner of a political contest" (p.360) as quite the reverse may happen. State subsidies have not prevented several changes within party systems such as access, volatility and government participation. Different political finance regimes can be observed: candidate-orientation is dominant in a presidential federal system such as U.S., while in parliamentary systems, party-orientation is stronger. The party organization at all levels can be affected by competition among fundraisers and can lead to conflicts both within parties and between parties and affiliated associations for resources of power. Nassmacher contends that party organization is still double layered - centrally and locally. As party activity shifts towards professional operation at the centre and at the local level, the balance of power within the party organization is predicted therefore 'to shift towards all those elements that wield the purse-strings, especially those which are able to raise additional funds[…]' (p.391).

The book uses the evidence gathered and touches upon old and new theories of party types from mass parties to cartel parties. On this subject matter, the book concludes that recently created party types have not deepened the core substance of party

analysis as many of their details have already been identified by earlier party theorists. Given the richness of material presented and its analytical character, the book can be recommended and is equally interesting to both academic and non-academic audiences concerned with political finance and its impact on a democratic political system.

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Jane Hardy, _Poland's New Capitalism_ (London: Pluto Press, 2009).

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Poland was the only EU country in 2009 that successfully avoided sliding into recession.[2] It thus managed to retain its status as a poster-child of neoliberal transition in postcommunist Europe. Even a recent _Lancet_ study that linked declining life expectancy in the 1990s to rapid and comprehensive privatization programs in Central and Easter Europe found that Poland was one of the few countries to buck the general trend (Stuckler _et. al_. 2009). Now, twenty years after _Solidarity_'s sweeping and dramatic victory in the Polish elections of 1989 - following nearly a decade of mass-struggle - the consolidation of democracy and capitalist social relations in Poland seems as solid as ever.

In this context, Jane Hardy's _Poland's New Capitalism_ (2009) offers a critical and nuanced (neo)Marxist take on Poland's reintegration into an emerging European and international division of labour. Hardy's book complicates the above narrative by incorporating landscapes of poverty, de-industrialization, mass migration, and workplace insecurity that accompanied successive iterations of Poland's experiment with neoliberal 'shock therapy.' The scope of Hardy's analysis – spanning the conceptual and analytical terrains of class-analysis, feminism, political economy, migration and labor studies, new social movement theory, etc. – highlights her strength as a scholar. It also highlights a panoply of issues that have largely remained marginalized in post-communist studies.

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2   The Polish economy benefited from a weak zloty that encouraged exports and was further boosted by rising demand for its automotive production lines in light of Western European car-replacement schemes. Poland has also benefited from a strong internal market, sustained consumer demand, the securing a $20.6-billion IMF reserve credit line and a range of EU funded construction projects. With the looming threat of budgetary cuts in 2010 – spurred by constitutionally mandated provisions triggering cutbacks if public debt mounts to 55% of GDP – Donald Tusk's Civic Platform (PO) government has announced a new round of privatizations valued at some 37-billion zlotys (including the selling off of minority shares in energy producers PGE and Tauron, copper miner KGHM, oil refiner Lotos, Polish national airline LOT, and the Warsaw Stock Exchange).

Poland's New Capitalism (2009) is thus organized around three broad themes, including: (i) Hardy's revisionist account of the Polish economy prior to the institution of neoliberalism; (ii) the impact of Poland's re-integration into the global economy on the worlds of 'work, welfare and everyday life;' and (iii) the importance of recovering resistances to neoliberalism as a central feature of our understanding of Poland's recent transitions. At its most basic, Hardy's thesis is that:

> "The experience of neoliberalism in Poland has been similar to that of other countries, with a polarization of income, resulting from a redistribution of income and wealth to those at the top end of society, and the majority of people facing increasing insecurity in the workplace and more precarious access to services as welfare is commodified" (Hardy 2009: 3).

While viewing postcommunist transition as 'combined, uneven and contested' (31), Hardy avoids slipping into nostalgic accounts of the communist past – recovering instead a long legacy of working class resistance to the state-centralism of the PZPR regime (1945-1989) – while also remaining critical of one dimensional accounts of neoliberal reform (by both its champions and critics). In fact, Hardy traces a progression from Edward Gierek's reforms in the early 1970s, which tentatively set Poland on the path to integration within the global economy, with the later wholesale adoption of market reform. As a result, she claims that postcommunism in Poland is best understood: "not [as] a movement from one system – communism – to another – capitalism, but…as a 'leap' to integration with the global economy, the foundations of which were laid in the reforms of the 1970s and 1980s" (5).

In this context, Hardy argues that "the working class, organized or otherwise, have played a central role in patterning economic change" (52). In fact, Hardy's book is at its most engaging when recovering the working class history of both Poland's communist era and its neoliberal present. She opens an important space for scholars wishing to revisit the position of organized labor in contesting, shaping and building alternatives to neoliberal state restructuring. Explicitly conceived as an alternative to what she sees as David Ost's (2006) more pessimistic reading of this

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legacy, Hardy claims that class has been mistakenly "eviscerated from most accounts of transformation" (48). Instead, by focusing on revived labor militancy in Poland since 2005 (and earlier), she contends that new areas of study are possible.[3]

Hardy's chapter on the dynamics of Poland's integration into the global economy also highlights her ability to balance competing perspectives on the massive inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI) it has experienced. She finds little evidence that Poland has simply become a *maquiladora* for the rest of Europe as some critics claim. However, she also questions whether FDI in Poland has produced the desired technology transfer with the ability to move Poland further along global value-added chains. Hardy argues instead that in "this sea of peripherality there are islands of innovation in relation to [sectors such as] automobiles, IT and defense," though such developments have been "highly uneven as some parts [of the economy] have been destroyed while others have been upgraded" (93).[4]

Hardy is also successful at shedding light on the adverse impacts of transition on the position of Polish women. According to Hardy: "cuts in public spending and welfare provision…have both pushed women out of work and pulled them back into the home" (163). Again, Hardy is critical of both the communist past and the neoliberal present here, critiquing the communist system's failure to secure full equality and the subsequent rollback of many welfare and workplace rights that contributed to greater reproductive freedom. Statistics on women's current over-

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3   Some examples include: the shift by labor from defensive to more proactive demands; the adoption of new recruiting methods; creative forms of industrial action; attempts to organize emerging sectors of the economy; the development of transnational links with other unions; the need to organize migrant workers entering Poland from North Korea, India, Belarus and Ukraine as well as Polish migrant workers employed in the UK, Ireland and in other parts of the EU; and, the willingness to raise novel issues such as mobbing (bullying) and discrimination in the workplace.

4   In class terms this has translated into an emerging core of increasingly wealthy white-collar professionals clustered around key sectors of the knowledge economy, including business and financial services, with an increasing mass of workers thrown into increasingly precarious service sector jobs. It also suggests the need to pay greater attention to new management techniques and forms of labour discipline introduced into Polish workplaces (Hardy provides a highly insightful account of such practices in the sixth chapter of her book).

representation within the ranks of the unemployed and among labour migrants, as well as anecdotal evidence of intensified gender-based discrimination in the workplace, reinforce the image of rollback. In this context, Hardy discusses both the impact of right-wing social movements in attempting to reassert conservative and patriarchal values in Polish society as well as new forms of feminist resistance seeking to address discrimination on the grounds of both sexuality and gender (163-183).

One shortcoming of Hardy's study is that she often relies on assertions without providing any data to back her claims - e.g. when claiming that "migrant workers are central to British and Irish capitalism" or when discussing the increasingly proactive nature of labor organizing in Poland (while failing to produce recent figures on the frequency or concrete successes of industrial action). At other times, Hardy allows broad concepts familiar in Marxist literature to do some of the heavy-theoretical lifting in her account and thereby skim over important contradictions (for instance, the term 'ruling class' litters Hardy's account, in contrast to her own contention at other points that Poland's communist *nomenklatura* and its postcommunist elite should be conceptually disaggregated).[5]

Nevertheless, Hardy's study is still worth reading for those interested in exploring the dominant tensions and contradictions likely to continue animating Poland's political economy in the coming years. It is also useful for those interested in movements across the region that are, "starting to reclaim the language of emancipation, workers' democracy and women's liberation, which was brutally distorted by the Stalinist regimes" (11). While Hardy's account remains unfortunately thin in its discussion of

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[5]   While Hardy's book provides a broad set of interesting starting points for further research and inquiry, it fails to take into consideration some other potential points of departure for an alternative research agenda, including: a more detailed discussion of the legal and constitutional constraints imposed on successive Polish governments that limit the range of policy options; the role and nature of popular culture as a contested space in Poland for articulating various forms of working class consciousness, mass-culture, etc.; as well as the environmental impact of Poland's disproportionate reliance on a policy of using coal to fuel its current development model.

these movements, *Poland's New Capitalism* nevertheless remains a rich, nuanced and layered attempt to capture the divergent landscapes and life-worlds of Polish capitalism within which such movements have emerged following two-decades of neoliberal reform.

Timothy McCajor Hall and Rosie Read (eds.), *Changes in the Heart of Europe (Recent Ethnographies of Czechs, Slovaks, Roma, and Sorbs)* **(Stuttgart: Ibidem Verlag 2006)**.

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In the light of the current financial crisis, questions about the stability of democratic governance in Eastern and Central Europe were raised. Violent protests in Hungary in 2006, the change of the Czech government during its European Union Council Presidency in the first half of 2009 and the growth of radical-right wing and racist parties in the elections to the European Parliament in June 2009 are only some indicators that led commentators to question the stability of democracy and its ability to moderate people's frustration in the light of one of the most severe economic crises in history.

The book *Changes in the Heart of Europe* addresses some of the issues involved in the long-term democratization and transformation process in Central and Eastern Europe. The book consists of 14 essays by Czech, Slovak and mainly American authors plus a useful introduction by the editors and an afterword by Zdeněk Salzmann, one of the leading scholars on ethnographies and anthropology in the former Czechoslovakia. The essays are organized in four categories, the first one being Civil Society and Social Change and including such wide topics as corruption in Czech society (Raymond June), Structural Violence and transformation (David Karjanen), and the role of Women's organizations (Karen Kapusta-Pofahl, Hana Hašková and Marta Kolářová). The second part of the book looks at gender and sexuality issues and includes essays about family-state relations

in the Czech Republic (Rebecca Nash), Cancer stigmatization (Denise Kozikowski), sterilization of Romani Women in Communist Czechoslovakia (Věra Sokolová), the role of pornography in postsocialist Slovakia (James Quin) and a case study about the role of gender, honesty and change in a Moravian Toy Factory (Ben Hill Passmore). The third category examines ethnic minorities and includes papers on the Roma (Krista Hegburg), Czechs in Bosnia (Zdeněk Uherek and Kateřina Plochová) and the Sorbs (Leoš Šatava). Finally, a selection of international authors examines the role of memory, history and the ethnographic present, including contributions about autobiographies after socialism (Haldis Haukanes), the role of memory, space and time perceptions (Davide Torsello) and a proposal for new research in the area of community re-studies (Petr Skalník).

The variety of topics and the different approaches used, including case studies, anthropological examinations and a number of case studies built on extensive field work by the authors lead to an interesting collection on core changes in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. All authors highlight to some extent or another the importance of change as an "experience" for the individual as a result of the end of communism, the creation of two new states and the introduction of democratic government. The collection of essays as a whole demonstrates the complicated transformation processes in societies that needed to transform their political, economic and societal models simultaneously. From the perspective of anthropology the authors highlight the importance of deep-societal changes for the individual as well as for the group. Different aspects are balanced differently, a majority of essays focus on the Czech Republic, and the study of ethnic minorities in particular could have been much more comprehensive when focusing on the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, for example.

The variety of topics gives deep insight into the societal changes in the Czech Republic and to a lesser extent in Slovakia, but the essays, even those in the same category, sometimes lack cohesion; while one essay concerns the change of family-state relations in postsocialist Czech Republic, the next discusses the

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role of cancer. A different organization of essays would have been useful.

The book itself will be of value for a variety of readers. Those who study social anthropology and questions of inclusion and exclusion in new democracies should have a keen interest in the book. Political scientists dealing with minority issues in Central Europe will value the third part of the book in particular, while doctors and psychologists will be interested in the studies of the first and second part. Historians and scholars of ethnographies will enjoy the fourth part of the book, dealing with the role of memory in post-communist Central Europe. Finally, those interested in the democratization processes at the grassroots level will find many interesting aspects and problems discussed throughout the collected edition. Indeed, here lies the key strength of the book, that it demonstrates how problematic change can be at grassroots level, be it through the creation of a viable and effective civil society or through the transformation of people's relations with the state, such as the difference of family-state relations in socialist Czechoslovakia and postsocialist Czech Republic, as highlighted by Rebecca Nash. Another core strength of the book is the study of the Sorbs in the Czech Republic as well as the Czechs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, two often marginalized and forgotten minorities.

The essays themselves are well written and referenced and often based on extensive data and field work. This adds another strength to the collection, as each essay by itself is worth reading. The afterword written by leading scholar Zdeněk Salzmann summarises the changes described and highlights the new research areas in anthropology studies in Central Europe. However, his words sometimes become praise for the book and miss the important role of a summative afterword. One of the weakest chapters in the book is the introduction, although it does include all elements of a good introduction, namely a short introduction to the topic, a brief research outline and summary of the papers. However, because the papers are so diverse, the authors find it hard to give them the cohesion needed. It was a useful choice of the editors to put the chapter on new research approaches in community re-studies by Petr Skalník at the end of

the edition, as it summarizes the new research areas in anthropological studies and outlines future research agenda.

All in all it can be said that the edition is a well written book, worth reading for scholars of political anthropology and democratization. While the cohesion of the essays in the collection is not always a given, the variety of topics discussed are a distinct advantage. Future research, possibly comparative, including the developments in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe will be required to assess the effects of transition, transformation and post-transformation not only on the political system of a country, but on its society and people. To understand how democracy can reach the grassroots level and whether or not people see an improvement in their lives under democratic governance can only be examined through studies like this edition. Furthermore, the effects of Europeanization on Central and Eastern European grassroots development will have to be analyzed, a topic which is unfortunately completely ignored by this study.

Changes in the Heart of Europe is an interesting collection of essays, especially because the book covers a variety of topics including civil society, gender, minority issues and memory in the post-communist context of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Furthermore, the book offers explanations for a variety of ongoing transformations and therefore focuses on the long-term implementation of democratic government. It will add to the existing studies on democratization in Central Europe, in particular because it does not focus on institutional changes, but focuses on the grassroots level and the implementation of democratic values within a society.

John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy* **(Cambridge, Mass and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).**

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John Rawls's latest book, *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy,* completes his theoretical works and provides an interpretation of six classic authors: Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, J.S. Mill, David Hume and Karl Marx. The book represents a collection of lectures which Rawls delivered during his Harvard professorship, edited after his death by Samuel Freeman. In his classic works, Rawls expounded the principles of modern political liberalism. In this latest publication, he outlines the intellectual predecessors from whom he drew his inspiration. The volume adds to Rawls' work by offering the reader the possibility to glimpse the way Rawls understood classical philosophy.

In the book's introduction, Rawls sets out the principles of political liberalism, seen as a regime of free and politically equal citizens. Moreover, this regime has to be justifiable to those over whom it imposes binding regulations. The book looks at six attempts at such justification. Further, the collection is divided into six parts, each corresponding to several lectures delivered by Rawls on different occasions. Each of these lectures touches upon a certain feature in the conception of the classical authors. The book's first chapter is dedicated to Hobbes' doctrine of state and law of nature and to his justification of the absolute sovereign. Further, Locke's doctrine is related to his resistance to royal absolutism and features discussions of the social contract and the theory of property. The principle of utility, as understood by Hume and Mill and the latter's justification of rights in term of utility are the central features of the next two chapters. Then, Rawls comes to Rousseau and discusses the issues of general will and *amour-propre*. Finally, Marx is understood as criticizing liberalism and capitalism from the point of view of justice.

The most important goal of the book, as Rawls repeatedly explains, is to place classical philosophy in its own context, rather than interpreting it from the point of view of our times.   Thus, we should first understand the questions which the respective author was trying to answer. When such an exercise is attempted, Rawls avers, the answers given, though shallow and outdated by our time, seem deep and intriguing.

The innovation brought by this book is the application of modern concepts of philosophy to the interpretation of classical authors. Rather than scholastically reading old texts and summarizing views, Rawls breaks down these texts and arguments and builds upon them using concepts invented in the last decades. Two such examples easily come to mind when Rawls sets out to interpret Hobbes and Locke.

Hobbes' theories are put in the context of the British civil war. Rawls sees Hobbes as arguing for the necessity of a sovereign to end civil strife. On Rawls' interpretation, the Hobbesian state of nature is assimilated to the prisoner's dilemma game which was invented by mathematicians in the fifties and which has long since passed into philosophical use. By this analogy, Rawls shows how people in the Hobbesian state of nature face the collective action dilemmas associated with the lack of an enforcement agency. Moreover, by this comparison, Rawls aims to show how for Hobbes' people, it is rational to obey an absolute sovereign, under whom life cannot be worse than in the state of nature. Furthermore, Rawls employs the distinction between reasonable and rational to present Hobbes' conception of the law of nature as reasonable and the way of enforcing it, the absolute sovereign, as rational, given the uncertain conditions of the state of nature. Reasonable action is taken to mean offering fair terms of cooperation, while rational is understood as maximizing one's own advantage.

Secondly, Rawls argues that Locke's doctrine is a way to justify resistance to royal absolutism under a mixed constitution. Rather than discussing whether a social contract ever took place in the form described by Locke, Rawls interprets Locke's social contract theory as a hypothetical contract under which only certain

political regimes could arise He shows how, even if a meeting of primeval people never occurred, the social contract method could be understood as a test for the legitimacy of regimes. Rawls interprets Locke as asking "What regimes could and could not be instituted if a gathering of rational and politically equal and free individuals would have ever occurred?" This interrogation is valid regardless of how actual regimes actually came about. When viewed in this light, the only regime which is excluded, in Rawls's interpretation of Locke, is royal absolutism, which violates the natural rights individuals would have kept for themselves. Moreover, Rawls defends Locke's limitations of suffrage by showing how they are consistent with his approach, even if unjustifiable under modern standards. By interpreting Locke's social contract as an original position with a very thin veil of ignorance and by using game-theoretical approaches, Rawls maintains that a class state could have come about in Locke's conception.

Another clarification and innovation is brought by two interpretations of Rousseau which save the latter from charges of being a totalitarian political philosopher. Firstly, Rawls interprets Rousseau's concept of the general will very differently than others, for example Isaiah Berlin. Rawls refuses the holist and collectivist interpretation of the general will and maintains that Rousseau never envisioned it as the will of the supra-individual collectivity. Rousseau opposed the sacrifice of a single individual for the survival of the community. Rather, the general will is the aggregation of the reflections of each citizen when this citizen chooses to abstract from his thinking reasons pertaining to his own personal interests. When each citizen thinks in rational terms, detaching themselves from the issue at hand, and when these thoughts are aggregated by a vote, the general will is revealed. Moreover, Rawls' Kant-inspired interpretation of Rousseau's concept of *amour-propre*, as having both an equalitarian meaning, the desire to be recognized by others as an equal and a perverted meaning, the desire to dominate others, show Rousseau to not be inconsistent when arguing that in the society of the social contract, *amour-propre* is fully realized.

One weakness comes from the way it was conceived. A mix of tape-recorded lectures and handwritten notes make the book somewhat more difficult to read than the Rawlsian classics, which are known for their clear style. Rather than including complicated sentences and ambiguous philosophical utterances (see Karl Popper's denunciation of Hegel for such examples), Rawls set out his philosophy in clearly separated thrusts, each explaining and arguing for a certain principle. This fluency and readability is often encountered in the book under review. However, at other times, the writing is incongruent and the argument simply jumps from one idea to the other. Most probably, these passages have been compiled from different sources and the disparities are obvious.

Concluding, Rawls' *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*, represents a new way to approach old sources. It allows the modern reader an interpretation more akin to the style of current writings in political philosophy. Moreover, the book is addressed not only to philosophers, but also to the general public, contributing thus to Rawls' goal of making political philosophy a part of democratic culture.

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