



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Volume 11 Issue 23 Version 1.0 December 2011
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)
Online ISSN: 0975-4172 & Print ISSN: 0975-4350

The Problems and Prospects of New Public Sphere for Global Civil Society

By Muhammad Zubair Khan, Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani, Dr. Allah Nawaz

Gomal University, KPK, Pakistan

Abstract - Information and communication technologies (ICTS) have revolutionized almost every aspect of life particularly it has created a new global public sphere by providing endless list of tools for global communication thereby establishing a new global society with novel norms and mundane issues. This paper is an effort to review the state of affairs in new public sphere with a focus on the digital tools under use, their role in creating the global society and the threats and opportunities available for the international citizens for behaving effectively to utilize the opportunities and manage threats to the maximum. The paper explores interlinks between the digital gadgets, emerging global public sphere and the mundane issues emanating from this situation. The paper ends with a theoretical model constructed out of the themes floating across the review and analysis.

Keywords : *New Global Society, New Public Sphere, ICTS, Social Software.*

GJCST Classification : *K.4.m*



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



© 2011 . Muhammad Zubair Khan, Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani, Dr. Allah Nawaz. This is a research/review paper, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 Unported License <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/>), permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

The Problems and Prospects of New Public Sphere for Global Civil Society

Muhammad Zubair Khan^α, Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani^Ω, Dr. Allah Nawaz^β

Abstract - Information and communication technologies (ICTS) have revolutionized almost every aspect of life particularly it has created a new global public sphere by providing endless list of tools for global communication thereby establishing a new global society with novel norms and mundane issues. This paper is an effort to review the state of affairs in new public sphere with a focus on the digital tools under use, their role in creating the global society and the threats and opportunities available for the international citizens for behaving effectively to utilize the opportunities and manage threats to the maximum. The paper explores interlinks between the digital gadgets, emerging global public sphere and the mundane issues emanating from this situation. The paper ends with a theoretical model constructed out of the themes floating across the review and analysis.

Keywords : *New Global Society, New Public Sphere, ICTS, Social Software,*

I. INTRODUCTION

The 'public-sphere' is a sphere which mediates between society and state, in which the public organizes itself into a bearer of public opinion (Habermas, 1974). 'Cyberspace' is promoted as a 'new public space', which enables the people to follow the objectives of self-fulfillment and personal development (Papacharissi, 2002). The contemporary global public sphere is largely dependent on the global and local communication media system including television, radio, and the print press, as well as a diversity of multimedia and communications systems, among which the Internet and horizontal communication networks are playing a decisive role (Castells, 2008).

The fundamental principle of the public sphere is the 'principle of public information' which once had to be fought for against the cryptic policies of monarchies and which since then has made possible the democratic control of state activities-the sphere of public authority (Habermas, 1974). Particularly, the internet and related technologies are increasing avenues for personal expression and promoting citizen activity (Papacharissi, 2002). Since the rise of the Internet in the early 1990s, the global civil society has grown from millions into billions. At the same time, social media have become a fact of life for civil society worldwide, involving many

actors like regular citizens, activists, nongovernmental organizations, firms of telecommunications, software providers, and government agencies (Shirky, 2011).

The public sphere is a domain of social life in which public opinion can be formed and based on the transposition of the model of face-to-face communication to that of mediated communication. Habermas closely ties the notion of public sphere, its constitution, structure and change with the rational debate (Habermas, 1989). With the emergence of Internet several questions have surfaced about whether the new form of computer-mediated communication will contribute to a higher degree of social integration? How can it connect and reintegrate individuals? How can it enrich the interaction between citizen, social groups and their governments? Critical dilemmas are appearing from the emergence of the 'electronic' or 'virtual' public sphere (Oblak, 2002).

Undoubtedly, the rapid penetration of the communication technologies into different aspects of public life was mainly enhanced by its potential for interactive, unmediated and synchronous communication that was unthinkable before (Oblak, 2002). The process of globalization has shifted the debate from the national domain to the global level, prompting the emergence of a global civil society and different forms of global governance. Furthermore, the public sphere as a discussion forum for debate on public affairs has also transformed from national to the global and is increasingly constructed around global communication networks (Castells, 2008).

The creation of special interest groups fosters the development of several online publics, which reflect the collective ideologies of their members. It is in consonance with the Habermas' vision as it was one of 'coffeehouse' or small group discussions (Papacharissi, 2002). While their key technological features are fairly consistent, the cultures that emerge around cyberspace are varied. Most sites support the maintenance of legacy social networks, but others allow strangers connect based on shared interests, political views, or activities (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). In addition to basic demographic and socioeconomic factors, however, factors such as individuals' Internet skills and political motivations should also be prioritized. Skills and motivations are the two most important factors that would explain individuals' differential Internet use for politics (Min, 2010:26).

Author ^α : Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Gomal University, KPK, Pakistan. E-mail : zubairbaluch@gmail.com

Author ^Ω : Professor, Department of Politics and International Relations International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan. E-mail : ijazsgilani@gmail.com

Author ^β : Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration Gomal University, KPK, Pakistan. E-mail : profallahnawaz@gmail.com

The global civil society is the organized expression of values and interests of a society (Kean, 2003, Castells, 2008). It is supposed to be an arena for fostering the regimes of tolerance, civility and pluralism and its advocates assume that activism within civil society will promote these values globally (Chandler, 2007). The decreasing ability of the nationally political systems to manage the world's problems on a global scale has induced the rise of a global civil society (Castells, 2008). However, it is generally agreed that global civil society is a 'fuzzy concept' (Anheier et al., 2001b, p. 11; An-Na'im, 2002; Chandhoke, 2002). Its 'organizational infrastructure' is still in a 'state of flux' (Anheier and Themudo, 2002, p. 191), nonetheless Keane's (2001, p. 23) description provides the essence of the issue: 'Global civil society is a vast, interconnected, and multilayered social space that comprises many hundreds of self-directing or non-governmental institutions and ways of life'. Through its 'cross border networks' global civil society is constituted of 'chains of interactions linking the local, regional and planetary orders' (p. 24), This new social world is constituted by 'networks, coalitions, partnerships and social movements' (Anheier and Themudo, 2002).

Voluntary organizations and the public sphere of discourse are rapidly shifting from the mass media to the interactive Internet channels. The most obvious transformations can be witnessed in the global and national communications systems. ICTs have facilitated several other changes, like (1) convergence of telecommunication and computers, (2) miniaturization of personal communication devices, (3) rapid expansion of the wireless and (4) application of information storage, processing and retrieval in nearly all industries and services (Tehrani, 2004). The internet age through its new technology and information flow offer 'digital publics' unlimited social possibility to innovate and form discursive communities of their choice around diverse issues (Drache, 2008).

From their humble beginnings, virtual worlds have evolved to become major hubs of entertainment, education, and community. Although the development of these virtual worlds has been driven by the game industry, by now these worlds are used for far more than play, and soon they will be widely adopted as spaces for research, education, politics, and work (Messinger et al., 2008).

II. NEW PUBLIC SPHERE

Habermas (1962/1989) traced the development of the public sphere in the 17th and 18th century and its decline in the 20th century. He saw the public sphere as a realm of our social life in which public opinion could be formed out of rational public debate. 'Ultimately, informed and logical discussion, Habermas argued, could lead to public agreement and decision making, thus representing the best of the democratic tradition'

(Papacharissi, 2002). This public sphere first emerged in Great Britain at the end of the 17th Century - the Licensing Act of 1695, which allowed newspapers to print without the Queen's censorship, is regarded as a crucial enabler (Gordon, 2004).

The story of public-sphere begins with the invention of press by Gutenberg in 1438 and continued progressing with the help of emerging technologies like the electric telegraph invented by Morse in 1837, telephone by Bell in 1876, radio, invented by Marconi in 1895 and in 1923 Baird's television - all brought with it the most speculation of its democratizing power (Gordon, 2004). Digital revolution by computers, networks, Internet and now social networking have raised the notion of not only public sphere rather 'global public sphere' to its heights (Nawaz, 2010, 2011).

Our interactions with one another today are increasingly multimodal. We conduct our relationships face-to-face, over the phone, and online through modes as varied as e-mail, instant messaging, social network friending, personal messages, comments, shared participation in discussion forums and online games, and the sharing of digital photos, music, and videos. Research is increasingly signifying that the closer the relationship, the more modes people use to communicate with one another (Haythornthwaite, 2005:721). The public sphere is the space of communication of ideas and projects that emerge from society and are addressed to the decision makers in the institutions of society (Castells, 2008).

There is transformation of a public sphere anchored around the national institutions of territorially bound societies to a public sphere constituted around the media system (Volkmer 1999; El-Nawawy and Iskander 2002). There is a public sphere in the international arena. It exists within the political and institutional space that is not subject to any particular sovereign authority but, instead, is shaped by the variable geometry of relationships between states and global nonstate actors (Volkmer 2003). It is widely recognized that diverse social interests express themselves in this international arena: multinational corporations, world religions, cultural creators, public intellectuals, and self-defined global cosmopolitans (Castells, 2008).

The Internet in many ways changed our established conceptions not only about space, time, and access, but also about publicness, activity and interaction (Oblak, 2002). For example, a virtual world on Internet is a spatially based depiction of a persistent virtual environment, which can be experienced by numerous participants at once, who are represented within the space by avatars (Koster, 2004). Koster begins to draw out some of the essential characteristics of a virtual world, but lacks the explicit mention of the technology needed to bring these environments into existence (Bell, 2008).

If communication networks of any kind shape the public sphere, then our society-the network society, organizes its public sphere, more than any other historical form of organization, and it does so on the basis of media communication networks (Lull 2007; Cardoso 2006; Chester 2007). These communication networks are distinctive feature of contemporary society (Castells, 2008) these networks and information technologies are creating virtual spaces or worlds (Papacharissi, 2002). A 'virtual world' is the 'crafted places inside computers that are designed to accommodate large numbers of people'. This definition contains the technological element but does not include the ideas of persistence or synchronous communication (Bell, 2008). In the digital epoch, this includes the diversity of both the mass media and Internet and wireless communication networks (McChesney 2007:79).

III. DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

ICT is a shorthand for the computers, software, networks, satellite links and related systems that allow people to access, analyze, create, exchange and use data, information, and knowledge in ways that were unimaginable before. ICT is used almost interchangeably with the Internet (Beebe, 2004). Internet technologies (now incorporating "Web 2.0" technologies such as wikis, blogs, RSS), virtual reality applications and/or videogames and mobile devices are some of the many technologies used today for communication and entertainment (Chan & Lee, 2007; Nawaz & Kundi, 2010).

In the new public sphere much activity is growing in the areas of business, education, and culture. Concerning advertising and promotions, there is a list of 126 prominent real life brands in Second Life as of August 31, 2007, including IBM, Mercedes, Pontiac, Nissan, Dell, BMG (in the media Sector), and PA Consulting (Barnes, 2007). In retailing and service businesses, there were 25,365 business owners in Second Life in February 2007, most of whom owned stores, rented real estate, or managed clubs (DMD et al., 2007). Business, public organizations, and cultural groups are using this environment for conferencing, public meetings, delivering informational services, and performances or exhibits (Messinger et al., 2008).

Acquiring and dispersing political communication online is fast, easy, affordable, and convenient (Abramson et al., 1988). New technologies provide information and tools that can extend the role of the public in the social and political spheres. The emergence of online political groups and activism certainly reflects political uses of the internet (Bowen, 1996; Browning, 1996). PC and Internet created the facilities to connect and interact with other users across the globe (Messinger et al., 2008). The current media system is multi-layered. It is local and global at the same time (Castells, 2008:90). Thus the cyberspace translates

into a virtual world and specific locations with in this vast digital space become identical with eighteenth century European cafés that facilitated intellectual forum identified by Habermas as the 'bourgeois public sphere'. Within this framework, despite the structural transformations in society, geographically dispersed intelligence can converge in cyberspace to engage in rational and critical debate (Ubayasiri, 2006).

The distinctive feature of open virtual worlds is the social interaction among people and their avatars that take place in a 3D immersive shared environment with user-chosen objectives, user-generated content and social networking tools. In these worlds, people can form relationships in a variety of ways; as friends, romantic partners, virtual family members, business partners, team members, group members, and online community members (Lederman, 2007). They can also create things, and save, give, or even sell what they created to other people. And, as the objects that are created might be desired by others, so they suddenly have value in the real-world economy (Lastowka & Hunter, 2006). These features make virtual worlds as desirable virtual spaces for collaborative play, learning, and work (Messinger et al., 2008).

The new public sphere is emerging out of the digital gadgets starting from a 'computer' then connecting these computers together into 'Network', these networks first started within a building, then cities, states and finally 'global-networks' came up with the concepts of 'Internet', which is now working as real global platform thereby giving every citizen an opportunity to become an 'international-citizen' (Chan & Lee, 2007). This platform has offered global discussion and dialogue opportunities that can be continued 24/7. Internet, like other digital tools, works with hardware and software devices to communicate and exchange messages and files (Nawaz, 2010).

'Social-software' is that creed of software which helps in conducting social activities and socializing process at any temporal level including the international communications. As a result a 'new environment' of global interaction is being established, which has both positive and negative consequences for the international community (Oblak, 2002). The social software has created and activated 'new public sphere' as a backdrop of global communications for the novel 'global society' which never existed in a form that every member of this community can instantly communicate or interact with another member beyond the traditional limits of time and space (Bell, 2008).

IV. SOCIAL SOFTWARE

Social software can be broadly defined as tools and environments that facilitate activities in digital social networks (Chatti et al., 2006). Digital social networks are social networks mainly realized by means of computer-mediated communication. Most social software research concentrates on the relations between social



entities in digital social networks and their interaction, while community information systems contain and group social entities (Klamma et al., 2007). What makes social network sites distinctive is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. This may lead to connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently between “latent ties” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Social software is a very difficult concept to define. The term encompasses a wide range of different technologies, along with the social aspect of the technologies that often emerges from a combined use of different technologies. Commonly used social software includes weblogs, wikis, RSS feeds and social bookmarking (Dalsgaard, 2006). The social network sites are web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and navigate their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

The blogs are a class of software often used in organizations nowadays, e.g. corporate wikis, social bookmarks, and RSS web feeds (Kumar et al., 2004). The term ‘Blog’ is a contraction of ‘Weblog’ and the act of ‘Blogging’ is the making of such logs. For some businesses, the ‘real’ news isn’t just a ticker-tape-like news feed from Reuters or the BBC. In business, the most significant news is what you and those you have reason to care about, did yesterday, are doing today, and plan to do tomorrow (Klamma et al., 2007).

Finally, wikis can also be catalogued as social software tools. A wiki is a web page which can be edited dynamically directly from the web page itself. In principle, everybody with access to a wiki can amend it. It is possible to either edit a current page or create new pages through new hyperlinks. A wiki keeps track of changes meaning that one can view previous versions of each page on a wiki. The most renowned implementation of a wiki is wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>), an online encyclopaedia which everybody can edit. Wikis support collaborative construction, development and production. (Dalsgaard, 2006).

V. OPPORTUNITIES OF THE NEW PUBLIC SPHERE

Current technologies enable the Internet to be fairly decentralized and open, free from censorship and with the ability of anonymity. New technologies can further enhance these features of the Internet in future. Through these characteristics the Internet can, indeed, at least provide the basis for a public sphere that

approximates to Habermas’ vision (Gordon, 2004). Online spheres are no longer contained within their own boundaries (if they ever were). What appear to be single online groups often turn out to be multi-modal. Group members connect with one another in multiple online spaces, using multiple media–social network sites to make their identity and social connections visible, YouTube for video sharing, Flickr for sharing pictures, blogs for instantaneous updates, web sites for amassing collective intelligence, and so on (Baym, 2009).

The greater pluralism promoted through the Internet offers a similar source of empowerment for geographically dispersed subordinate groups. These groups may be based on identity or on a common interest. Such forms of global resistance politics may be symbolic of a form of mutual affinity that is not delimited to territorial borders: indeed, that openly rejects the institutional and imaginative constraints imposed in a nation-state frame (Crack, 2007). As the communications become more sophisticated, and more participatory, the networked population is gaining greater access to information, more opportunities to engage in public speech, and getting more powerful to work collaboratively (Shirky, 2011).

There is inherent tendency of networks to produce fragmented audiences. Historically, segmented groups prove valuable for societal transformation and civil rights movement is the best example. Each has pressed for recognition and greater inclusion within mainstream society, but has mobilized through counter publics of alternative and independent media (Fraser, 1992; Warner, 2002). Social media can compensate for the disadvantages of undisciplined groups by reducing the coordination costs. Resultantly, larger, looser groups can now take on some kinds of coordinated action, such as protest movements and public media campaigns that were previously reserved for formal organizations (Shirky, 2011). Recent uprising in Egypt and London riots can be good examples in this regards.

Anonymity online assists users to overcome identity boundaries and communicate more freely and openly, thus promoting a more enlightened exchange of ideas (Papacharissi, 2002). ICTs have increased dialogic opportunities between geographically disparate actors, thus opening up the prospect of extending public spheres beyond the nation state (Crack, 2007).

VI. THREATS OF NEW PUBLIC SPHERE

Internet enthusiasts’ rhetoric on the advantages of the internet as a public sphere is based on the fact that it provides a place for personal expression. It makes it possible for little-known individuals and groups to reach out to citizens directly and restructure public affairs, and connects the government to citizens (Papacharissi, 2002). Most Realist scholarship perceives technology as a passive and exogenous factor,

contributing to the power capabilities of states, which strive for security and welfare in an anarchic environment. Technological leadership and control of large technological systems is imperative to maintain or improve a relative power position in the international system. Technology is instrumental in achieving political goals (Fritsch, 2011).

Mere access to the internet does not guarantee increased political activity or enlightened political discourse. Moving political discussion to an online space excludes those with no access to this space. Moreover, connectivity does not ensure a more representative and robust public sphere (Papacharissi, 2002). There is a concern that ICTs, which are expected to contribute to the development of all humans, actually widen the inequalities between the developed world and the underdeveloped world, the rich and poor, whites and blacks, the educated and less-educated, etc., creating the so-called 'digital divide' (Warschauer, 2003; Van Dijk, 2005; Min, 2010).

The network society is marked by a trend towards individualization, social fragmentation and new forms of mediated community. The logic of networked organization is horizontally differentiated and polycentric. The old cohesive hierarchies are replaced by a multitude of strategically important 'nodes' in the network, which can cooperate and conflict with one another. Network structures encompass all spheres of society, including politics, government, the economy, technology, and the community (Crack, 2007). The decreased ability of territorially based political systems to manage the world's problems on a global scale has induced the rise of a global civil society (Castells, 2008).

VII. IMPACTS ON GLOBAL SOCIETY

Interaction between citizens, civil society, and the state, communicating through the public sphere ensure that the balance between stability and social change is maintained in the conduct of public affairs (Castells, 2008). Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs), grassroots activists, and social movement actors are becoming more intertwined to leverage their strengths and make an impact on local, national, and global realities. NGOs are key players in this global network. These influence international and state policies by researching and disseminating information, launching awareness campaigns, lobbying, and organizing direct action in collaboration with other organizations and networks (Custard, 2008).

It is through the media, both mass media and horizontal networks of communication, that non-state actors influence people's thinking and foster social change. Ultimately, the transformation of consciousness does have impact on political behavior, on voting patterns, and on the decisions of governments. It is at the level of media politics where it appears that societies can be moved in a direction that diverges from the values, norms and interests institutionalized in the

political system (Castells, 2008). Social media may be thought as a long-term tool that can strengthen civil society and the public sphere. In contrast to the instrumental view of Internet freedom, this can be called the "environmental" view. According to this view, positive changes in the life of a country, including pro-democratic regime change, follow, rather than precede, the development of a strong public sphere (Shirky, 2011).

The rise of NGOs with a global or international frame of reference in their action and goals is referred to as "global civil society" by many analysts (Kaldor, 2003). The key tactics of NGOs to accomplish results and build support for their causes is media politics (Gillmor 2004; Dean et al., 2006). These organizations reach the public and mobilize support for their causes by using media. They put pressure on governments threatened by the voters or on corporations fearful of consumers' reactions. Hence, the media become the space for an NGO's campaign. Since these are global campaigns, global media are the key target. The globalization of communication leads to the globalization of media politics (Castells, 2008).

ICTs impact on individual, society and state is though drastic, however it is arguable to say that national public sphere has transformed into global public sphere. There are social and political prerequisites too, and it is debatable whether transnational analogues to domestic conditions exist (Crack, 2007). For example, there is not a well-defined moral or political community outside of the nation-state. Computer mediated communication across borders may represent nothing more than an 'aggregate audience' of individuals, who lack a sufficient sense of commonality to engage in normatively structured discourse (Bohman, 1998:211). Further, in an international 'anarchic' environment, there is not a sovereign authority comparable to the state that could serve as an addressee of public opinion. It is therefore questionable whether the concept of the public sphere can make the transition from the domestic to the transnational level (Crack, 2007). On the other hand some suggest that though there is no global state at planetary level however global networks of governance are emerging and may play the role that nation state play within its territory (Castells, 2008). Anyhow, the global ICT-infrastructure continues to grow as does the use of this media to negotiate social change and justice (Custard, 2008).

Internet and wireless communication, by enacting a global, horizontal network of communication, provide both an organizing tool and a means for debate, dialogue, and collective decision making (Castells, 2008). Internet enthusiasts have argued that the Internet can contribute to democracy by bonding people, regardless of territory, and by creating public spheres and new social movements. Many studies (Ott & Rosser, 2000; Hill & Sen, 2005) have shown how



citizens use computers and the Internet for enhanced political and democratic initiatives. For the so-called cyber pessimists, however, the Internet is a digital replica of the real world where one observes politics as usual (Min, 2010).

VIII. DISCUSSIONS

Advocates of cyberspace expect that online discourse will increase political participation and open vistas for democracy. They claim that the alleged decline of the public sphere lamented by academics, politicians, and several members of the public will be halted by the democratizing effects of the internet and its surrounding technologies. On the other hand, skeptics caution that technologies not universally accessible and ones that frequently provoke fragmented, nonsensical, and enraged discussion, otherwise known as 'flaming', far from guarantee a revived public sphere (Papacharissi, 2002).

The notion of public sphere necessarily relies on the existing communication processes and it may be said that it depends heavily on the working of the dominant forms of communication (Oblak, 2002). Temporal and spatial obstacles in distanced communication have been effectively eradicated by ICTs, opening up deliberative spaces that may hold emancipator potential. A communicative network is the precondition of transnational public spheres that enable broad participation across state borders. The technologies of the networked society do not merely expand previous communication media, but are qualitatively different in terms of structure, speed, and scope. Consider the Internet. It is a matrix of networks based on a 'many-to-many' model of information distribution, as opposed to the 'one-to-many' structure of mass media of 20th century (Crack, 2007).

Internet-based technologies can help to connect, motivate, and organize dissent however, whether the expression of dissent is powerful enough to bring social change is a question of human character and a more complex issue. Digital technologies offer additional tools, but they cannot single-handedly transform a political and economic structure that has thrived for centuries (Papacharissi, 2002). It is important to appreciate the complex problems that are implicated in the task of restructuring the public sphere in an internationally anarchic environment. These emanate from the traditional association of the virtual space of the public sphere with the physical space of the territorial nation-state (Crack, 2007). However, a researcher argues that the current Internet 'access divide' will persist in the form of 'usage-divides (Min, 2010).

The internet may actually enhance the public sphere, but it does so in an unprecedented way that is not comparable to our past experiences of public discourse. Perhaps the internet will not become the new public sphere, but something radically different. This

may enhance democracy and dialogue, but not in a way that we would expect it to, or in a way that we have experienced in the past (Papacharissi, 2002). The network society is marked by a trend towards individualization, social fragmentation and new forms of community. The old hierarchies are replaced by strategically important connections in the network, which can cooperate and conflict with one another. Network structures have penetrated into every sphere of life, including politics, government, economy, technology, and the community as a whole. These processes symbolize a disruption in conventional understandings of space, borders, and territory, and directly impact on the institutional foundations of public sphere (Crack, 2007; Castells, 2008).

Figure 1 : Theoretical Structure of New Public Sphere

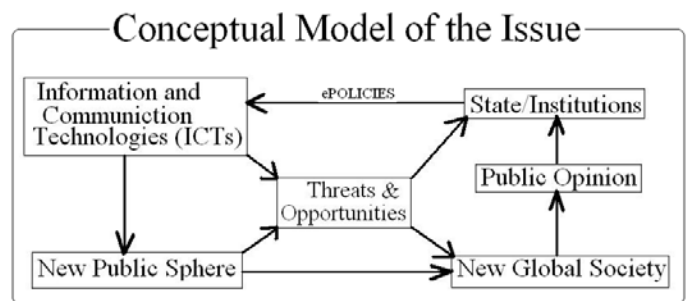


Figure 1 is the diagrammatic presentation of the issue discussed across the paper containing all the critical factors and their interrelationships to portray the whole story with a holistic view. 'ICTs' have created the 'New Public Sphere' with a 'New Global Society' whose 'Public Opinion' affects the 'State/Institutions'. However, ICTs and the emergent new public sphere offer both threats and opportunities for the state as well as new global society. Similarly, the role of ICTs is mediated by the ePolicies of the state or government about the purchase and operations of digital systems in the country.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

ICTs have created a new 'global-village' with 'international-citizens' who use social software to stay connected (24/7) with each other to socialize internationally and discuss matters of mutual interest like global warming and terrorism. Traditionally, the global interactions depended mostly on the physical tools and then mass media. However, the interaction was limited, one-way and very slow. The internet has created a cyberspace where anybody from anywhere can log on the system at any time and continue interacting with the world community. A diversity of tools are popularly used at the moment like facebook, twitter and blogging are the buzzwords across the global civil society.

It should however be noted that new public sphere is not a blessing in itself rather it requires legal,

social, political and ethical guidelines for operating in the favor of the global civil society. Thus there are both opportunities and threats from the new public space or virtual platform for the international citizenship. Both positive and negative aspects must be identified continuously so that both the international institutions as well as the individual states can formulate their ePolicies and policies for international affairs in an effective manner thereby making the new public sphere as an opportunity of the newly emerging new global civil society.

REFERENCES REFERENCES REFERENCIAS

- Abramson, J.B., F.C. Arterton and G.R. Orren. (1988). *The Electronic Commonwealth: The Impact of New Media Technologies on Democratic Politics*. New York: Basic Books.
- Anheier, H., Glasius, M. & Kaldor, M. (eds) (2001b). Introducing global civil society, in Anheier, H., Glasius, M. & Kaldor, M. (eds) *Global Civil Society 2001*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 3–28.
- Anheier, H. & Themudo, N. (2002). Organizational forms of global civil society: implications of going global, in Glasius, M., Kaldor, M. & Anheier, H. (eds), *Global Civil Society 2002*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 191–216.
- An-Na'im, A. (2002). Religion and global civil society: inherent incompatibility or synergy and interdependence?, in Glasius, M., Kaldor, M. & Anheier, H. (eds), *Global Civil Society 2002* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 55–76.
- Barnes, S. (2007). Virtual Worlds as a Medium for Advertising. *Database for Advances in Information Systems* 38(4) 45-55.
- Baym, Nancy K. (2009). A call for grounding in the face of blurred boundaries. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 14 p720-723. [Retrieved on September 24, 2011 from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.10836101.2009.01461.x/pdf>]
- Beebe, Maria A. (2004). Impact of ICT Revolution on the African Academic Landscape. *CODESRIA Conference on Electronic Publishing and Dissemination*. Dakar, Senegal. 1 -2 September 2004. [Retrieved on August 20, 2008 from http://www.codesria.org/Links/conferences/el_publ/beebe.pdf]
- Bell, Mark W. (2008, July). Toward a Definition of "Virtual Worlds". *Journal of Virtual Worlds Research*, Vol. 1. No. 1 [Retrieved on August 29, 2010 from <http://journals.tdl.org/jvwr/article/view/283/237>]
- Bohman, J. (1998). The Globalization of the Public Sphere. *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 24(2/3), pp. 199–216.
- Bowen, C. (1996). *Modem Nation: The Handbook of Grassroots American Activism Online*. New York: Random House.
- Boyd, Danah M. & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Vol. 13(1), 210–230. [Retrieved on May 02, 2009 from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x/pdf>]
- Browning, G. (1996). *Electronic Democracy: Using the Internet to Influence American Politics*. Wilton, CT: Pemberton Press.
- Cardoso, Gustavo. (2006). *The media in the network society*. Lisbon, Portugal: Center for Research and Studies in Sociology. [Retrieved on April 20, 2010 from http://www.obercom.pt/en/client/?newsId=35&fileName=media_in_the_network_society.pdf]
- Castells, Manuel. (2008, March). The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance. *Annals, AAPSS*, 616, 78-93.
- Chan, Anthony & Mark J. W. Lee (2007). We Want to be Teachers, Not Programmers: In Pursuit of Relevance and Authenticity for Initial Teacher Education Students Studying an Information Technology Subject at an Australian University. *Electronic Journal for the Integration of Technology in Education*, Vol. 6 p-79 [Retrieved on April 23, 2010 from <http://ejite.isu.edu/Volume6/Chan.pdf>]
- Chandler, David. (2007). Deriving Norms from 'Global Space' The Limits of Communicative Approaches to Global Civil Society Theorizing. *Globalizations*. June 2007, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 283–298. [Retrieved on October 20, 2010 from http://www.davidchandler.org/pdf/journal_articles/Globalizations%20-%20Global%20Space.pdf]
- Chandhoke, N. (2002). The limits of global civil society, in Glasius, M., Kaldor, M. & Anheier, H. (eds), *Global Civil Society 2002*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 35–54.
- Chatti, M. A., Klamma, R., Jarke, M., Kamtsiou, V., Pappa, D., Kravcik, M., & Naeve, A. (2006a). Technology Enhanced Professional Learning – Process, Challenges and Requirements. *Paper presented at the WEBIST 2006*, April 19-22, 2006, San Setúbal, Portugal. [Retrieved on October 21, 2011 from <http://kmr.nada.kth.se/papers/TEL/Chatti-TEPL-WEBIST.pdf>]
- Chester, Jeff. (2007). *Digital destiny. New media and the future of democracy*. New York: New Press.
- Crack, Angela M. (2007, September). Transcending Borders? Reassessing Public Spheres in a Networked World. *Globalizations*, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 341–354.
- Custard, Holly Ann. (2008). The Internet and Global Civil Society: Communication & Representation within Transnational Advocacy Networks. *GMJ: Mediterranean Edition* 3(2) Fall 2008 [Retrieved on January 19, 2011 from http://globalmedia.emu.edu.tr/images/stories/ALL_ARTICLES/2008/fall2008/issues/Custard_pp_1_11.pdf]
- DMD (2007). Diversified Media Design, combined storey, and Market Truths Limited. 2007, *The virtual brand footprint: The marketing opportunity in*

- Second Life*. [Retrieved on March 23, 2010 from http://popcha.com/combinedstory_whitepaper.pdf]
23. Dalsgaard, Christian (2006) Social software: E-learning beyond learning management systems. *European Journal of Open, Distance and E-Learning*. [Retrieved on March 21, 2011 from http://www.euodl.org/materials/contrib/2006/Christian_Dalsgaard.htm]
 24. Dean, Jodi, Jon W. Anderson, and Geert Lovink, eds. (2006). *Reformatting politics: Information technology and global civil society*. New York: Routledge.
 25. Drache, Daniel. (2008). *Defiant Publics: The Unprecedented Reach of the Global Citizen*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
 26. El-Nawawy, Mohammed, and Adel Iskander. (2002). *Al-jazeera: How the free Arab news network scooped the world and changed the Middle East*. Cambridge, MA: Westview.
 27. Fraser, Nancy. (2007). Transnationalizing the Public Sphere On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World. *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol. 24(4): 7–30 <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0605/fraser/en>
 28. Fritsch, Stefan. (2011). Technology and Global Affair. *International Studies Perspectives*, Vol. 12, 27–45 [Retrieved on September 22, 2011 from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1528-3585.2010.00417.x/pdf>]
 29. Fraser, N. (1992). Rethinking the public sphere: a contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy, in C. Calhoun (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), pp. 109–142.
 30. Gillmor, Dan. (2004). *We the media. Grassroots journalism by the people for the people*. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly.
 31. Gordon, Jake. (2004). Does the Internet provide the basis for a public sphere that approximates to Habermas' vision? (*his web essay*). [Available at <http://www.jakeg.co.uk/essays/habermas.htm>] Accessed on June 15, 2011.
 32. Habermas, J. (1962/1989). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of a Bourgeois Society*, trans. T. Burger and F. Lawrence. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
 33. Habermas, J. Lennox, Sara. Lennox, Frank. (1964/1974). The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article. *New German Critique*, No. 3 (Autumn, 1974), 49-55. Originally appeared in Fischer Lexicon, Staat and Politik, New Edition (Frankfurt am Main, 1964), pp. 220-226. [Retrieved on January 11, 2011 from <http://frank.mtsu.edu/~dryfe/SyllabusMaterials/Classreadings/habermas.pdf>]
 34. Haythornthwaite, C. (2005). Social networks and Internet connectivity effects. *Information, Communication, & Society*, 8(2), 125–147. [Available at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13691180500146185>] Accessed on March 22, 2011.
 35. Hill, D., & Sen, K. (2005). *The Internet in Indonesia's new democracy*. New York: Routledge.
 36. Jones, S.G. (1997). 'The Internet and its Social Landscape', in S.G. Jones (ed.) *Virtual Culture: Identity and Communication in Cybersociety*, pp. 7–35. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
 37. Kaldor, Mary. (2003). *Global civil society: An answer to war*. Malden, MA: Polity.
 38. Keane, John. (2003). *Global Civil Society?* UK: Cambridge University Press.
 39. Klamma et al., (2007). Social Software for Life-long Learning. *Educational Technology & Society*, 10 (3), 72-83. [Available at http://www.ifets.info/journals/10_3/6.pdf] Accessed on June 21, 2009.
 40. Koster, R. (2004, January 07) A virtual world by any other name? [Msg 21] Message posted to http://terranova.blogs.com/terra_nova/2004/06/a_virtual_world.html
 41. Kumar, R., Novak, J., Raghavan, P., & Tomkins, A. (2004). Structure and Evolution of Blogspace. *Communications of the ACM*, 47(12), 35-39. [Retrieved on October 15, 2011 from <http://home.ubalt.edu/students/UB95M03/WFD/IDIA-620/SourceMaterial/p35-kumar.pdf>]
 42. Lastowka, F. G. & Hunter, D. (2006). *Virtual Worlds: A Primer. The State of Play: Law, Games, and Virtual Worlds*. Ed. Jack M. Balkin.. New York: New York University Press.
 43. Lederman, L. (2007). "Stranger Than Fiction": Taxing Virtual Worlds. *New York University Law Review* 82(6) 1620-1672. http://www.law.nyu.edu/idcplg?ldcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=ECM_DLW_015204&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased
 44. Lull, James. (2007). *Culture-on-demand: Communication in a crisis world*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
 45. McChesney, Robert Waterman. 2007. *Communication revolution: Critical junctures and the future of media*. New York: New Press.
 46. Messinger, Paul R. Stroulia, Eleni. & Lyons, Kelly. (2008, July). A Typology of Virtual Worlds: Historical Overview and Future Directions. *Journal of Virtual Worlds Research*, 1(1). [Retrieved on June 15, 2011 from <http://journals.tdl.org/jvwr/article/view/291/245>]
 47. Min, Seong-Jae. (2010). From the Digital Divide to the Democratic Divide: Internet Skills, Political Interest, and the Second-Level Digital Divide in Political Internet Use. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 7:22–35, 2010 [Retrieved May 04, 2010 from http://www.jitp.net/m_archive.php?p=12]
 48. Nawaz, A. (2011). User's training: The predictor of successful eLearning in HEIs. *Global Journal of Computer Sciences & Technology (GJCST)*,

- 11(4):1-8 [Retrieved on June 11, 2011 from <http://computerresearch.org/stpr/index.php/gjcst/article/view/681/605>]
49. Nawaz, A. (2010). Using eLearning as a tool for 'education for all' in developing states. *International Journal of Science and Technology Education Research* (IJSTER), Vol 1(6). [Retrieved on June 08, 2010 from <http://www.academicjournals.org/ijster/index.htm>]
 50. Nawaz, A. & Kundi, GM. (2010). Digital Literacy. An analysis of the contemporary paradigms. *Journal of Science and Technology Education Research* (JSTER), 1(2): 19-29.[Retrieved on June 02, 2011 from <http://www.academicjournals.org/ijster/PDF/Pdf2010/July/Nawaz%20and%20Kundi.pdf>]
 51. Oblak, T. (2002) Dialogue and representation: Communication in the electronic public sphere. *The Public*, 9(2):7-22. [Retrieved on May 25, 2011 from <http://www.javnost-thepublic.org/media/datoteke/2002-2-oblak.pdf>]
 52. Ott, D., & Rosser, M. (2000). The electronic republic? The role of the Internet in promoting democracy in Africa. *Democratization*, 7(1), 138–156. [Retrieved on February 25, 2011 from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13510340008403649#preview>]
 53. Papacharissi, Zizi. (2002). The virtual sphere, The internet as a public sphere. *New Media & Society*, Vol.4 (1):9–27 [Retrieved on March 23, 2009 from <http://www.cblt.soton.ac.uk/multimedia/PDFs/The%20virtual%20sphere.pdf>]
 54. Shirky, Clay. (2011, Jan/Feb). The Political Power of Social Media. *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90 Issue 1, p28–41, 14p.
 55. Tehranian, Majid. (2004, September). Civilization: A Pathway to Peace? *Globalizations*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 82–101.
 56. Ubayasiri, Kasun. (2006). Internet and the public sphere: A glimpse of Youtube. *eJournalist Vol 6*. No. 2. [Available at <http://ejournalist.com.au/v6n2/ubayasiri622.pdf>. Accessed on November 10, 2009]
 57. Van Dijk, J. (2005). *The deepening divide: Inequality in the information society*. London: Sage.
 58. Volkmer, Ingrid. (1999). *News in the global sphere: A study of CNN and its impact on global communication*. Eastleigh, UK: University of Luton Press.
 59. Warschauer, M. (2003). *Technology and social inclusion: Rethinking the digital divide*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

