Simon Fraser University

Department of Political Science
Dr. Sandra MacLean

Information Polity?

The Political Economy of Information and Communication Technology and Democratization Processes

Honours Thesis

Paul Goodrick
96301.5699
Winter Semester 2006

Table Of Contents

Introduction

The end of the Cold War saw a shift away from the geo-political framework of the 1980s with its hyper-emphasis on security issues and witnessed the ascendancy of neo-liberal economics as the preeminent ideology shaping political events of the 1990s. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new transitional governments in Eastern Europe, the so-called 'Third Wave of Democracy' was sweeping across much of the Second World. It was hoped these changes would produce a peace dividend for the entire world with governments more focused on economic (and it was presumed, by extension, social) issues rather than military concerns. Following the events of September 11th, 2001, US leadership of global politics attempted to swing the pendulum back to a primary focus on a state-centric security paradigm. Yet one of the commonalities between each phase was the supposed continued march of democracy, whether through market economics or regime change; authoritarian governments were supposed to fall – from within or without – and Western political and economic elite rhetoric has claimed that information and communication technology would be in the vanguard. This paper proposes to assess the impact information and communication technology has had on democratization processes and, by implication, its ability to facilitate peaceful (or at least less violent) transitions from authoritarianism to democracy.

I define information and communication technology (ICT) for this paper as consisting of global Internet applications such as e-mail and the World Wide Web and cell phones (more specifically text-messaging), with the primary focus on the Internet. Different from earlier technology as the result of digitization and computerization, current generation ICT aggregates several distinct features including the potential global reach of the Internet and mobile networks enabling technology that can penetrate national borders while being less location sensitive itself. New ICT also allows for much greater one-to-many and many-to-many

communication flows with an interactive nature that often blurs the line between producer and consumer of information.

Though "conventional thinking" often suggests ICT (generally in tandem with market economics) assists transitions to democracy, how precisely ICT does so is left vague; it is often implied that there is an inherent democratizing dimension to the technology. My objective is to discern ways in which ICT may be employed to promote democracy and democratic traditions and to determine the effect of ICT on these processes when taken in context of current global political and economic regimes.

David Potter suggests the main differences between authoritarian regimes and democracies (transitional or liberal) are determined by the political structure of the state and general attributes of its civil society.[1] He argues that "democratization" is a movement over time,

> from less accountable to more accountable government, from less competitive (or non-existent) elections to freer and fairer competitive elections, from severely restricted to better protected civil and political rights, from weak (or non-existent) autonomous associations in civil society to more autonomous and more numerous associations.[2]

For this paper, then, democratization processes encompass both empirically measurable variables implied by Potter's "movement" and normative values such as political pluralism; governments should be accountable to their citizens; and, respect human rights and the rule of law. It is important to note that these processes are neither inevitable nor irreversible, whether through government action or a change in political culture. I would argue these changes to a society are a result of an ongoing dialogue between, and among, citizens that takes place in Jürgen Habermas' concept of the "public sphere." Habermas has posited that the public sphere is "a realm between civil society and the state, in which critical public discussion of

---

[1] David Potter, "Explaining Democratization," in *Democratization,* eds David Potter, David Goldblatt, Margaret Kiloh and Paul Lewis (USA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), 4.
[2] Ibid, 6.

matters of general interest was institutionally guaranteed."[3] The ability to enable platforms that individuals and groups can use to communicate and debate societal problems means ICT, amongst its other functions, can be seen as a tool of civil society, though not a proxy for civil society. Both civil society and the public sphere are argued here to be necessary for the organic development and sustainability of democracy. ICTs' relationship with the public sphere will be explored more below.

This paper builds on the argument put forth by Peter Wilkin in his 2001 book, *The Political Economy of Global Communication,* which explores the effect global communication corporations and a global neo-liberal economic political and economic regime have had on achieving human security (as defined below). Wilkin argues the end goals of neo-liberalism are privatization and the perfection of markets to realize consumer sovereignty, and while this theoretically may result in benefits for the consumer, it generally does not. He defines two terms that form the core understandings of this paper.

> Political economy of communications: issues of ownership and control of the means of communication and what this in turn means for the structure(s) of power that exist between states, capitalist markets and social groups (seen in terms of class gender, ethnicity, race and nation).[4]

> Human security emphasizes two particular themes: first, the satisfaction of human needs should be central to the way in which we seek to organise our political, economic and cultural institutions and practices; second, a critical component is the achievement of human autonomy and the possibility of meaningful participation in the institutions and procedures that shape political, economic and social life. Yet for this autonomy to be achieved, it is vital that citizens have the resources needed in order to make informed choices regarding their lives that are then able to act upon.[5]

It must also be acknowledged that the impact of ICT may generate vastly different results, whether in theory or practice, when applied to current liberal democracies versus authoritarian/transitional regimes. Clearly, differences exist in technological infrastructures, political systems and general socio-economic

---

[3] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation Of The Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into A Category Of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989), xi.
[4] Peter Wilkin, The Political Economy of Global Communication: An Introduction (London, England: Pluto Press, 2001), 20.
[5] Ibid, 5 – 6.

prosperity at local, national, regional and global levels and outcomes may vary. Yet, excessive media concentration in either state *or* a limited number of private corporations is argued to have a negative impact on democratic underpinnings.

This paper is structured in three parts. The first will attempt to ground ICTs' impact on democratization processes in a critical understanding by looking at: effects *on* governments and *for* governments; implications of the global neo-liberal economic paradigm on ICTs' ability to foster transitions in political systems; and ICTs' influence on socio-political norms. The second part will focus on the ICTs' development in both theoretical terms and by looking at examples from states like Indonesia, Ukraine and the Philippines. The third chapter attempts to connect core concepts from previous chapters in a case study of the on-going China and Google relationship.

The relevancy of this study lies with the recent spate of relatively peaceful revolutions such as People Power II revolution in Indonesia, the Rose Revolution in Georgia, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon and Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution. As Semetko and Krasnoboka have noted, "the political Internet in societies in transition has not received the academic attention that the critical role institution building and information provision play in democratising societies might suggest."[6] This statement is also true with other ICTs like text-messaging. Building on Wilkin's broad theoretical critique of neo-liberalism, the paper will attempt to incorporate evidence from some transitional events, ICT development in random states and contemporary democratization processes in arguing that ICT is not intrinsically democratizing.

---

[6] March, Luke. "Russian Parties And The Political Internet." *Europe-Asia Studies* 56 (May 2004): 369.

Chapter 1. Informatization vs. Information Polity

Several authors have hailed ICT as being able to both facilitate the transition of authoritarian governments to democratic regimes as well as revitalize the liberal democracies that have seen a decline in electoral participation. F. Ellis argues ICT is not official-friendly because it, "bypasses the traditional role of the bureaucrat and government official as the mediator of access to data and information."[7] Harold Rheingold explores the societal effects of new mobile communication technologies more generally and argues that positive political results are the likely outcome.[8]

This is not to suggest that advocates of the democratizing power of ICT only naively see positives in the application of new technologies. Jamie Metzl argues, "[a]ccurate and timely information is an indispensable tool and an essential precondition for effective responsive action and the promotion of human rights, whether by organizations, individuals, governments, or international institutions."[9] He concedes that ICT can be used to violate human rights (mostly in the hands of authoritarian governments) as well as promote them and, further, while accurate information is a necessary condition for the protection of human rights, it may not always be a sufficient condition, as in the case of Rwanda.[10] Though Metzl recognizes potential drawbacks in the use of ICT for human security, he feels the gains outweigh the detractions and it could be suggested that he represents the *techno-optimist* view of ICT on democratization processes. Critics of techno-optimist authors like Metzl and Rheingold would suggest that even in liberal democracies examples in the use of ICT for domestic surveillance such as with extensive use of

---

[7] Ibid, 370.
[8] Howard Rheingold, *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution* (United States: Basic Books, 2002).
[9] Metzl, Jamie F. "Information Technology and Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly* 18 (November 1996): 706.
[10] Ibid, 707 – 708.

CCTV in Europe[11] and the recent scandal surrounding non-constitutional wiretaps in the US[12] suggest that ICT must truly be viewed as a neutral medium that does not contain *inherent* democratizing tendencies, though it may certainly have *potential* ones.

When assessing the impact of ICT, access issues must also be evaluated, something addressed by both sides of the argument. Proponents often highlight the falling cost structure of current generation ICT infrastructure that can radically lower communication costs and may eventually make activities like electronic publishing more widely accessible to a broad array of groups than it is today. Critics often point out the disparity between ICT penetration in the industrial world and the non-industrialized parts and even often within states along urban-rural or regional divisions. ICT infrastructure will be explored further below.

Impact on Political Systems

While ICTs' ability to rapidly disseminate information on threats to human security to growing numbers of people in the world or the increasing ability of liberal and authoritarian governments to conduct surveillance of domestic populations and issues of access are legitimate areas of enquiry, they all contain a very technologically-driven focus. When assessing the political impact of ICTs, especially that of the Internet and e-government, Bellamy and Taylor argue that there is a vital distinction to be made between technological impacts *on government* and the significance of new forms of information and communication *for government* on the other.[13]

> Whilst the *informatization perspective* has as its primary focus the development and use of information in public services, the concept of the *information polity* emphasizes the role of information in the changing system of relationships which is emerging in and around government in the information age. As

---

[11] Peter Wilkin, *The Political Economy of Global Communication: An Introduction* (London, England: Pluto Press, 2001), 36.

[12] Arena, Kelli. *Bush Says He Signed NSA Wiretap Order* [document online]. Available from http://www.cnn.com/2005/POLITICS/12/17/bush.nsa/; accessed 12 March 2006.

[13] Bellamy, Christine and John A. Taylor. "Exploiting IT In Public Administration – Towards The Information Polity?" *Public Administration* 72 (Spring 1994): 3.

governments adopt new ICTs, so new capabilities for the mediation of relationships embodied in systems of governance present themselves.[14] [emphasis added]

Each component offers its own challenges and support to democratization processes. Kalathil and Boas argue that an informatization perspective may allow for authoritarian regimes to increase efficiency of service delivery as well as being seen as routing out corruption (though success may not be an actual goal) and thus ICT is not an inherent threat to them and may in fact enhance regime stability and legitimacy.[15] This topic will be explored in greater detail below.

When evaluating ICTs' impact on democratization processes, the evolving concept of state sovereignty also plays a crucial role. "National institutional politics just can not be called the only political centre in society these days. Politics is spreading into society and beyond. This dispersion is called the *displacement of politics*."[16] [emphasis in original] van Dijk argues that this displacement is the result of two factors. Traditional government bureaucracies employ ICT earlier and more effectively than legislative bodies do; consequently, the first factor is the shift of power from government to public administrations. The second displacement factor is from privatization of public administration and the rise of neo-liberalism in the West, in which the state has, "relinquished political power to decisions made by the market in general and (trans)national corporations in particular."[17] Some of this power is lost as well to international bodies that often have embedded neo-liberal values, as they are dominated by Western actors. These international organizations combine with private transnational corporations in an attempt to replicate Western models in developing states whether they are democratic or authoritarian.

---

[14] Ibid, 2.

[15] Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor C. Boas, *Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact Of The Internet On Authoritarian Rule* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 2003), 7.

[16] Jan van Dijk, "Models of Democracy and Concepts of Communications," in *Digital Democracy: Issues Of Theory And Practice,* eds Kenneth L. Hacker and Jan van Dijk (Great Britain: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2000), 33.

[17] Ibid, 33 – 35.

Impact on Citizens and Political Culture

Lewis Friedland suggests that the democratizing potential of new ICTs is to be found in the relationship between the work of local real world civil society groups and the foundation such work finds in the democratic tradition, not in the actual technology itself. Friedland sees new interactive ICTs as beginning to open new public spaces in the Habermasian tradition that can offer alternative sources of information and venues for relationship building;[18] although, Friedland also notes Habermas only refers to contemporary ICT in a cursory and fragmented manner. While Friedland does believe that mass media remains the primary ICT component of identity formation for "imagined" communities and concedes these new ICTs are "embedded in an oligopolistically networked capitalist marketplace,"[19] he feels that the ideas contained within the concept "electronic democracy" suggest radically new forms of democratic practice.

Friedland examines four models of citizen- and community-based information networks and concludes they share certain central themes, especially the idea that citizen networks must originate from social capital development, practical problem solving and new forms of citizenship[20] – themes that have a direct connection to human security. One such model explored is electronic public journalism, which Friedland treats simply at the institutional level of civil society groups. He suggests that there are "three potential democratic properties" in electronic public journalism: the capital costs of Internet publishing is minimal; news sources generated on the Internet can be gathered together and republished; and, "hypertextual possibilities" of citizen journalism, which can be employed to highlight

---

[18] Friedland, Lewis A. "Electronic Democracy And The New Citizenship." *Media, Culture & Society* 18 (April 1996): 188.
[19] Ibid,187.
[20] Ibid, 190.

several viewpoints and sources to build context.[21] With the increased penetration of the Internet and the ability of the World Wide Web to provide free and easy-to-operate tools for 'blogging,'[22] the benefits of electronic public journalism can be shifted even further towards the individual and offer what is sometimes referred to as citizen journalism.

Through the unique use of what Friedland terms the "vertical layering of information," readers of blogs are able to read a conventional narrative that allows them to critique the argument presented but also directly examine the source material,[23] whether it is other secondary sources or primary documents referenced by the blogger. Other authors have also praised this interactive nature benefit and the social impact it may have.[24] There is no guarantee that individual readers will be able to evaluate the validity of claims or of sources but the self-organizing nature of the blogosphere does form an informal peer-review mechanism.

Thus, unlike traditional media, uses of ICT can be highly interactive and blur lines between producers and consumers of content. The blogosphere also has a more dynamic audience that can easily search out more information (through provided links and search engines) to gain more depth and commentary on a topic that interests them, as opposed to the fairly passive role the audience plays in traditional media where information flow is much more uni-directional. Websites like Newsvine.com are good examples of communities of interested citizens coming together and combining information produced (but not necessarily promoted) by mainstream media with the bloggers' own analysis. Posts often generate debate from

---

[21] Ibid, 201 – 202.

[22] Weblog (Blog): A personal Web site that provides updated headlines and news articles of other sites that are of interest to the user, also may include journal entries, commentaries and recommendations compiled by the user.;
Dictionary.com. *Weblog* [document online]. Available from http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=weblog; accessed 7 March 2005.

[23] Friedland, Lewis A. "Electronic Democracy And The New Citizenship." *Media, Culture & Society* 18 (April 1996): 202.

[24] Cayzer, Steve. "Semantic Blogging and Decentralized Knowledge Management." *Communications of the ACM* 48 (February 2005): 47.

multiple users of varying political ideologies, which suggests a virtual discussion that implicitly tries to determine the public good. Tumber and Bromley contend that the dialogue between government and the public that ICT can potentially facilitate will offer a key empirical measurement, "[in] testing whether the Internet can create a 21st century Habermasian 'public sphere.'"[25] One must then question how much impact blogs can have on government or the general public.

Blogs are a fairly new phenomenon, even in the realm of new media and the Internet, and while the number of blogs is growing astronomically, in absolute terms readership is still quite small. According to a Gallup Poll, fewer than 15% of Americans read blogs at least a few times a month and only 12% read blogs dealing specifically with politics as frequently.[26] While exceptions perhaps exist, it is likely these numbers would be comparable – if not higher – for industrialized states and much smaller for less industrialized countries or those with tighter media control by the state and questions remain about the actual impact of the blogosphere in terms of real world results.

Prominent US blogger Glenn Reynolds argues the influence of blogs is similar to that of "insider publications" as blog readership demographics are heavily composed of politicians and journalists.[27] In an academic study of blog credibility, Johnson and Kaye found, "many journalists consider blogs a trustworthy source of information and rely on them for information and story ideas," and further, "users may find Weblogs more credible [then mainstream media] because they are independent rather than controlled by corporate interests; bloggers may discuss

---

[25] Howard Tumber and Michael Bromley, "Virtual Soundbites: Political Communication In Cyberspace." *Media, Culture & Society* 20 (January 1998): 165.
[26] Mystery Pollster, *Gallup Poll On Blogs* [document online]. Available from http://www.mysterypollster.com/main/2005/03/gallup_poll_on_.html; accessed 11 March 2005.
[27] Reynolds, Glenn Harlan. "The Blogs of War: How the Internet is Reshaping Foreign Policy." *The National Interest* 75 (Spring 2004): 61.

issues traditional media shy away from because they might hurt corporations."[28] Whether blogs actually are more credible (or, rather, just have alternative interests to corporations) needs to be shown empirically but perception is often important for electoral politics.[29] Johnson and Kaye further argue, like Reynolds, that the influence of blogs may exceed the small readership size because of the general attributes of blog readers.[30]

Thus, *who* reads blogs may be more important for fostering democratic norms in transitional states then *how many* view them because members of the political blogosphere are often "opinion leaders" and would seem to have greater influence in the general public, especially in developing states where elites (political, educational and economic) are more likely to be early adapters of ICT due to cost and political factors. If blogging has a positive effect then its most important contribution to human security may reside in its ability to foster changing norms. Of course blogs that deliberately or accidentally disseminate mis-information or particular viewpoints could have an opposite effect.[31] Yet, with the blogosphere's self-organizing nature and greater interaction of like-minded *and* opposed ideologies, there exists a potential for increased dialogue and empowerment of civil society that could bolster human security. This interactive debate of a wide range of viewpoints could have positive connotations for democratic norm-building and could strengthen techno-optimist arguments though the potential of negative societal effects must also be acknowledged.

---

[28] Johnson, Thomas J. and Barbara K. Kaye. "Wag the Blog: How Reliance on Traditional Media and the Internet Influence Credibility Perceptions of Weblogs among Blog Users." *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 81 (Autumn 2004): 623.

[29] For an introduction into the complex, symbiotic relationship between blogs and mainstream media see Palser, Barb. "Journalism's Backseat Drivers." *American Journalism Review* 27 (August/September 2005): 42 – 51.

[30] Johnson, Thomas J. and Barbara K. Kaye. "Wag the Blog: How Reliance on Traditional Media and the Internet Influence Credibility Perceptions of Weblogs among Blog Users." *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 81 (Autumn 2004): 622-623.

[31] I first presented the blog readership size and impact argument in a paper prepared for Political Science 349: Human Security, Simon Fraser University, April 1, 2005.

It is important to remember that the mere potential for more nuanced analysis is no guarantee that the use of ICT will yield tangible results. One of the recurring questions pertaining to ICTs' role in democratization processes is how this *virtual* participation can translate into real-world results. March suggests a rhetoric-action gap exists between interest in ICT and its impact on electoral practices in advanced liberal democracies, let alone transitional states.[32]

Impact of Cell Phones and Text-Messaging

Much like Internet access, when assessing the impact of cell phones and text-messaging in democratization processes, one must consider the limited spread of the technology outside the industrialized world and the uneven penetration within individual markets. Nevertheless, the inherent cost advantages to wireless technologies are apparent and may have positive effects on access demographics. Consequently, "[t]elecommunications networks become available in places where wires weren't previously economically feasible. One in eight people in Botswana [has] a mobile telephone."[33] While this should not be taken as the norm in the developing world, it does support the techno-optimist position of the potential that cell phones may have in supporting democratization processes.

Some instances of text-messaging use can be seen as the informatization process and a simple expansion of the way traditional media has been used to new ICT mediums, such as in the case of Iraq. Worth and Wong state, "[c]andidates have been killed, even as slick television spots run throughout the day, showing office-seekers who soberly promise to defeat terrorism and revive the economy. Cell

---

[32] March, Luke. "Russian Parties And The Political Internet." *Europe-Asia Studies* 56 (May 2004): 369.
[33] Howard Rheingold, *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution* (United States: Basic Books, 2002), 135 – 136.

phone users routinely get unexpected text messages advertising one candidate or another."[34]

Yet, usage in Iraq's neighbour, Iran, may show greater steps towards the concept of information polity. In a country where the rhetoric-action gap concerning democratic principles like freedom of speech is quite large, text-messaging offers an alternative medium for political organization. As a result of state control over traditional forms of ICT (typified by reformist publications being shut down and the numerous arrests of journalists and publishers) and the barring of a multitude of reform candidates from running in the general election, many in Iran called for a boycott of 2005 parliamentary elections. Young reformists often used text-messaging to advocate a ban of the polls with one apparently widely circulated text-message stating, "The ballot boxes of Friday are the coffins of freedom. We will not take part in the funeral of freedom."[35]

Text-messaging and other mobile ICT allow for individual members of demonstration groups to remain dispersed and then converge on a specific location from all directions simultaneously, in coordination with other groups. Vincente Rafael, in exploring the role of the cell phone in enabling Rheingold's 'smart mobs' suggests, "[u]nlike computer users, cell phone owners are mobile, immersed in the crowd, yet able to communicate beyond it. Texting provides them with a way out of their surroundings."[36] Rafael has further suggested, "The power of texting has less to do with the capacity to elicit interpretation and stir public debate than it does with compelling others to keep messages in circulation."[37] Presuming such a claim to be valid, text-messaging may prove more vital in facilitating transitions through peaceful

---

[34] Worth, Robert F. and Edward Wong. "Politics, Iraqi Style: Slick TV Ads, Text Messaging and Gunfire," *New York Times* (New York), 11 December 2005, 1.
[35] BBC News. *Iran Shuts Down Reformist Papers* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3502995.stm; accessed 19 January 2006.
[36] Rafael, Vicente L. "The Cell Phone and the Crowd: Messianic Politics in the Contemporary Philippines." *Public Culture* 15 (Fall 2003): 405.
[37] Ibid, 409.

revolutions than in fostering long term democratic ideals. Perhaps the most telling example of the power of ICT in the form of text-messaging and its impact on the democratization process is the Philippines and the People Power II revolution explored below.

Kevin Anderson claims that text-messaging has been successfully used to organize protests in a variety of locations and causes: the Philippines with People Power II; protests for great transparency into the investigation of the 2004 Madrid bombings; TXTmob, a free text-messaging broadcast service used to organize US protests of Democratic and Republican National Conventions and assisting in the Orange Revolution in Ukraine; opposition leaders in Lebanon used text-messaging and other ICT to organize anti-Syria rallies after the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri.[38]

Impact of Global Corporate Media

While ICT has been hailed as reviving the spirit of the public sphere in established democracies and creating virtual ones in authoritarian regimes through the empowerment of citizens, it is often a handful of global corporations that control traditional media and new ICT. Authors such as media critic Robert McChesney have attacked the neo-liberal agenda and the idea that Western media truly is representative of the free and objective ideal. McChesney argues that the current trend of the global entertainment and journalism concentrated in a handful of powerful corporations results invariably in a neo-liberal political economy ideology embedded in our understanding of core global issues with negative implications for democratization processes.[39]

---

[38] Anderson, Kevin. *Breaking Down The Great Firewall* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asisa-pacific/4496163.stm; accessed 14 February 2006.
[39] Robert W. McChesney, *Corporate Media And The Threat To Democracy* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1997), 23.

Christopher Anderson tracks a predictable outcome of this increasing media concentration in the hands of the natural champions of the neo-liberal agenda, the transnational corporation. Patterns of news articles are used to show how citizens have been usurped of their rights to protest at major international financial meetings against what they see as the expansion of private power.

> Since the World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle in 1999, a sad but familiar pattern has become evident in the run-up and aftermath of protests. Police officials, aided by a hype-hopeful mainstream media, exaggerate the possible dangers posed by consistently non-violent protesters. Using the climate of fear created by this hype to justify their actions, the police consistently engage in extra-constitutional and illegal behavior, such as mass pre-emptive arrests, the interference with media outlets, and brutal protest behavior. Inevitably, the main stream press realizes the hype once the protests are safely over, and sheepishly admits its mistake.[40]

The argument that the expanding roles of ICT were to result in the end of authoritarian regimes has often been associated with the more nebulous concept of globalization. With the non-stop media coverage that was now possible from media conglomerates such as the Time-Warner media empire, Disney-Capital City (ABC) and the global growth of News Corp., it was claimed that the Fourth Estate would bring incredible pressure to bear against Western governments through their constituencies to intervene on behalf of oppressed peoples. The development of new ICTs along with digitization was to enable human rights violations anywhere in the world to be instant reported upon. This was to be the much vaunted "CNN Effect," which was "usually thought of as the effect that continuous and instantaneous television may have on foreign policy, in the making of foreign policy and the conduct of war."[41]

The exact level of influence this effect would have has been widely disputed. Supporters argue that the media drives Western conflict management by mobilizing

---

[40] Anderson, Christopher. *Getting Used: How The Mainstream Media Helps Create Climate Of Fear And Repression During Political Protests.* Indymedia, 2004, 1.
[41] Brookings Institution. *"The CNN Effect": How 24-Hour News Coverage Affects Government Decisions and Public Opinion* [document online]. Available from http://www.brookings.edu/comm/transcripts/20020123.htm; accessed 13 March 2005.

public outrage over abuses, forcing Western governments to intervene militarily in humanitarian crises against their will[42] – NATO/UN Peacekeeping missions of the 1990s are usually offered as evidence of the power of the CNN Effect. Skeptics argue that the influence of the CNN Effect is negligible and may in fact prevent military intervention because public support for intervention may decrease with televised images of dead soldiers.[43]

Characterizing any potential impact of a CNN Effect as a dichotomy provides an overly simplistic level of analysis. Piers Robinson, in a more thorough examination, makes a convincing argument that the ability of the media to influence governments should instead be perceived as a continuum based on consensus among political elites and government.[44]

Table 1. Policy-Media Interaction Model[45]

Level of Elite Consensus	Elite Consensus	Elite Dissensus	Elite Dissensus But Policy Certainty W/N Executive	Elite Dissensus *Plus* Policy Uncertainty W/N Executive
Role of the Media	Media remain uncritical and help build support for official policy.	Media reflect elite dissensus but remain non-influential.	Coverage pressures gov't to change policy but policy certainty w/n executive means media influence is resisted.	*The CNN Effect.* Here media can influence policy outcome.

Yet this idea of the media providing a forum to pressure or change the government policies is increasingly coming under attack, especially when one considers the role of media barons and economic elites blurring the lines (even more) with traditional political elites. Karatnycky offers the example of Italy under Prime Minister Berlusconi, with the claim, "excessive concentration of broadcast media in the hands of the incumbent government has raised serious questions about whether

---

[42] Jakobsen, Peter Viggo. "Focus on the CNN Effect Misses the Point: The Real Media Impact on Conflict Management is Invisible and Indirect." *Journal of Peace Research* 37 (March 2000): 132.
[43] Ibid, 132.
[44] I first presented this CNN Effect argument in a paper prepared for Political Science 349: Human Security, Simon Fraser University, April 1, 2005.
[45] Adapted from Table 2.1 in, Piers Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 31.

the lack of media diversity is corrosive of pluralism."[46] Recent charges of corruption against Berlusconi[47] serve to reinforce concerns about the melding of political and economic elites.

Beyond the role of specific political actors, the entire corporate system of vertical and horizontal mergers so typical of the current neo-liberal global economic regime is criticized by some. Wilkin questions the ability of NBC to provide independent and critical information about the US government when its parent company, General Electric, receives defense contracts every year worth billions of dollars.[48] Project Censored, an NGO that attempts to publicize stories not covered (adequately or at all) by the mainstream media, recently released a report drawing the connections between board of directors of major media corporations and other corporations, claiming, "Corporate Media is Corporate America."[49] They cite, amongst others, connections between Disney (ABC's parent company) and Halliburton and Boeing, two large US defense contractors. Excess information concentration means most citizens have few real choices for their news, information and education – "[i]n corporate-dominated capitalism wealth concentration is the goal and corporate media are the cheerleaders."[50]

This is not to suggest that critics of the current neo-liberal economic regime believe that the partnership between big business and government that results in the increase of private power over public institutions is a new one but, rather, that it is growing. The contrast between the warnings of President Eisenhower against the rise of the military-industrial complex at the end of his term and the number and size

---

[46] Karatnycky, Adrian. "The Democratic Imperative." *The National Interest* 76 (Summer 2004): 114.
[47] BBC News. *Italy Bid For PM Corruption Trial* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/europe/4793070.stm; accessed 10 March 2006.
[48] Peter Wilkin, The Political Economy of Global Communication: An Introduction (London, England: Pluto Press, 2001), 49.
[49] Bridget Thornton, Brit Walters and Lori Rouse, "Corporate Media Is Corporate America," in *Censored 2006: The Top 25 Censored Stories,* ed Peter Phillips (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005).
[50] Ibid, 254.

of no-bid contracts given in Iraq to Halliburton[51] with its connections to the current Bush administration may be the most glaring example.

It is important to note that not all authoritarian governments deal with ICT the same. Hachigian, in exploring the Internet's impact on One-Party East Asian states outlines four broad ICT policies by authoritarian regimes: severe restrictions; significant restrictions; moderate restrictions; negligible restrictions. She argues, "Policy calculations, based on broad decisions about how to maintain power, are subtler than simple attempts to maximize control of the Internet, and no neat conclusion can be drawn about what approach will be most successful in promoting regime longevity."[52] This will be explored further in the next chapter.

Overall, it seems clear that while ICT *may* have an impact on democratization processes, the level of impact and how it occurs depends on several variables. Are states using ICT simply for improved bureaucratic efficiency and reduction of communication costs or attempting to maximize the potential for new forms of democratic participation? What is the impact of blogging as alternative information sources and altering socio-political norms? What does the global aspect and the empowerment of the individual mean for traditional ideas of national cohesiveness and state sovereignty? Is text-messaging used as a simple communication device or as a new tool for political organization? What are the consequences of increasing media concentration in predominantly Western, neo-liberal transnational corporations?

Investigating the full impact of all these questions is beyond the capacity of this paper but they suggest potential knowledge gaps in our full understanding of ICTs impact on political, economic and social spheres. Further investigation may offer the opportunity to measure ICT influence on factors that directly contribute

---

[51] Solomon, John. *FBI Investigates Halliburton's No-Bid Contracts* [online]. Available from http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/contract/2004/1028greenhouse.htm; accessed 13 April 2006.
[52] Hachigian, Nina. "The Internet and Power in One-Party East Asian States." *Washington Quarterly* 25 (Summer 2002): 54.

to or hinder democratization processes. The next chapter will try to go beyond some of the theoretical implications for ICT and examine the actual use and deployment of political Internet in authoritarian regimes.

Chapter 2. ICT: Development & Implementation

Even with a decline in the techno-optimist view that was prevalent in the 1990s, there remains a powerful connection between ICT and democratization in the popular consciousness – that the Internet poses an overwhelming threat to authoritarian rule.[53] Kalathil and Boas suggest that for all its rhetorical value there has been a lack of academic studies on the impact of the ICT on democratization processes and of those that have been conducted most either examine the role of the Internet in politics of advanced industrial democracies or are individual case studies on Internet use in various authoritarian regimes with few examples of *how* these new technologies are supposed to topple governments.[54]

Kalathil and Boas attempt to provide a "systematic, cross-regional comparative study of the impact of Internet use in authoritarian regimes" by examining four broad categories of use: civil society; politics and the state; the economy; and the international sphere.[55] Using their analysis as a starting point, this chapter will attempt to explore ICTs impact on democratization processes on both a conceptual level and by looking at the actual use of ICT to facilitate transitional events of varying success in a selection of states.

The State is the Primary Actor

The most important factor when assessing ICTs' ability to impact democratization process in states with authoritarian regimes is the role of the government. In such states the government has generally played an important role in traditional broadcast and print mass media and this continues with new ICT. While there is a certain amount of romanticism around the concept of "cyberspace," in the

---

[53] Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor C. Boas, *Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact Of The Internet On Authoritarian Rule* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 2003), 1.
[54] Ibid, 3 – 5.
[55] Ibid, 5 – 8.

end, the Internet is simply "a set of protocols allowing computers to exchange information,"[56] relying on a significant power and communications grid. While international financial institutions may increase pressure on states to increasingly open their telecommunications industries, states still have regulatory and taxing powers that can shape growth of ICT infrastructure. Some states like Cuba have decided to develop a limited national intranet[57] and thus limit citizens' access to the global Internet. Others like Burma have simply not permitted much of any Internet access except for select economic and political elites who are unlikely to be enemies of the regime.[58]

Kalathil and Boas found that existing government structures could dictate the implementation of ICT policies. Large, inefficient bureaucracies as in China can lead to conflicts over which departments regulate content and/or infrastructure and competition can occur over the investment revenues; states that are ambivalent about the benefits of Internet promotion such as Vietnam may also have conflicting ICT development policies.[59]

As mentioned above, authoritarian governments often use the Internet to their benefit for purposes from monitoring dissidents and domestic surveillance to increasing citizen satisfaction through responsive e-government. If ICT is used to improve service delivery and is seen to be routing out corruption, it may increase legitimacy and support for the regime as in the United Arab Emirates.[60]

ICT Usage is generally Risk-Averse

Though even critics of the techno-optimist position agree there may be potential for ICT to have positive effects for democratization processes, this paper

---

[56] Ibid, 2.
[57] Ibid, 56.
[58] Ibid, 92-96.
[59] Ibid, 138.
[60] Ibid, 112.

argues there is nothing intrinsically democratizing about ICT. Most citizens are likely to use the Internet much the same whether in authoritarian regimes or democracies: "they communicate with friends and family, consult easily accessible news sources, browse entertainment and sports sites, and look for information specifically relevant to their lives."[61]

Even if Internet penetration becomes widespread in authoritarian regimes and users are *technically* able to circumvent government blocks, *self-censorship* is likely to prevent most from attempting to do so. This obviously limits direct criticism of the regime but also contributes to a deficiency in the ability of citizens to engage in debate over what is the common good of society, preventing the formation of a Habermasian public sphere, and limiting the possibility of meaningful participation in the political institutions and procedures that shape the various facets of a democratic polity. This is not to suggest that self-censorship does not exist in democracies but rather that it is more pervasive in non-democracies.

An Informatization Policy has Diverse Results

While it was discussed above that authoritarian governments can use ICT to strengthen support for the regime, a cost/benefit analysis of e-government for authoritarian states suggest ICT adoption is a complex proposition.

> Government jobs are an important form of patronage, and increases in bureaucratic efficiency through e-government measures might lead to job losses for many. Increased transparency through e-government may lend support to authoritarian regimes if they are seen as rooting out endemic corruption, but the exposure of existing corruption could contribute to political crisis. In addition, disparities in Internet access ... may create political tensions as to who is better served by e-government.[62]

Economic Reform and Growth are not Political Reform

This argument is one of the primary critiques leveled against claims by neo-liberals that market reform in authoritarian states can lead to increased political

---

[61] Ibid, 143.
[62] Ibid, 130.

freedoms. Kalathil and Boas argue that domestic entrepreneurs do not by default take an independent or challenging position vis-à-vis the state even if they assist in fragmenting centralized state economic authority.[63] While foreign investors are under less of a direct threat they generally cooperate with authoritarian regimes, even if doing so contravenes principles of online privacy and freedom of expression that corporations normally support in their home countries.[64] This often results from the corporation's primary goal being profit, not enhancing democratization processes.

The potential benefits for a state of economic development through ICT must be weighed against national cohesion such as in China where disparities exist between rapidly industrializing eastern and rural western provinces[65] and in the United Arab Emirates with the rapid growth of ICT in Dubai.[66] Closed authoritarian regimes, as well as transitional and establish democracies, must also decide whether they desire to increase integration into the global economy. Chattopadhyay notes just such a conundrum that India faced and claims, "the internet propagates global capitalism. However, it also increases India's chances of getting a larger chunk of the pie, as it creates channels for monetary investment within the nation-state."[67]

Realism still has a Role to Play

The importance of a specific state to the dominant industrial powers – especially the US – can often dictate the success of transnational ICT campaigns in pressuring governments and corporations.

---

[63] Ibid, 147.

[64] Ibid, 147.

[65] Wingfield-Hayes, Rupert. *China's Rural Millions Left Behind* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4782194.stm; accessed 10 March 2006.

[66] Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor C. Boas, *Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact Of The Internet On Authoritarian Rule* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 2003), 111.

[67] Chattopadhyay, Rohitashya. "The Internet and Postcolonial Development: India's Transnational Reality." *Contemporary South Asia* 12 (March 2003), 34.

> Burma's lack of strategic importance to the United States may be part of the reason that the transnational campaign to shame investors has been so successful. ... Transnational campaigns to highlight human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia have found less purchase because of the economic importance of the country's oil reserves and its status as an ally of the United States.[68]

It is important to note that not all anti-regime Internet usage is inherently pro-Western or pro-democracy. "Militant nationalist and religious movements can use the Internet just as easily as those demanding peaceful transitions."[69]

Harnessing the Political Power of the Internet

Luke March examines the use of the Internet in Russian politics and outlines the benefits that ICT can provide in strengthening political parties, which in turn might help anchor democratic principles in Moscow's evolution from Communism. While March is talking specifically about political parties, it can also apply to transnational advocacy organizations and domestic civil society groups. He argues, like Metzl,[70] the Internet can help externally with information dissemination and, further, may assist in addressing real world differences in traditional offline media,[71] whether through state power or private economic asymmetries. He also suggests "online shops and membership appeals may help a party's financial base significantly."[72]

This last item has potential connotations for democratization processes in both transitional and established democracies – micro-donations for electoral campaign reform. The experience of online donations for Tsunami relief and the increasing frequency, at least on Western websites, to incorporate "donate buttons"

---

[68] Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor C. Boas, *Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact Of The Internet On Authoritarian Rule* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 2003), 149.

[69] Ibid, 152.

[70] Metzl, Jamie F. "Information Technology and Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly* 18 (November 1996): 706.

[71] March, Luke. "Russian Parties And The Political Internet." *Europe-Asia Studies* 56 (May 2004): 372.

[72] Ibid, 372.

allows visitors of no-cost, content websites to contribute to bandwidth and server costs. If the communications industry has played an important role in constructing an imagined public and providing the tools for people to come together and discuss what amounts to the public good,[73] then these donations and the communities that grow up around them might be seen as an alternative actor to state and corporations. The ability of political parties to garner micro-donations might suggest popular support and may increase the capacity of public institutions to resist the private power of corporations although without limits on donations and strict declaration guidelines the impact of micro-donations may be small. More specifically, for transitional states, micro-donations on a large enough scale could help counter the potentially extensive state financial (and political) resources available to the incumbent vis-à-vis any challengers though the state would maintain a monopoly on the use of violence.

Just as ICTs are valuable to political parties for external use, March feels that

> ... ICTs' uses within the party organisation are equally significant. The use of websites as online libraries and the use of web networks and email to link party structures and members may help intra-party education, communication, particularly with larger parties, as well as aiding greater organisational openness and efficiency. In turn, organisational culture and identity may be reinforced by participation and networking opportunities fostered by ICTs. Finally, increased internal cohesion may accelerate the party's response to its environment, particularly at election time, when parties may rely on 'region-wide mobilisation of an active party base'.[74]

Thus *even if* ICT can only provide benefits such as increasing the efficiency and lowering the costs of communication, its ability to help embed various organizational structures may cement democratic traditions (such as multi-party politics) within transitional governments and thus help secure peaceful shifts away from authoritarian regimes by strengthening peaceful political opposition. Yet, there must be caution about the amount ICT can foster democratic underpinnings in

---

[73] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation Of The Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into A Category Of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989).
[74] March, Luke. "Russian Parties And The Political Internet." *Europe-Asia Studies* 56 (May 2004): 372.

opposition groups. For instance, March found that, overall, in Russia the adoption of new ICTs "has generally been seen as reactive and *ad hoc* rather than strategic, stylistic and supplementary rather than fundamental, and top-down, administrative and information-heavy rather than interactive or participative, in stark contrast to the potential ascribed to ICTs."[75]

Internet 1 – New Order 0

In Metzl's 1996 article on the impact of ICT on human rights, he highlighted several ways in which new technology was impacting the Indonesian authoritarian regime of General Suharto. He states that Amnesty International was having trouble distributing its 1994-1995 report to local NGOs within Indonesia; however, the Internet copy, "was downloaded by Indonesian NGOs, translated, reposted to Indonesian bulletin boards, and distributed on floppy disk."[76] This resulted in even wider distribution than would have been possible from hard copy alone.[77]

Metzl argued that governments would not be able to censor information on the Internet too greatly with filtering techniques because this would also result in negating many of the economic benefits that the speed and ease of communications ICT was to bring in various forms of e-commerce – a classical argument also used by neo-liberals when discussing the democratization potential of ICT. Metzl suggested that if human rights concerns informed the way this information highway was employed, it could result in negative consequences for authoritarian regimes.[78]

Whether reports disseminated by ICT of human rights violations in East Timor worried foreign investors and played a role in the East Asian financial crisis and contributed to the Suharto overthrow is something beyond the scope of this paper to determine. Yet, it clearly represents some of the anecdotal evidence that

---

[75] Ibid, 369.
[76] Metzl, Jamie F. "Information Technology and Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly* 18 (November 1996): 722.
[77] Ibid, 722.
[78] Ibid, 741.

Kalathil and Boas argue has perpetuated the belief in the intrinsic democratizing power of the Internet. Hill and Sen counter Kalathil and Boas' claim of the difficulty analysts have in illustrating a direct causal link between ICT usage and eventual political change. As Hill and Sen argue,

> Causality of major political events is rarely conclusive, particularly not in the kind of empirical studies to which Kalathil and Boas are referring. ... And while conclusive links between particular media technology and the independence of Timor and the fall of Suharto are indeed hard to make, it is our contention that these processes are nonetheless impossible to imagine without some reference to the Internet.[79]

Hill and Sen explore the development of the Internet in Indonesia and its role in domestic politics. Several factors do seem to support some of the ideas on how ICT may destabilize authoritarian regimes. Inter-ministry conflicts occurred between the Ministry of Information (the regulator of traditional broadcast and print media) and the neo-liberal policies of various economic ministries who were focused on the financial benefits the Internet would bring to Indonesia.[80] With less bureaucratic content restrictions on domestic news reporting, the speed and interactivity that are two of ICTs' primary benefits and the international nature of the global Internet impacted the political culture of the country; "the Internet ... became a site around which to open up questions about freedom of speech and, by implication, its absence in Indonesia."[81]

With the fall of the Suharto regime many in the press praised the role of the Internet and referred to it as a tool of freedom, much like the bamboo spear had been for Indonesians in their struggle for independence from the Dutch in the 1940s. Hill and Sen argue that, "whatever the *technical* efficacy of either bamboo spear or Internet against colonial or authoritarian mechanics of power, they were both widely *perceived* to have been crucial to the respective struggles, and

---

[79] David T. Hill and Krishna Sen, *The Internet in Indonesia's New Democracy* (New York, United States: Routledge, 2005), 11.
[80] Ibid, 49 – 51.
[81] Ibid, 29.

consequently became infused with symbolic power to move the struggle along."[82] [emphasis in original] Hill and Sen quote the military spokesman for social and political affairs, Lieutenant-General Syarwan Hamid, as describing the Democratic People's Party's (PRD) Internet presence as a sign of their strength. The authorities had accused the PRD of planning the 27 July riots; a pro-labour group that was a small, unregistered political party, mostly student-based, was being accused of organizing an effective counter to one of the longest lasting authoritarian regimes in Southeast Asia.

> Virtual political presence was thus being equated with real politics by both sides: the Internet's invincibility protecting the underground political activists, and simultaneously allowing them a public presence while marking the limits of the New Order's power against a banned political party.[83]

This illustrates that the Internet can have an impact on authoritarian regimes but only in so much as it can be translated from virtual power into real world power. Kalathil and Boas would seem to support this claim when, in exploring the impact of Internet transnational advocacy upon Castro's regime, they suggest it is unlikely to have a direct impact, although it might be employed to influence other states' policies towards Cuba.[84]

Everywhere Is The New "Orange"

While both popular domestic support and international pressure are often seen as requirements for democratic reform, backlashes can occur that challenge the legitimacy of newer regimes. Adrian Karatnycky reports that in the face of massive electoral fraud in the 2004 Ukrainian presidential elections, Viktor Yushchenko opted for a two-prong attack.[85] One prong was mass, non-violent protest that was facilitated by text-messaging and broadcast to the world, with news stories and

---

[82] Ibid, 32.
[83] Ibid, 45.
[84] Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor C. Boas, *Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact Of The Internet On Authoritarian Rule* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 2003), 67.
[85] Karatnycky, Adrian. "Ukraine's Orange Revolution." *Foreign Affairs* 84 (March/April 2005): 43.

pictures being widely circulated through the blogosphere and Internet. This helped generate both national and transnational legitimacy for the widely held assumption of voter fraud. The other avenue of attack was rooted in the democratic principle of the rule of law, an appeal to the parliament and the supreme court.

Though Karatnycky argues that both widespread popular demand and coordinated international pressure were components in generating the necessary pressure on the legislature and judiciary calling for new elections, the constitutional actions taken were vital in themselves. He suggests Yushchenko and his advisors, "understood that a successful civic coup could set a precedent for street-driven politics and remain a long-term source of institutional instability."[86] Yushchenko's fears are legitimate when one considers the cycle of People Power revolutions that have swept through the Philippines over the past twenty years, as discussed below.

By being able to claim non-violent mass support against the election fraud (internationally and nationally) and the successful use of the legislature and judiciary as checks and balances on the executive, the Yushchenko team was able to try and demonstrate that the Orange Revolution possessed a democratic foundation, even if a somewhat revolutionary one. The long-term success of this two-pronged attack faced its first serious challenge in the parliamentary elections in March 2005, with the implications of the vote still in flux as of writing.

Generation TXT

In January 2001, following the de-railed impeachment process of President Joseph Estrada of the Philippines, hundreds of thousands of Filipinos gathered at Manila's Edsa Shrine, the site of 1986's successful People Power revolution overthrow of President Marcos. Richard Lloyd Parry, present in Manila during the

---

[86] Ibid, 44.

relatively non-violent revolution claims the size of the crowds and speed in which

they gathered was a result of using text-messaging to coordinate protest.[87]

People Power II saw ICTs' virtual power clearly being translated into real

world power. Parry reports that even as networks were overloaded with the volume

of text traffic, television stations were reporting the latest messages as news.[88]

> Nearly all the accounts of People Power II available to us come from middle-class writers or by way of a middle-class controlled media with strong nationalist sentiments. And nearly all point to the crucial importance of the cell phone in the rapid mobilization of demonstrators.[89]

> Cell phones, then, were not only invested with the power to overcome the crowded conditions and congested surroundings brought about by the state's inability to order everyday life, they were also seen to bring about a new kind of crowd that was thoroughly conscious of itself as a movement headed toward a common goal.[90]

One reason for the success of text-messaging was that the more anonymous

nature of the technology allowed for greatly increased individual security. Most

Filipinos use pre-paid phone cards as opposed to having contracts, which would

connect users with a billing address, and thus the source of messages was

untraceable. This left the regime with the option of either a complete shut down of

the network or accepting the anti-regime use.[91]

While the cost of text-messaging is argued here to be relatively inexpensive[92]

and therefore a cost-effective tool for developing states, it is important to remember

that People Power II was a manifestation of the middle class. Estrada was seen as a

champion of the poor and following his removal from office they marched on the

---

[87] Parry, Richard Lloyd. "The TXT MSG Revolution," *The Independent* (London), 23 January 2001.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Rafael, Vicente L. "The Cell Phone and the Crowd: Messianic Politics in the Contemporary Philippines." *Public Culture* 15 (Fall 2003): 401.
[90] Ibid, 403.
[91] Parry, Richard Lloyd. "The TXT MSG Revolution," *The Independent* (London), 23 January 2001.
[92] Ibid.;
Howard Rheingold, *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution* (United States: Basic Books, 2002), 76.

Edsa Shrine for People Power III without any technological savvy or political sophistication, as perceived by supporters of People Power II.

> Middle-class accounts of this other crowd regularly made mention of the "voicelessness" of the urban poor. At the same time, these accounts showed a relative lack of concern with actually hearing—much less recording—any distinctive voices. By emphasizing this voicelessness, the middle class in effect redoubled the masses' seeming inarticulateness; as if the masses, without anything intelligible to say, could only act irrationally and at times violently. "Voiceless," the masses, it was feared, might riot in the streets.[93]

This argues that while the cell phone and text-messaging assisted in the peaceful transition from an authoritarian regime to a more democratic government, it did not necessarily cement deep reaching, democratic traditions. Recent actions surrounding the apparent coup attempt against President Arroyo, Estrada's successor, has shown the continuing unsettled situation surrounding the peaceful transfer of power in the Philippines, especially in light of a similar situation in 2005 where, "Mrs. Arroyo survived an attempt to impeach her over allegations that she tried to influence the 2004 presidential poll."[94]

Many questioned Arroyo's declaration of a state of emergency on February 24th, 2006 just prior to a march and rallies to mark the 20th anniversary of the original People Power revolt of 1986, which removed President Ferdinand Marcos from power.[95] The BBC quotes the *Philippine Star* as commenting,

> the results of two people power uprisings have led to the realisation that it takes more than a revolution to liberate this nation from its woes. There is no quick fix to the nation's ills. The nation needs hard work, discipline, institution building, the rule of law. It will take something other than repeated attempts to recreate the 1986... revolt to fulfill the promise of people power.[96]

This is clearly the situation that Yushchenko attempted to prevent by using both peaceful revolution *and* constitutional challenges during the Orange Revolution.

---

[93] Rafael, Vicente L. "The Cell Phone and the Crowd: Messianic Politics in the Contemporary Philippines." *Public Culture* 15 (Fall 2003): 423.
[94] BBC News. *Arroyo Brushes Off Coup Rumours* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/4734894.stm; accessed 26 February 2006.
[95] BBC News. *Emergency Order Unsettles Press* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/4749944.stm; accessed 26 February 2006.
[96] Ibid.

Yet People Power II is one of the few examples where ICT can be clearly shown to have had a discernible effect on democratization processes, a situation where, "A technological thing was thus idealized as an agent of change, invested with the power to bring forth new forms of sociality."[97]

Business as Usual

Though authoritarian governments may enact legislation to curtail free speech on the Internet, often the technical expertise used to curtail information is gained through private companies based in liberal democracies. A recent study conducted at the University of Toronto used computers both inside and outside of Iran to ascertain the nature and methods of content the government is blocking. Though some of the sites being blocked were various pornographic sites – websites the Iranian government has admitted blocking – the study found that dissident groups such as the Communist Party of Iran, mujahideen groups outside of Iran, sites talking about the monarchy and news outlets like the Voice of America were also amongst those blocked. "The study also notes that weblogs, particularly those in Farsi, are being targeted by the Iranian government, as well as websites that provide tools or tips in how to get around Internet filtering."[98]

Further, the study found that the technology being used by the government was commercially available filtering software called SmartFilter, which is produced by a US company called Secure Computing. While Secure Computing has issued statements that it "'has sold no licenses to any entity in Iran,'" and "was actively taking steps to stop what it called this illegal use of their products,"[99] Jonathan Zittrain, co-director of Harvard Law School's Berkman Center for Internet and Society, finds such claims to be untrue and disingenuous and Secure Computing's

---

[97] Rafael, Vicente L. "The Cell Phone and the Crowd: Messianic Politics in the Contemporary Philippines." *Public Culture* 15 (Fall 2003): 402.
[98] Boyd, Clark. *Iran Targets Dissent On The Net* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/technology/4123788.stm; accessed 19 January 2006.
[99] Ibid.

actions representative of Western businesses dealing with authoritarian states.[100]

Microsoft has also taken considerable criticism for the way it has co-operated with requests to remove blogs that discussed used terms such as "democracy," "Taiwan independence" or "freedom"[101] and recently outlined its policy for dealing with requests.

> In future Microsoft will only pull content from MSN when it receives official legal notice that content breaks local laws or MSN's terms and conditions. Content will only be blocked from view in the country which objects to it - the rest of the world will still be able to access it. This is a new function of MSN which the company is in the process of implementing. Additionally, Microsoft will inform the blog's author when content is removed by government order.[102]

Informing users of content removal and only pulling content when receiving official legal notification that content breaks local laws may still negatively influence the ability to create an open forum where citizens can debate the common good, i.e. Habermas' public sphere. It also may be evidence of continued weak protections for civil and political rights, and thus an impediment to democratization processes. Let us now look at how all these factors are playing out in China.

---

[100] Ibid.

[101] Sherriff, Lucy. *Microsoft Deletes 'Freedom' and 'Democracy' in China* [document online]. Available from http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/06/13/ms_ban_freedom//; accessed 28 February 2006.

[102] Oates, John. *Microsoft Changes China Policy* [document online]. Available from http://www.theregister.co.uk/2006/02/01/ms_wants_common_policy/; accessed 28 February 2006.

Chapter 3. China and Google: A Case Study?

China is an emerging global power, especially in the field of economics with its potential consumer base of 1.3 billion citizens – something that is attracting ICT transnational corporations and their governments in the hope of gaining access to this potentially lucrative market. With more than 350 million mobile phones in China[103] and 110 million Internet users – second in absolute numbers only to the United States[104] – Chinese citizens are becoming more wired than ever. Yet concerns linger as to how effective ICT can be in assisting democratization processes within the state.

As China shifts from a centrally-planned to a limited market economy, inevitable friction and social unrest has occurred – especially due to the breakneck speed that the economy is growing.

> The number of so-called 'mass incidents (sit-ins, riots, strikes and demonstrations) reached 74,000 in 2004, an all-time high, and involved about 3.7m individuals. In 1994, by comparison, there were about 10,000 such incidents, with 730,000 participants. ...
>
> Luckily for Beijing, brewing social unrest has not precipitated a nationwide crisis, and participants in these incidents, localised and poorly organised, have yet to form an anti-government movement with mass appeal. Most incidents are triggered by specific grievances (unpaid wages, high taxes and arbitrary land seizures). The government occasionally appeases protesters by punishing local officials or redressing these grievances.
>
> If that fails, the authorities can always call on well-equipped anti-riot police. But mixing carrots and sticks is a Band-Aid approach. The fact that these incidents have grown more than six-fold over the last decade proves that this strategy has failed.[105]

These issues are of concern for the Communist Party as it attempts to facilitate an authoritarian political regime with an increasingly market-oriented economy. During a recent speech following the annual meeting of parliament, Prime

---

[103] Anderson, Kevin. *Breaking Down The Great Firewall* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asisa-pacific/4496163.stm; accessed 14 February 2006.
[104] Clendenin, Mike. *Great Firewall of China* [document online]. Available from http://www.linuxpipeline.com/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=180207814; accessed 28 February 2006.
[105] Pei, Minxin. "China Is Paying The Price Of Rising Social Unrest," *Financial Times* (London), 7 November 2005.

Minister Wen "promised to punish officials who seized land without offering compensation and to tackle a growing gap between China's rich and poor ... but when it came to concrete measures he was far less clear."[106] One way in which such pledges are monitored in liberal democracies is through the freedom of the press. In addressing China's control over its domestic media in light of a crackdown on "errant websites and newspapers" over the last few months, Wen stated, "Internet companies in particular should exercise self-discipline and self-management."[107] State censorship is starting to be opposed from even former high members of the Communist Party[108] but less so by ICT companies based in states where freedom of speech and the press is highly regarded.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF), an NGO that defends imprisoned journalists and press freedom throughout the world notes that there are more than 50 cyber dissidents currently in prison in China. RSF notes the case of Li Yuanlong who "faces charges of incitement to subversion for posting articles online highlighting society's failings and calling for freedom and democracy." Ironically, or perhaps not, Li "is accused of posting a series of articles on foreign-based websites about the harsh living conditions of peasants [a rural inland province],"[109] one of the main policy areas the Chinese Prime Minister said the government was to focus on.

Recently Google has come under fire for its decision to exercise such "self-discipline" by filtering its search results on Google.cn, Google's Chinese version of their industry leading search tool.[110] Google was certainly not the first or only

---

[106] BBC News. *Chinese PM Issues Rural Pledge'* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/4804150.stm; accessed 14 March 2006.
[107] Ibid.
[108] BBC News. *Party Elders Attack China Censors'* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/4712134.stm; accessed 14 February 2006.
[109] Reporters Without Borders. *Journalist Li Yuanlong Charged With "Subversion"* [document online]. Available from http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=16316; accessed 28 February 2006.
[110] BBC News. *Google Censors Itself For China* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4645596.stm; accessed 25 January 2006.;

Western ICT company to acquiesce to Chinese demands, with EC Vice President Margot Wallström recently criticizing Microsoft for blocking Chinese blog entries that use words such as "democracy", "freedom" and "human rights"; blasting Yahoo! for handing over the name of a journalist who had sent an email criticizing the Chinese government; and censuring Google.[111] Yet, many had felt that the libertarian values of the Internet expressed by techno-optimists were embedded in Google; as part of an open letter included in Google's regulatory filing for its initial public offering, co-founder Larry Page outlined Google's promise not to be "evil" by sacrificing its ideals for short-term financial gains.[112]

One must ask whether Google *has* sacrificed its self-professed ideals as a consequence of a recent spate of bad news. The stock price has fallen this year after "its 82% surge in profit failed to meet Wall Street's forecasts,"[113] and the company has faced legal action over allegations of "click fraud" in a search engine advertising market that is expected to be worth $7.4 billion by 2008.[114] Google has recently also faced a copyright infringement lawsuit due to the way it indexes thumb nailed pictures and although the case is not expected to have a wide impact,[115] it adds to the recent problems of the company. Google has been experiencing China-specific problems as well, with RSF reporting that China has blocked access to Google News in an apparent effort to force Internet users to use a less critical Chinese version of

BBC News. *Google Move 'Black Day' For China* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4647398.stm; accessed 25 January 2006.

[111] Leyden, John. *EU Chief Criticises Net Firm Over China Actions* [document online]. Available from http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/12/20/eu_chief_slams_yahoo_ms_google/; accessed 28 February 2006.

[112] Hu, Jim. *Co-founders Release Google 'Owner's Manual'* [document online]. Available from http://news.zdnet.com/2100-3513_22-5202090.html; accessed 28 February 2006.

[113] BBC News. *Google Set To Fall On Profit Miss* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/business/4668180.stm; accessed 31 January 2006.

[114] Liedtke, Michael. *Click Fraud Looms As Threat To Online Advertisers* [document online]. Available from http://www.usatoday.com/tech/news/2005-02-14-click-fraud_x.htm; accessed 14 March 2006.

[115] BBC News. *Google Rapped Over Adult Photos* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4742382.stm; accessed 28 February 2006.

the site.[116] In light of recent actions surrounding the decision to block sites on Google.cn critic John Naughton argues that Google's motto should be changed from "Don't Be Evil," to "Do As Little Evil As You Can."[117] This paper argues actions taken in China by Google must be understood in the greater neo-liberal context, especially as investors feel that an *82% increase* in profits is not enough and Google's traditional revenue streams of advertising may be plateauing.

While critics like Naughton argue that Google's actions represent all that is missing from corporate social responsibility, supporters like Bill Thompson suggest that Google's actions should be seen in the light of, "constructive engagement in a way that respects but also challenges local law."[118] Goolge's attempt of a "respect but challenge local law" ideology should perhaps be contrasted with recent actions by Yahoo! which complied with Chinese authorities requests for information that lead to the locating and imprisonment of dissidents like Li Zhi.[119] Claims by the company that they did not know what the information was to be used for ring hollow when similar actions by Yahoo! resulted in the jailing of journalist Shi Tao the year prior.[120]

Though Western ICT companies seem to be lining up to assist the Communist Party and ensure market access, Chinese actors are attempting to fight state censorship. The closure of *Freezing Point*, an investigative publication "noted for

---

[116] BBC News. *China 'Blocks Google News Site'* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4263525.stm; accessed 14 February 2006.

[117] John Naughton, "RSA Economist Debate: The Internet's Golden Age Is Over," Mediated by Tom Standage, 23 February 2006, Lecture230206.mp3, mp3. http://www.rsa.org.uk/audio/, Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.

[118] Thompson, Bill. *Why Google In China Makes Sense* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4654014.stm; accessed 28 January 2006.

[119] Reporters Without Borders. *Verdict in Cyberdissident Li Zhi Case Confirms Implication of Yahoo!* [document online]. Available from http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=16579; accessed 28 February 2006.

[120] Lemon, Sumner. *Li Verdict Shows Yahoo Played Key Role, Group Says* [document online]. Available from http://www.macworld.com/news/2006/02/28/l1/index.php?lsrc=mwrss; accessed 2 February 2006.;
BBC News. *Chinese Man 'Jailed Due To Yahoo'* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/4695718.stm; accessed 9 February 2006.

its cutting-edge reporting on sensitive topics,"[121] raised such a level of domestic protest even among some former senior party and media officials that the government re-opened the paper. What pro-techno-optimists often fail to mention is that it re-opened without its outspoken editor.[122] Chinese citizens will likely increase self-censorship following the high profile arrests and firing of dissidents, which was likely a primary goal of the regime.

Thompson also claims that since Google.cn, "will let people know if their search results are being restricted, something that doesn't happen if the filtering is done by the government," this is an improvement over other Western ICT companies such as Yahoo! and MSN who also censor results.[123] Microsoft's general counsel Brad Smith has echoed Google's justification by stating his company, "believed it was better for customers that Microsoft was present in these markets in a restricted form than not at all."[124] Consequently, it is important to remember that companies like Microsoft and Google may have *customers'* best interests in mind but this is not necessarily in the best interests of *citizens*.

As Yahoo! has argued, "Private industry alone cannot effectively influence foreign government policies on issues like the free exchange of ideas, maximum access to information, and human rights reform …""[125] These are private corporations whose primary goal is the accretion of profit but actions taken to increase profit or secure market access can still have positive effects for democratization processes. Even RSF has admitted, "The most open Internet sites are the ones that are

---

[121] Luard, Tim. *China's Censored Media Answers Back* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/4743274.stm; accessed 24 February 2006.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Thompson, Bill. *Why Google In China Makes Sense* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4654014.stm; accessed 28 January 2006.
[124] Oates, John. *Microsoft Changes China Policy* [document online]. Available from http://www.theregister.co.uk/2006/02/01/ms_wants_common_policy/; accessed 28 February 2006.
[125] Haines, Lester. *Please Don't Censor The Internet, Sobs Yahoo!* [document online]. Available from http://www.theregister.co.uk/2006/02/14/yahoo_censorship_statement/; accessed 28 February 2006.

commercial enterprises. Competition within this sector encourages those in charge to test the limits of censorship."[126] Yet it must also be noted that websites in China, including those run or financed international corporations like Yahoo! have gone beyond simple self-censorship to not objecting to the installation of spyware in their servers "that enables the cyberpolice to identify recalcitrant Internet users."[127]

McChesney argues that due to its creation of and current dominance of cyberspace – among other reasons – a focus on the United States can generate a reasonably accurate understanding of the political impact of the Internet. He concedes that to the extent a US-centric approach was even plausible in 2000, it will not be so in the future.[128] Google's partially successful resistance to US government requests for information[129] might suggest that private organizations have not lost the ability to counter state power. Yet extrapolating from the US experience of the Internet to other states like China may be inaccurate and McChesney's future may be here now. With the continual bowing to political pressure by Beijing on Western ICT companies operating in China and recent technical developments that could allow for a mass-audience, national intranet that minimizes the international aspect of the global Internet,[130] the ability of ICT to provide a catalyst for democratization in authoritarian regimes may truly be limited.

---

[126] Reporters Without Borders. "*Living Dangerously On The Net*" [document online]. Available from http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=6793; accessed 28 February 2006.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Robert W. McChesney, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 122.
[129] BBC News. *Google Ordered To Hand Over Data* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4821858.stm; accessed 19 March 2006.
[130] Geist, Michael. *China And The Break-up Of The Net* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4779660.stm; accessed 7 March 2006.; Ward, Mark. *Google Big Push For Chinese Net Domains* [document online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4767972.stm; accessed 3 March 2006.

Conclusion

Although this paper has remained skeptical of the position that new ICTs will inevitably result in the overthrow of authoritarian regimes, it has remained open to the potential for positive effects on democratization processes, particularly holding governments accountable and contributing a forum for communication and debate as part of the public sphere. As Wilkin has suggested, "Global communication could service the ideal of providing us with an open, plural, critical and independent form of news media and channels of communication that could help to sustain and inform a critical global citizenry."[131]

Stephen Coleman argues that several steps can be taken to help move from an informatization perspective to one of an information polity and help accomplish the goal of direct public deliberation. He suggests that there is a need to create a virtual public space that would, "enable citizens to inform themselves about the issues of the day, scrutinize the workings of parliament and government, and enter into dialogue with decision makers in ways currently available to elites (often via expensive lobbying and shady cronyism) but rarely to average citizens,"[132] a view also supported by Friedland. This could be achieved through online policy proposals that would also allow for online consultation. Finally, public involvement in various legislative and executive committees could be achieved through the use of webcasts, whether citizens were "invited guests (via closed discussion lists)" or through the use of open forums, which could be summarized and attached to committee reports as appendices.[133]

---

[131] Peter Wilkin, *The Political Economy of Global Communication: An Introduction* (London, England: Pluto Press, 2001), 64.
[132] Stephen Coleman, "Cutting Out the Middle Man: From Virtual Representation to Direct Deliberation," in *Digital Democracy: Discourse And Decision Making In The Information Age,* eds Barry N. Hague and Brian D. Loader (New York, Routledge, 1999), 200 – 201.
[133] Ibid, 201.

Though Coleman is not a techno-optimist, his argument may be one or, at least, suggests a type of e-government that may not be embraced by political elites. McChesney does not share the optimism of techno-optimists. He believes their "utopianism" is a result of not just a belief in ICT but that the neo-liberal economic regime it is often embedded in is a fair, rational, and democratic mechanism – a claim he disputes.[134] How then should ICTs role be understood?

As Hagen reports,

> Research on IT applications in politics and government has found overwhelming evidence that political, cultural, economic and social factors shape the forms and extents of political uses of computer technology. ICT do not change political institutions and processes by virtue of their mere existence. Rather, their use may amplify existing social behaviours and trends. This can be contributed to the fact that the development is controlled by specific dominant interests.[135]

Many authors are critical of what the growing concentration of media power in the hands global transnational corporations and their neo-liberal ideology means for human security for citizens in both liberal democracies and authoritarian regimes, and the potential implications for democracy. The outcome of this competition is in no way decided and democratically accountable governments – at local, national, regional or global levels – may reassert greater control over these private actors. While a massive paradigm shift in global political and economic regimes may be unlikely, "at the moment there are manifestations of discontent, caused by lack of faith in corporate players, limited remits of regulators and new ambitions of local governments."[136]

---

[134] Robert W. McChesney, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 121.

[135] Martin Hagen, "Digital Democracy and Political Systems," in *Digital Democracy: Issues Of Theory And Practice,* eds Kenneth L. Hacker and Jan van Dijk (Great Britain: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2000), 55.

[136] Hulsink, Willem. "Tides in Communication Politics?" *Gazette: The International Journal for Communication Studies* 67 (December 2005): 573.

Ackerman and Duvall argue that, "protest itself cannot pry a ruler from office because power does not come from a public show; it comes from applying force,"[137] something that seems to be backed up with the Orange Revolution. They argue that large scale protests are one of many nonviolent tactics of economic and social disruption that can weaken the political or military support of authoritarian regimes when directed strategically by a civilian-based movement, assisting in transitions from authoritarian to more democratic governments. And while the use of ICT to facilitate actual nonviolent transition periods is crucial, so is the role it can play in changing broader socio-political norms by promoting ideals of pluralism and freedom of speech. "Freedom House noted that the stronger the nonviolent civic coalition operating in societies in the years immediately preceding the transition, the deeper their transformation in the direction of freedom and democracy."[138]

In assessing the ability of ICT to facilitate transitions from authoritarian regimes to those of a more democratic nature, it is important to think of ICT as a part of a more holistic approach. Kalathil and Boas have argued,

> [i]n reality, the use of the Internet may be but a small factor in any democratic transition. Traditional (albeit less glamorous) forms of democracy assistance, such as bolstering local governments, aiding political parties, and promoting civic education, are vital ways to support liberalization in the long term. In fact it may be helpful to think of the Internet as primarily facilitating work in these other areas rather than playing a starring role itself.[139]

As such, ICT should be seen as an enabler, rather than an inherent democratizing tool. ICTs ability to provide forums that create the possibility of meaningful participation in the institutions and procedures that shape political, economic and social life *can* contribute to a healthy public sphere and democracy. ICT *can* help hold governments more accountable, play a role in maintaining free and

---

[137] Ackerman, Peter & Jack Duvall. "People Power Primed: Civilian Resistance and Democratization." *Harvard International Review* 27 (Summer 2005): 43.
[138] Ibid, 46.
[139] Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor C. Boas, *Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact Of The Internet On Authoritarian Rule* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 2003), 151.

fair competitive elections, illustrate the protection of civil and political rights and be a platform for numerous, autonomous associations that make up civil society, key components of democratization processes. There is just no guarantee that ICT *will*.

Paul Goodrick
Honours Candidate
Department of Political Science
Simon Fraser University
April 18, 2006
[Final revisions, January 2011]

Works Cited

Ackerman, Peter & Jack Duvall. "People Power Primed: Civilian Resistance and Democratization." *Harvard International Review* 27 (Summer 2005): 42 – 47.

Anderson, Christopher. *Getting Used: How The Mainstream Media Helps Create Climate Of Fear And Repression During Political Protests.* Indymedia, 2004.

Anderson, Kevin. *Breaking Down The Great Firewall* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asisa-pacific/4496163.stm; accessed 14 February 2006.

Arena, Kelli. *Bush Says He Signed NSA Wiretap Order* [online]. Available from http://www.cnn.com/2005/POLITICS/12/17/bush.nsa/; accessed 12 March 2006.

BBC News. *Arroyo Brushes Off Coup Rumours* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/4734894.stm; accessed 26 February 2006.

BBC News. *China 'Blocks Google News Site'* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4263525.stm; accessed 14 February 2006.

BBC News. *Chinese Man 'Jailed Due To Yahoo'* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/4695718.stm; accessed 9 February 2006.

BBC News. *Chinese PM Issues Rural Pledge* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/4804150.stm; accessed 14 March 2006.

BBC News. *Emergency Order Unsettles Press* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/4749944.stm; accessed 26 February 2006.

BBC News. *Google Censors Itself For China* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4645596.stm; accessed 25 January 2006.

BBC News. *Google Move 'Black Day' For China* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4647398.stm; accessed 25 January 2006.

BBC News. *Google Ordered To Hand Over Data* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4821858.stm; accessed 19 March 2006.

BBC News. *Google Rapped Over Adult Photos* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4742382.stm; accessed 28 February 2006.

BBC News. *Google Set To Fall On Profit Miss* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/business/4668180.stm; accessed 31 January 2006.

BBC News. *Iran Shuts Down Reformist Papers* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3502995.stm; accessed 19 January 2006.

BBC News. *Italy Bid For PM Corruption Trial* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/europe/4793070.stm; accessed 10 March 2006.

BBC News. *Party Elders Attack China Censors* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/4712134.stm; accessed 14 February 2006.

Bellamy, Christine and John A. Taylor. "Exploiting IT In Public Administration – Towards The Information Polity?" *Public Administration* 72 (Spring 1994): 1 – 12.

Boyd, Clark. *Iran Targets Dissent On The Net* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/technology/4123788.stm; accessed 19 January 2006.

Brookings Institution. *"The CNN Effect": How 24-Hour News Coverage Affects Government Decisions and Public Opinion* [online]. Available from http://www.brookings.edu/comm/transcripts/20020123.htm; Accessed 13 March 2005.

Cayzer, Steve. "Semantic Blogging and Decentralized Knowledge Management." *Communications of the ACM* 48 (February 2005): 47-52.

Chattopadhyay, Rohitashya. "The Internet and Postcolonial Development: India's Transnational Reality." *Contemporary South Asia* 12 (March 2003), 25 – 40.

Clendenin, Mike. *Great Firewall of China* [online]. Available from http://www.linuxpipeline.com/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=180207814; accessed 28 February 2006.

Coleman, Stephen. "Cutting Out the Middle Man: From Virtual Representation to Direct Deliberation." in *Digital Democracy: Discourse And Decision Making In The Information Age,* eds Barry N. Hague and Brian D. Loader, 195 – 210. New York, Routledge, 1999.

Dictionary.com. *Weblog* [online]. Available from http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=weblog; accessed 7 March 2005.

Friedland, Lewis A. "Electronic Democracy And The New Citizenship." *Media, Culture & Society* 18 (April 1996): 185 – 212.

Geist, Michael. *China And The Break-up Of The Net* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4779660.stm; accessed 7 March 2006.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation Of The Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into A Category Of Bourgeois Society.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989.

Hachigian, Nina. "The Internet and Power in One-Party East Asian States." *Washington Quarterly* 25 (Summer 2002): 41 – 58.

Hagen, Martin. "Digital Democracy and Political Systems." in *Digital Democracy: Issues Of Theory And Practice,* eds Kenneth L. Hacker and Jan van Dijk, 54 – 69. Great Britain: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2000.

Haines, Lester. *Please Don't Censor The Internet, Sobs Yahoo!* [online]. Available from http://www.theregister.co.uk/2006/02/14/yahoo_censorship_statement/; accessed 28 February 2006.

Hill, David T. and Krishna Sen. *The Internet in Indonesia's New Democracy.* New York, United States: Routledge, 2005.

Hu, Jim. *Co-founders Release Google 'Owner's Manual'* [online]. Available from http://news.zdnet.com/2100-3513_22-5202090.html; accessed 28 February 2006.

Hulsink, Willem. "Tides in Communication Politics?" *Gazette: The International Journal for Communication Studies* 67 (December 2005): 569 – 574.

Jakobsen, Peter Viggo. "Focus on the CNN Effect Misses the Point: The Real Media Impact on Conflict Management is Invisible and Indirect." *Journal of Peace Research* 37 (March 2000): 131 – 143.

Johnson, Thomas J. and Barbara K. Kaye. "Wag the Blog: How Reliance on Traditional Media and the Internet Influence Credibility Perceptions of Weblogs among Blog Users." *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 81 (Autumn 2004): 622 – 642.

Kalathil, Shanthi and Taylor C. Boas. *Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact Of The Internet On Authoritarian Rule.* Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 2003.

Karatnycky, Adrian. "The Democratic Imperative." *The National Interest* 76 (Summer 2004): 107 – 116.

Karatnycky, Adrian. "Ukraine's Orange Revolution." *Foreign Affairs* 84 (March/April 2005): 35 – 52.

Lemon, Sumner. *Li Verdict Shows Yahoo Played Key Role, Group Says* [online]. Available from http://www.macworld.com/news/2006/02/28/l1/index.php?lsrc=mwrss; accessed 2 February 2006.

Leyden, John. *EU Chief Criticises Net Firm Over China Actions* [online]. Available from http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/12/20/eu_chief_slams_yahoo_ms_google/; accessed 28 February 2006.

Liedtke, Michael. *Click Fraud Looms As Threat To Online Advertisers* [online]. Available from http://www.usatoday.com/tech/news/2005-02-14-click-fraud_x.htm; accessed 14 March 2006.

Luard, Tim. *China's Censored Media Answers Back* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/4743274.stm; accessed 24 February 2006.

March, Luke. "Russian Parties And The Political Internet." *Europe-Asia Studies* 56 (May 2004): 369 – 400.

McChesney, Robert W. *Corporate Media And The Threat To Democracy.* New York: Seven Stories Press, 1997.

McChesney, Robert W. *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999.

Metzl, Jamie F. "Information Technology and Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly* 18 (November 1996): 705 – 746.

Mystery pollster. *Gallup Poll On Blogs* [online]. Available from http://www.mysterypollster.com/main/2005/03/gallup_poll_on_.html; accessed 11 March 2005.

Naughton, John. "RSA Economist Debate: The Internet's Golden Age Is Over." Mediated by Tom Standage, 23 February 2006. Lecture230206.mp3, mp3. http://www.rsa.org.uk/audio/, Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.

O'Grady, Paul. "A New Medium Comes of Age." *New Statesman* 134 (10 January 2005): 14 – 15.

Oates, John. *Microsoft Changes China Policy* [online]. Available from http://www.theregister.co.uk/2006/02/01/ms_wants_common_policy/; accessed 28 February 2006.

Palser, Barb. "Journalism's Backseat Drivers." *American Journalism Review* 27 (August/September 2005): 42 – 51.

Parry, Richard Lloyd. "The TXT MSG Revolution," *The Independent* (London), 23 January 2001.

Pei, Minxin. "China Is Paying The Price Of Rising Social Unrest," *Financial Times* (London), 7 November 2005.

Potter, David. "Explaining Democratization." in *Democratization,* eds David Potter, David Goldblatt, Margaret Kiloh and Paul Lewis, 1 – 40. USA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997.

Rafael, Vicente L. "The Cell Phone and the Crowd: Messianic Politics in the Contemporary Philippines." *Public Culture* 15 (Fall 2003): 399 – 425.

Reporters Without Borders. *Journalist Li Yuanlong Charged With "Subversion"* [online]. Available from http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=16316; accessed 28 February 2006.

Reporters Without Borders. *"Living Dangerously On The Net"* [online]. Available from http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=6793; accessed 28 February 2006.

Reporters Without Borders. *Verdict in Cyberdissident Li Zhi Case Confirms Implication of Yahoo!* [online]. Available from http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=16579; accessed 28 February 2006.

Reynolds, Glenn Harlan. "The Blogs of War: How the Internet is Reshaping Foreign Policy." *The National Interest* 75 (Spring 2004): 59 – 64.

Rheingold, Howard. *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution.* United States: Basic Books, 2002.

Robinson, Piers. *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention.* New York: Routledge, 2002.

Sherriff, Lucy. *Microsoft Deletes 'Freedom' and 'Democracy' in China* [online]. Available from http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/06/13/ms_ban_freedom//; accessed 28 February 2006.

Solomon, John. *FBI Investigates Halliburton's No-Bid Contracts* [online]. Available from http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/contract/2004/1028greenhouse.htm; accessed 13 April 2006.

Thompson, Bill. *Why Google In China Makes Sense* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4654014.stm; accessed 28 January 2006.

Thornton, Bridget, Brit Walters and Lori Rouse. "Corporate Media Is Corporate America." in *Censored 2006: The Top 25 Censored Stories,* ed Peter Phillips, 253 – 270. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005.

Tumber, Howard and Michael Bromley. "Virtual Soundbites: Political Communication In Cyberspace." *Media, Culture & Society* 20 (January 1998): 159 – 167.

van Dijk, Jan. "Models of Democracy and Concepts of Communications." in *Digital Democracy: Issues Of Theory And Practice,* eds Kenneth L. Hacker and Jan van Dijk, 30 – 53. Great Britain: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2000.

Ward, Mark. *Google Data Request Fuels Fears* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/technology/4631924.stm; accessed 22 January 2006.

Wilkin, Peter. *The Political Economy of Global Communication: An Introduction.* London, England: Pluto Press, 2001.

Wingfield-Hayes, Rupert. *China's Rural Millions Left Behind* [online]. Available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4782194.stm; accessed 10 March 2006.

Worth, Robert F. and Edward Wong. "Politics, Iraqi Style: Slick TV Ads, Text Messaging and Gunfire," *New York Times* (New York), 11 December 2005.