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The Structural Preconditions for the Emergence of Transnational Public Spheres

by

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis poses the following question: do the structural preconditions exist in the present for the emergence of transnational public spheres? Following a reconstruction of Habermasian public sphere theory, I define a transnational public sphere as a site of deliberation in which non-state actors reach understandings about issues of common concern. I identify trends that may coalesce to provide the structural preconditions for the emergence of transnational public spheres. These are threefold. First, developing communicative capacity across state borders due to new media technologies, particularly the internet. Second, transformations in sites of political authority, such as the evolution of multi-layered global governance, which poses challenges to traditional conceptions of state sovereignty. Third, emerging transnational communities of recognition that use new media to communicate and to politically mobilise.

I define a community of recognition as distinguished by the following: by a sense of collective identity as a 'public' due to shared identities and interests, and by the demonstration of a common endorsement of the norms of publicity in communicative interaction. With reference to these criteria, I examine the activities of three transnational social movements: the international women's movement, the Zapatista movement and Greenpeace and the international environmental movement. I also consider whether a transformative influence can be identified on hegemonic discourse and the international institutional framework as a result of the activities of these movements.

I argue that a suitable environment has developed in which transnational public spheres can indeed emerge. However, the development and consolidation of transnational public spheres may be constrained by other factors. These include global disparities in access and ownership to communication technologies, and the influence of private and state interests on the development of new media. I conclude with some suggestions for future research.

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1. Introduction

The turn of the millennium was popularly characterised as heralding the 'information age' (Toffler and Toffler, 1993; Castells, 1997). There is a widespread recognition that new media[1] technologies such as the internet contribute to profound socio-political transformations. In recent years, these developments have been the subject of a great deal of speculation: some utopian, some dystopian (Gimmler, 2001: 21; Mosco, 1996: 113). However, there has been little serious analysis of new media in International Relations (IR).

There is only a select band of IR literature devoted to the study of new media, most of which is descriptive and empirical (e.g. Frederick, 1993; Mohammadi, 1997; Mowlana, 1997). Few studies in IR attempt to theorise the effects of developments in communication technologies. Rather, conventional scholarship in IR focuses on war and state interaction. If analysed at all, communication issues tend to be considered as inferior variables in relation to these main subjects of reference. There is intriguing academic analysis of the effects of new media in Communication Studies; however, issues that are of interest to International Relations scholars, such as political authority and state sovereignty, tend to not be explored in this framework. Thus, the nexus between International Relations and Communication Studies has yet to be fully explored, despite calls for such integrated research stretching back over a number of years (Stevenson, 1992).

This thesis aims to rectify this notable omission. It starts with the contention that a critical theory perspective can aid in the explanation and understanding of the socio-political implications of new media. I propose the concept of the public sphere, as popularised by Habermas in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), as a promising basis from which to explore the emancipatory potential of the new media environment. A public sphere approach has not received sustained attention in the IR literature. However, there are some notable exceptions. For example, Linklater (1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1996a, 1998) develops Habermasian theory as a philosophical alternative to conventional theories of IR, with dialogic communities providing the basis for world order. More recently, Lynch (1999, 2000) and Brunkhorst (2002) have introduced public sphere terminology to IR. Building on these contributions, I attempt to develop public sphere theory as a conceptual framework for normative analysis of new media and contemporary global transformations.

The notion of a public sphere is part of the foundational discourse of Political Theory and Communication Studies. There are a variety of conceptualisations of a public sphere, including Arendt's theory of the agnostic public (1958), and Dewey's examination of American small town publics (1927). However, Habermas's classic formulation of the bourgeois public sphere is the best

[1] 'New media' refers to computer-mediated communications and the digital convergence of formerly discrete technologies. Elsewhere, I use the term 'global media' to encompass new media as well as 'older' forms of mass media, such as newspapers. However, definition of new media is complicated because 'these technologies are often grafted on to older media formats (talk-shows, phone-ins) to produce hybrid forms. In addition, it is difficult...to assess the impact of new, or any media in isolation from other variables...[because we] may all live in thoroughly mediatized cultures.' (Axford and Huggins, 2001: vii) These complexities will become apparent in the course of this thesis.

known and the most influential. Following Kant, Habermas offered a historically and sociologically grounded account of the possibility for human emancipation in communication, by focusing on the emergence of the eighteenth century bourgeois public. Similar to Arendt and Dewey, Habermas conceives of the public sphere in a local/national context. Indeed, many other distinguished public sphere theorists also frame their versions of public spheres in bounded territories (e.g. Kosselleck, 1988; Negt and Kluge, 1993; Jacob, 1991; Ryan, 1992; Fraser, 1992). However, the huge growth in cross-border communication through the internet and other new media technologies encourages speculation about the expansion of public spheres beyond the nation state. Therefore, I propose the following research question: do the structural preconditions exist in the present for the emergence of transnational public spheres?

The notion of the public sphere is closely related to that of civil society – indeed, the intersection between the two concepts is crucial – but the terms are not interchangeable. 'Civil society' refers to non-state actors and organisations (Anheier et al, 2001: 4). A 'public sphere' refers to a site of free and open discussion between civil society actors (Habermas, 1989: 23). For two main reasons, public sphere theory is a more appropriate theoretical framework for the purposes of this thesis. First, it is centrally concerned with the relationship between politics and the means of communication. Therefore it is ideally placed for an exploration of the nexus between IR and Communication Studies, and for analysis of the effects of developments in communication technologies. Second, the notion of a public sphere initiates discussion on the most appropriate form of social organisation in which to develop effective political communication. Public sphere theory enables the identification and critique of anti-democratic processes and repressive elements of civil society, because it centres on issues of participation, inclusion and communication. In comparison, civil society theory focuses on decision-making and governance issues. Therefore, public sphere theory is a useful tool for normative critique.

There have been several attempts to develop the concept of the public sphere beyond the nation state (e.g. Bohman, 1998; Calhoun, 2002; Dahlberg, 2001a, 2001b; Dean, 2001; Sassi, 2001). Yet few theorists systematically investigate the conditions of possibility for the emergence of transnational public spheres. Most assume that such a sphere or spheres already exist, and simply transpose the elements of a national public to a transnational level. This results in conceptual imprecision and theoretical ambiguity. The case for the existence of transnational public spheres may be intuitively persuasive owing to evidence of the growth in cross-border communication. However, the notion of an expanded public raises complex theoretical problems that deserve greater consideration than it has hitherto received. Therefore, I will methodically problematise the possible emergence of transnational public spheres.

Recent public sphere literature can also be criticised for lack of normative content (e.g. Lynch, 1999). The concept of a public sphere does not simply provide a means by which to describe flows of communication; it was developed to contribute to normative political theory. The public sphere was conceived as a deliberative realm for the free expression of public opinion, and as a forum for political mobilisation. This normative interest must be retained, else the concept is

deprived of its critical power and political import. Therefore, this thesis attempts to reconnect the concept of the public sphere with its rich theoretical genealogy. My reformulation of public sphere theory is oriented by an explicit interest in emancipation, and so is connected to the wider project of international critical theory.

My appraisal of Habermasian public sphere theory acknowledges a number of valid critiques made of his work, involving issues such as alternative histories of public spheres, social equality and democracy, the distinction between public and private interests, multiple counter publics and the potential of new media. Habermas himself has incorporated such criticisms in his later writings (e.g. Habermas, 1992a). Further, I detect a statist assumption underlying Habermas's account of the bourgeois public that remains unquestioned in other reformulations of his theory (e.g. Fraser, 1992; Ryan, 1992; Meehan, 1995). Conventionally, public sphere theory describes the empowerment of citizenry with regard to the powers of private interests and the state. It is therefore assumed that the sovereign state is the addressee of public dialogue. However, a number of questions arise regarding the validity of transnationalising the concept of the public sphere that receive scant treatment in the literature. For example, are new media providing adequate discursive spaces for such deliberation? Are there institutional structures analogous to the state emerging at the international level? And can we identify the emergence of cross-border publics that demonstrate a mutual recognition of each other as legitimate participants in debate?

I adopt a functional definition of a public sphere that acts as a theoretical probe into the issues raised by these questions. I define a transnational public sphere as a site of deliberation in which non-state actors reach understandings about issues of common concern. In an ideal public sphere, political action will be justified according to the norms of publicity; all affected actors will be included in deliberation and treated as legitimate participants in debate, and direct appeals to power will be inadmissible. This definition is designed to take into account the critiques relating to Habermas's conception of the bourgeois public: it allows for multiple spheres and does not predetermine which issues merit public debate. It also does not presume the locus of a sphere and allows for comparative flexibility: necessary when evaluating non-state based, cross-cultural communication. Although Habermas's account of the bourgeois public provides an entry point into theorising about the possible structural transformation of public spheres, it must be emphasised that his claims regarding the theory of communicative rationality do not concern me here. Habermas's early public sphere theory was historicist – later it was supplanted by a more abstracted version influenced by discourse ethics (Habermas 1984, 1987). My reformulation of public sphere theory is influenced by Habermas's empirically drawn and historically informed approach. Likewise, I am interested in a situated account based on an evaluation of political, economic and social developments.

Drawing from my reconstruction of Habermasian theory, I identify three contemporary trends that may provide the structural preconditions for emergent transnational public spheres. These are as follows: developing communicative capacity across state borders, transformations in sites of political authority and emerging transnational communities of recognition. If each

structural precondition coalesces, a suitable environment would be produced for the emergence of transnational public spheres. I will briefly describe each structural precondition in turn.

'Developing communicative capacity across state borders' refers to all manner of information and communication technologies – although my focus here is on new media, and particularly the potential of the internet, the most iconic technology of the 'information age'. New media have given rise to broad transnational networks of communication, providing fast and decentralised methods of communication and political organisation across state borders. However, huge disparities in access and ownership of media technologies and continuing encroachment of state and commercial interests hinder wider participation and freedom of communication.

'Transformations in sites of political authority' refers to the growing challenges posed to state sovereignty by developments commonly associated with 'globalisation', including evolving structures of multi-layered 'global governance'. The state remains a key actor in world politics, but globalising pressures suggest a transformative trend in the traditional architecture of political authority. I consider the relevance of this for the concept of the 'public sphere', which has conventionally been defined in relation to the bounded community of the sovereign nation-state.

'Emerging transnational communities of recognition' refers to the networks of non-state actors using new media technologies to engage in discourse and to politically mobilise. It is controversial amongst public sphere theorists whether actors are able to meaningfully recognise each other as legitimate participants in dialogue given geographic diffusion, lack of common citizenship, and the anonymous methods of communication that characterise mediated communities (Calhoun, 2002: 16-17). I propose that participants can recognise one another as legitimate participants in dialogue despite these difficulties if two criteria are met. First, that a sense of common identity as a 'public' is forged due to shared identities and interests, particularly when framed as part of a political struggle for cultural recognition and/or redistribution. Second, that a common endorsement of the norms of publicity is demonstrated by a collective endeavour to make opinions intelligible and accountable, and to engage in reasoned discourse. These criteria will be judged with reference to a variety of evidence of the activities of numerous transnational social movements. These will be drawn from three subject areas: the international women's movement, the Zapatista rebellion in Mexico and Greenpeace and the international environmental movement. Each subject area has been chosen because it illustrates a different basis from which the participants claim a common interest or identity, so providing a comprehensive test of the notion of transnational communities of recognition. In the case of the women's movement, the basis is gendered experience, in the case of the Zapatistas, it is anti-neoliberal rhetoric, and in the case of Greenpeace and other associated movements, it is the eco-system. However, public spheres are not just sites of critique but also of transformation, so I am interested in the wider political effects of dialogue within these social movements. Therefore, I also consider whether a transformative influence can be identified on hegemonic discourse and the international institutional framework as a result of the activities of these movements.

The unique contribution that this inquiry makes to the literature is threefold. First, it analyses the implications of new media in an International Relations framework. Second, it advances international critical theory by taking an innovative critical-theoretical approach motivated by normative critique and the attempt to identify emancipatory possibilities in the present. Third, it problematises and reconstructs public sphere theory in a manner that allows for systematic and rigorous examination of contemporary political trends. I hope that these three distinctive lines of inquiry will complement and expand current debate in normative international theory.

1.1. Thesis Structure

The thesis proceeds as follows. First, I examine the limitations of the IR literature and argue that there is a need for critical inquiry into the role of new media in world politics. I offer an overview of the historical development and dominant discourses of the discipline, and demonstrate how IR scholars have largely neglected analysis of the socio-political effects of developments in communication technologies. However, there are some recent studies that focus on new media from different schools of thought – such as realism, pluralism and dependency theory. I review and critique these works from a critical theory perspective, and propose public sphere theory as an ideal theoretical framework to resolve the shortcomings of existing literature.

Second, I critique Habermasian public sphere theory and recent public sphere literature, and construct a theoretical framework for an inquiry into the possible emergence of transnational public spheres. Habermas's original formulation of the public sphere can be criticised for a number of reasons, including state-centricity, the dichotomous division between public and private, non-recognition of alternative public spheres and over-idealisation of the bourgeois public sphere. Notwithstanding these criticisms, I still consider the public sphere to be a useful theoretical tool for normative critique, and I illustrate this by considering the difference between the concepts of 'public sphere' and 'civil society'. I then examine recent public sphere scholarship and distinguish between two main approaches: a focus on public spheres of state actors, or public spheres of non-state actors. I critique much of this literature since it is based on the assumption that transnational public spheres are actually existing institutions. In contradistinction, I identify three structural preconditions for a transnational public sphere to emerge, based on the Habermasian institutional criteria of a public sphere, and through an appraisal of the most sophisticated recent public sphere scholarship (e.g. Bohman, 1997, 1998). The preconditions are as follows: the development of communicative capacity across state borders, transformations in sites of political authority, and emerging transnational communities of recognition. The ensuing chapters examine each structural precondition respectively.

Therefore, thirdly, I evaluate developments in communicative capacity across state borders. I detail the historical development of global media including the effects of the rise of neoliberalism, the emergence of the new media environment, the growth of the internet and the

disparities and inequalities of the 'information age'. I argue that there are some indications that new media could provide the communicative infrastructure for transnational public spheres, but also note that there are serious impediments in achieving inclusive public spheres of free and open debate, in terms of access, participation and ownership.

Fourth, I consider transformations in sites of political authority. I examine the challenges that globalisation poses to traditional conceptions of state sovereignty and autonomy, by examining developments in three areas: the globalisation of politics, the growth of international law and the complex identities of citizens. I argue that the emergence of international authority undermines the model of the state as the prime site of governance, and renders the concept of international anarchy less relevant to the study of IR. I propose that multi-layered global governance structures may provide an alternative institutional context for public sphere dialogue.

Fifth, I examine the emergence of transnational communities of recognition, including the three case studies outlined above. I define the concept of 'communities of recognition' and consider how to conceptualise cross-border discursive activity. I propose that communities of recognition can be identified when participants have a sense of collective identity as a 'public' and commonly endorse the norms of publicity. I also suggest that dialogue within these communities may have a transformative influence on hegemonic discourse and the international institutional framework. Through a review of the literature regarding the politics of recognition and virtual communities, I consider whether it is possible for participants to establish a basis for collective identity as a 'public', despite the problematic characteristics of mediated communication and a lack of a common territory and shared citizenship. I then evaluate each of the following social movements with respect to the criteria outlined above for transnational communities of recognition: the international women's movement, the Zapatista movement, and Greenpeace and the international environmental movement. I argue that there is strong evidence that transnational communities of recognition can be identified.

Finally, I conclude that despite some obstacles to progress, such as inequality of access to new media, it is possible to identify the three structural preconditions for emergent transnational public spheres. In order to encourage further research, I offer an outline of topics for future investigation.

2. New Media and International Relations

It could be said that the ability to communicate complex ideas is the essence of being human. Yet despite important exceptions, International Relations (IR) has largely neglected the analysis of fundamental transformations in the ways that humans communicate. There is no established tradition of IR scholarship that takes communications as its central focus. This is reflective of the way in which the discipline sets up the terms of debate, which favours those theories that focus on inter-state war, and tends to marginalize those that do not. The very title of 'International Relations' is indicative of the exclusionary assumptions upon which the discipline is based. As Steve Smith argues: 'it is very difficult to challenge that definition of the core problems of the discipline without placing oneself *outside* the discipline. Thus, those approaches that do not start with both *inter-state* relations and with *war* are axiomatically placed in a defensive position with regards to their fit within the discipline.' (Smith, 2000: 378)

International Relations scholars generally have conservative instincts, and the search for the permanent and unchanged in the international system has characterised the discipline far more than the search for the transformative. As Ruggie observes, IR theorists are not 'very good...at studying the possibility of fundamental discontinuity in the international system.' (Ruggie, 1993: 143-4) Those that do attempt to account for processes of change usually focus on the mode of production or military capability as the most important variables (e.g. Wallerstein, 1977; Carr, 1939). If considered at all, communication technologies are usually subsumed under or interpreted with reference to these factors. Even critical theories that identify a specific role for 'ideas' in influencing certain aspects of world politics fail to pay adequate attention to issues relating to the storage, transmission and distribution of knowledge (e.g. Cox, 1981: 136). Hence, in the first part of this chapter, I provide an overview of the historical development, dominant discourses and traditional concerns of IR. It will be shown how the conventional preoccupations of the discipline have precluded examination of the different ways that communication developments shape aspects of world politics. It will also be demonstrated that radical theoretical reinterpretations of IR, such as critical theory, have also proved deficient in theorising the impact of new media.

Nonetheless, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the role of communication developments in global transformations. New media are increasingly blurring the boundaries between technology, the economy, politics and culture. In recent years, the keen interest shown by the mass media about these developments has contrasted sharply with the paucity of IR commentary. Instead, most analyses derive from Communication Studies – as a self-contained discipline drawing from a specialised scholarship, these inquiries can be frustratingly limited. Even when considering the effects of cross-border communication, Communication Studies scholars do not tend to focus on issues of interest to IR theorists, such as state sovereignty and world order. Thus, the nexus between IR and Communication Studies remains underdeveloped.

There are encouraging indications that the potential for cross-disciplinary debate is beginning to be explored, with the establishment of International Communication working groups

at the British and American branches of the International Studies Association, and the publication of a number of notable texts, which accredit new media a significant role in world politics. In the second part of this chapter, I review and critique examples of such literature from differing theoretical backgrounds: realism (Krasner, 1991), pluralism (Deutsch, 1957, 1963, 1966; Keohane and Nye, 1998) neo-Marxist/dependency theory (Tehranian, 1999) and critical theory (Comor, 1994; Deibert, 1997; Gill, 1995). I demonstrate that there is an evident need for the effects of new media to be further explored in IR, and suggest that public sphere theory offers a valuable theoretical framework for research.

2.1. Foundations of the Discipline

International Relations was initially dominated by idealist scholars that shared a common interest in the causes of the First World War and the prevention of a similarly horrific conflict in the future (Zacher and Matthew, 1995). Idealists argued that a system of collective security by membership of organisations such as the League of Nations and a more open style of diplomacy could successfully mitigate the negative implications of anarchy (Doyle, 1986). Following the Second World War, which seemed to discredit idealist principles, classical realist theory assumed a long unchallenged position of dominance in the discipline. Foundational texts such as those by Carr (1939) and Morgenthau (1948) set out the central concepts that underpinned the principles of realism, such as sovereignty, the state, the causes of war, and the balance of power. These concepts came to effectively define the limits of inquiry in International Relations, so much so that: 'In the first two decades after the Second World War the discipline and realism were widely regarded as one and the same thing.' (Burchill, 1996a: 80) Realists saw self-interested power politics as an endemic feature of international system, and explained the 'inevitability' of competition and conflict between states as a consequence of the anarchic and inherently insecure international environment (Donnelly, 2000). Thus, international politics can be thought of as revolving around the pursuit of power: its acquisition, its maximisation, and its effect on other actors.

This stance is often characterised by realists as an 'objective' account of the 'knowable reality' of world politics, although by selecting certain features of the international system for analysis and not others, it is based on a particular epistemological understanding of the world and implicitly makes certain value judgements (Rosenburg, 1990). In a highly influential article, Martin Wight appeared to support realist precepts by claiming that the character of international politics is incompatible with progressivist theory, since it is a realm of recurrence and repetition. For Wight, this explained why there was no equivalent body of knowledge in IR to that of Political Theory, since the former only relates to the 'theory of survival', whilst the latter is concerned with the 'theory of the good life.' (Wight, 1966)

The origins of the discipline are important to appreciate since the initial preoccupations with the causes and prevention of war influenced the questions that scholars chose to ask about the world, the methods that they employed to conduct their studies and the conclusions that they

reached. The founding IR texts gave direction to the development of the discipline and influenced emerging understandings about 'legitimate' subjects of study. The early normative concern of the idealists was replaced by a focus on state survival by the realists, but there was a common consensus between the two schools of thought that IR was a clearly defined intellectual domain (S. Smith, 1995). This is indicated by the very title of 'International Relations', which implies that the concerns of the discipline are relations between nation-states. However, since Wight identified a paucity of international theory, there has been an explosion of theoretical activity. No longer can IR be described in Wight's narrow terms; other theoretical issues and a wider range of international actors and phenomena have supplemented the preoccupation with the nation-state, war, and conflict. Scholars such as Keohane and Nye (1977) from the pluralist school, and Gunder Frank (1980) from the neo-Marxist/dependency school, have led the way in this regard.

The pluralist perspective challenged key realist assumptions in a variety of ways. It encompassed a range of international actors other than states in its analyses, such as multinational corporations and intergovernmental bodies, recognising them as actors in pursuit of their own interests, as well as forming part of an international web of complex interdependence (Keohane and Nye, 1977). It allowed the inclusion of a range of policies, even those previously considered as domestic, on the global security agenda. Similarly, it has questioned the supremacy that realism accorded military force as a means of exercising influence in international affairs. The concept of the international regime became central to pluralist thought, based on the assertion that the international realm is best understood as an 'ordered anarchy', due to the greater observable instances of cooperation, rather than conflict (Zacher and Matthew, 1995). In Krasner's oft-quoted definition, regimes can be defined as 'sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors expectations converge in a given area of international relations.' (Krasner, 1982: 186)

This revived (though muted) normative interest in the possibilities for progression in international relations created a climate in the discipline that was receptive to the introduction of Marxist-influenced theory. Dependency theorists such as Andre Gunder Frank (1980) argued that the relationship between the Northern capitalist states and the Southern peripheral states was inherently exploitative. In this perspective, Northern-based explanations of Southern poverty as a product of 'underdevelopment' served to mask the true cause as a structural condition of global capitalism. Neo-Marxists use the terms of 'dependency' and 'dependent growth' to illustrate 'the extent to which the movement of economics and politics in poor countries is conditioned by a world economy dominated by others.' (Evans, 1993: 232) World-system theory developed this perspective further, by conceptualising world politics in terms of class, and examining the way in which the capitalist system institutionalises inequalities between 'core' and 'periphery' states (Wallerstein, 1977).

The development of alternative theories such as pluralism and neo-Marxism subjected realism to its most significant challenge since its inception. Kenneth Waltz ensured the continuing relevance of the realist discourse in his seminal work, *Theory of International Politics* (1979),

which assumed an intellectual hegemony over the discipline and still retains considerable influence today. Adopting an approach that was both a critique and an extension of classical realism, Waltz explained the causes of recurrent patterns of international conflict in terms of structural determinism. In his account, power remains a central concept, and states retain their traditional status as the key actors of the international system. Waltz argued that the survival imperative of the international anarchic environment acts as a systemic constraint on nation-states. Thus, despite differences in the internal composition of states, their foreign policy behaviour is homogenised.

Hence, Waltz returned the discipline to its original narrow focus on states, military power and conflict. However, certain post-positivist theories have gained increasing prominence in IR, which I argue has provided convincing attacks on conventional IR theory on theoretical, epistemological, methodological and normative grounds. Post-positivism alerts us to the value-bound nature of the key theories mentioned above, despite their claims to objectivity, since they contain a bias towards system-maintenance (George, 1994: 11; Cox, 1981: 130). This is particularly the case with realism, but seemingly critical analyses such as dependency theory are also conservative, if critique of the prevailing order is not accompanied by an identification of contradictory tendencies that could lead to future social change (Linklater, 1990b: 148). As such, conventional theories of IR tend to have a stabilising effect on the prevailing social order, whether this is intended or unintended, which primarily benefits those who are most privileged by this order (Cox, 1981: 129; Peterson, 1992: 14-15). Such claims were made in distinct ways by three main schools of thought that shared a common radical agenda, but were divided over understandings of the focus and scope of theory: feminism, critical theory and postmodernism.

2.1.1. Post-positivist Theories of International Relations

Before examining the contributions of feminism, critical theory and postmodernism to IR, I want to make my theoretical assumptions explicit. Of course, using generic names to classify highly individualistic approaches is problematic – especially in the case of 'postmodernism', where some of the theorists that are usually subsumed under that label in the literature attempt to distance themselves from categorisation (Devetak, 1996: 180). Indeed, there is significant divergence of opinion in all schools of thought. However, my sympathies lie most closely with international critical theory, since it develops a normatively motivated account of existing social conditions and the inherent possibilities for emancipatory transformation. Postmodernism contributes to some of these concerns, but is unsatisfactorily vague on questions of how to critically engage and transform the existing world order. Feminism offers an important corrective to traditionally masculinist IR theory, but may also have the effect of neglecting analysis and critique of exclusions based on categories other than gender. The insights and critiques of both postmodernism and feminism can contribute to the development of a reflexive critical theory: I shall expand more on this below. In what follows, I outline feminism, critical theory and postmodernism in IR, consider the Hoffman/Rengger debate (one of the first attempts in the discipline at defending critical theory from postmodern criticism), and argue that although feminism and postmodernism have made

important contributions to IR, it is not clear that either can withstand the demands made of a sophisticated critical theory.

Feminist theory began to make a notable impact on IR in the 1980s, emerging as a response to the exclusion of women in discourse about international affairs, and the injustices and inequalities experienced by women worldwide (True, 1996). The methodological bias in the discipline has tended towards individualism and inductive reasoning. Within such a framework, there has been little room for the study of people as agents relative to their social and historical constructs (Tickner, 1992a, 1992b). This has meant that the study of people as women and the implicit gendering of the construction of the modern state and the state-system have been ignored in conventional theories of IR (Peterson, 1992; Enloe, 1990; Zalewski, 1994). Feminists, together with critical theorists and postmodernists, make the claim that deconstructing the exclusionary ontological and epistemological foundations of IR will enhance our understanding of world politics. As Jean Elshtain has remarked, in IR theory, 'what gets left out is often as important as what is put in and assumed.' (Elshtain, 1995: 41) Feminists argue that theory that does not recognise the significance of gender as a tool of analysis assumes the 'naturalness' of gender hierarchy and therefore reproduces the status quo (Scott, 1988: 49).

Robert Cox's seminal 1981 essay, 'Social Forces, States and World Order', introduced critical theory to the discipline. Cox separates contending theories into two categories: 'problem-solving theory' and 'critical theory'. Problem-solving theory refers to conventional approaches to IR, which 'takes the world as it finds it, with the prevailing social and power relationships into which they are organised, as the given framework for action.' (Cox, 1981: 128) The existing order is reified and legitimised when it is not subjected to robust challenge (ibid.: 128-9). Problem-solving theory concentrates its efforts into finding ways to eliminate certain types of threats to the continued operation of the status quo; thus, it exercises a stabilising function on the existing order. In contrast, critical theory recognises that all theory can be located in a particular time and place (ibid.). Theory is influenced to some degree by social, cultural and ideological factors, and it is the task of the critical theorist to bring to consciousness these concealed perspectives, and to consider how these impact on the task of theorising. Critical theory takes an explicitly normative stance in favour of human emancipation, and is interested in the possibilities for theorising in a way that challenges the reproduction of inequalities in world order. In this regard, Cox is influenced in his approach by the Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci, utilising his concepts of production, the state, social forces and hegemony (Cox, 1983, 1987). These concepts contribute to Cox's theorisation of a 'historical structure', defined as a certain configuration of three categories of forces: ideas, material capabilities and institutions (Cox, 1981: 141). It is argued that attempting to account for structural transitions in the past will better enable one to assess the potential for future world order change.

Postmodernism is the most difficult theoretical approach to summarise, since its very nature defies definition. It could be said that it is easier to define what it is *not*, rather than what it is. It is popularly described in negative relation to modernity, as an attitude of 'incredulity towards

metanarratives.' (Lyotard, 1984: xxiv) Postmodern IR theory shares similar themes with critical theory – such as opening up discursive spaces for self-reflection, and advancing the understanding of marginalized themes in world politics (e.g. Ashley and Walker, 1990; Der Derian and Shapiro, 1988; Walker, 1993). But although both theories are radical in approach, the points of divergence on questions of rationality, universalism and ethics can be significant. For example, Rengger ironically observes that critical IR theory is committed to foundationalism and universalism, similar to the 'problem-solving' perspectives that it attempts to supersede. Thus, Rengger argues that critical theory forms part of a modernist discourse; it holds that 'the international order constitutes a dialectical process, but one presumably, like Marx's, with a fixed terminus: a telos to aim for and to bring about.' (Rengger, 1988: 83) Therefore, it promotes the reproduction of unequal power relations. Rationality has not and will not be a discourse immune from power and domination – rather, this constitutes rationality. In this sense, 'to theoretically privilege one side of modern rationality...is to engage in the practice of exclusion (and sometimes terror) that is the experience of the other side – that which has no (rational) voice.' (George, 1994: 161)

Rengger's critique prompted a well-known response article from Mark Hoffman, who argued that it was a misinterpretation of critical theory. Hoffman turned to Habermasian analysis to reject the claim that a single form of modern, instrumental rationality underpinned critical theory. Although there was an obvious Enlightenment influence within critical theory, Hoffman argued that it represented 'the most self-reflective outpost of the radical tradition of the Enlightenment', and so should not be dismissed so readily (Hoffman, 1988: 92). Critical theory represents an open-ended and evolutionary rationality; it seeks to critique the universalisation of a single form of rationality, 'namely instrumental, economic and administrative reason.' Therefore, critical theory:

> retain[s] a concept of reason which asserts itself simultaneously against both instrumentalism and existentialism, which is exercised in conjunction with normative concerns and which is critically applicable to itself. The essence of rationality, in the context of critical theory, entails a limitless invitation to criticism. In consequence a complacent faith in *rationalism* is ruled out (ibid.: 92).

Critical theory's unique notion of open-ended knowledge, which is always subject to ongoing reassessment, safeguards it from the worst excesses of Enlightenment determinism and foundationalism (Linklater, 1996b). Critical theory does not purport to determine objective knowledge. This is the goal of 'instrumental-type rationality', which is guided by an interest in control. Rather, critical theory understands the possible fallibility of *all* knowledge claims. Therefore, it resists the determinism of the 'fixed terminus' approach, the imposition of a futuristic utopian model of society upon others. Instead, it seeks an open-ended, emancipatory transformation of world order (Hoffman, 1993: 199).

Hoffman argued in a similar vein with respect to the issue of universalism, as problematised by Rengger. Critical theory is a sophisticated theory since it both 'recognises the problem [of universality] and acknowledges its own limitations.' (Hoffman, 1988: 93) The universality of critical theory is therefore 'cautious and contingent', and respectful of cultural difference (ibid.). However, the adoption of certain universalistic standpoints is necessary for a social and political theory that seeks critical engagement with the world. As Hoffman observes: 'The difficulty with the anti-universalism of radical interpretivism is that it offers us no reason to move in one social direction or another. We become dispassionate observers rather than concerned critics.' (ibid.)

Rengger's criticisms were useful in highlighting some possible pitfalls of critical theory – such as the dangers of progressivist, totalising tendencies. If critical theory is to be reflexive it must include explicit recognition of its own limitations or it will suffer from the same shortcomings as problem-solving theory. However, Hoffman argued persuasively that critical theory counters these postmodern critiques in three ways. First, critical theory analyses the counter-discourse in modernity and recognises that the ills of instrumental rationality can only be corrected by a radicalised rationality itself. Second, 'the radical interpretivist approach contains within it an element of conservatism and stops short of the aims of critical theory to change the way we talk *and act* in the world.' (ibid.: 94) Third, critical theory is motivated by an emancipatory interest. This enables critical theory to be normatively engaged with social and political issues in a less ambiguous way than is possible for postmodernists.

Mark Hoffman effectively articulates the strengths of a critical theory approach to IR. The contributions of feminist and postmodernist thought are essential to the development of the evolutionary rationality that underpins critical theory (Linklater, 1992: 85). For example, feminism can inform critical theory since it is motivated by a similar concern with challenging the reproduction of inequalities in world order. However, whereas feminist thought is oriented mainly by gender, critical theory is interested in a variety of forms of inequality – in Linklater's words, it is committed to the 'emancipation of the species' – therefore, it is better able to adopt a comprehensive approach (Linklater, 1990b: 8). It is a reflexive, sophisticated theory that can balance a 'sensitive universalism' with a respect for difference (Booth, 1995). Thus, critical theory allows one to effectively engage in normatively motivated societal critique.

2.2. New Media and International Relations: An Underdeveloped Area of Research

Although the approaches described above offer a brief disciplinary history, this is by no means an exhaustive list. International Relations is now a considerably eclectic field of study, and recent years have seen the development of a number of rival theoretical perspectives that are growing in popularity: from green theory (e.g. Hurrell and Kingsbury, 1992; Chatterjee and Finger, 1994) to social constructivism (e.g. Checkel, 1998; Wendt, 1999). The account above reviews the theories that have had the most impact on IR, and describes how the conventional focus and

boundaries of the discipline have been under sustained challenge since the 1980s. After a long period of intellectual hegemony, the introduction of dissenting voices to IR and the subversion of governing orthodoxies perhaps indicate a common feeling of bewilderment at the radical pace of global transformations. Yet it is surprising that this new thinking does not explicitly address issues of communication, despite popular acknowledgement of the socio-political, economic and cultural importance of new media. This is a remarkable omission in International Relations that has only recently begun to be addressed. However, a notable exception is Karl Deutsch, who spearheaded an early attempt to reconcile theories of communication with IR as far back as the late 1950s (e.g. Deutsch, 1957). A fuller account of his contribution is discussed below (section 2.4.1., p. 19). It is interesting to consider why the discipline virtually ignored communication issues even after the introduction of the subject matter by Deutsch.

It appears as if this was the case because throughout most of the discipline's history, the majority of IR scholars simply did not consider communication issues as relevant. The first 'great debate' in IR between idealism and realism was underpinned by an ontological and epistemological consensus (Knudson, 1992). Nation-states were understood as the key actors of the international system and differences in their internal composition were considered irrelevant. States were portrayed as self-contained, unitary actors, and war and state interaction as the most important characteristics of the global political process. It was not until the development of the pluralist school that these underlying assumptions were challenged, but the popularity of neo-realism represented a reassertion of confidence in these basic precepts of international relations (Burchill, 1996b: 85). Alternative approaches such as critical theory, postmodernism and feminism introduced contemporary debates in social science rather belatedly to IR. Their contributions ensured that previously marginalized questions of ontology, epistemology and methodology were made central concerns of the research agenda. The alternative theorists also disputed the neo-realist assertion that the international system remains a 'domain apart' that requires distinct study. Critical theorists are keen to explore the relevance of developments in social theory and historical sociology for the study of international politics (Booth, 1995: 119). Many postmodernists perceive disciplinary boundaries as exclusionary and a tool of intellectual oppression (e.g. Der Derian and Shapiro, 1988; Ashley and Walker, 1990). Feminists trace the structure and effects of patriarchy from the intimate to the international level (e.g. Sylvester, 1994; Enloe, 1990). As a result of these reinterpretations, the study of what is still conventionally termed 'International Relations' has been transformed into a subject so broad and diverse, that perhaps a more accurate title would be 'Global Politics' (Cox, 1992: 132). Yet considering how issues of communication are so relevant to the concerns of each of these radical perspectives, it is surprising that few significant studies on new media has emerged from either school of thought.

Perhaps the most obvious omission is that of the critical theorists. Gramsci's concept of hegemony is central to the work of Robert Cox and Stephen Gill, involving issues of information and the production and development of social knowledge (Gill, 1993; Cox, 1983). Neither develops these themes satisfactorily, particularly with regard to new media. Cox provides the most sustained

effort in his 'historical structures' approach (Cox, 1981: 136). He conceptualises 'ideas' as part of a dialectical triad of 'categories of force' within a historical structure. 'Ideas' refer to both intersubjective meanings and differing perspectives, and form a key component in Cox's conceptualisation of the forms of domination that govern the reproduction and eventual decline of a given world order. However, there is a general under-theorisation of process in Cox's work, and this is partly because he has no specific theory of communication, and as a result he delivers an incomplete account of the transition between one historical structure to another. Cox's conceptualisation of 'ideas' does not stretch as far as to consider issues of the storage, transmission and distribution of knowledge, and how fundamental transformations in each of these categories will affect the range of possible alternatives (Comor, 1994).

Postmodernists and feminists in other branches of social science have written extensively about new media. Postmodernists have been intently interested in the new possibilities that communication developments offer: possibilities to realise a 'virtual reality', to transcend the restrictions of time, space and the body and to subvert one's identity; as well as more sinister possibilities such as the increased potential for government surveillance (e.g. Burnett, 1995; Baudrillard, 1995; Gill, 1996; Bignell, 2000). Feminists have examined the unequal access and ownership of communication resources between the sexes, and how media portrayals of women support gendered power relations (e.g. van Zoonen, 1991, 1994; Valdivia, 1995; Douglas, 1995). Unfortunately, the insights that both approaches provide do not tend to be fully integrated within an explicitly IR focus.

The study of new media in IR is best placed to emerge within these alternative theoretical approaches – in the case of international critical theory, because there is a capacity for it, and in the case of postmodernism and feminism, because there is a well established and wider body of work relating to communication in each perspective. Although critical IR theorists have been notoriously slow to incorporate new media analysis into their work, there has been increasing interest in tapping this potential (e.g. Comor, 1994; Baynes, 2001). Indeed, it is largely within the critical theoretical tradition that a burgeoning and intriguing new literature is to be found rather than in other post-positivist approaches.

However, throughout the recent IR literature there has been increasingly frequent mention of new media as an important corollary of globalisation (e.g. Clark, 1997; Scholte, 2000; Aronson, 2001). There have even been a number of undergraduate-styled textbooks published in the field that focus exclusively on new media. Although these are worthwhile studies, they tend to provide more of an overview to the subject rather than establish a coherent theoretical position (e.g. Frederick, 1993; Fortner, 1993; Alleyne, 1995; Mohammadi, 1997; Thussu, 2000). Likewise, there are authors that write on international law, and adopt a policy-orientated perspective, such as Cees J. Hamelink (1994), who examines prevailing political practice and international law in areas such as transborder data flow, international broadcasting and the standardisation of consumer electronics. Amongst IR theorists, the influence of new media has been interpreted in varying ways: either to support claims of the decline of the state due to growing global economic and

political interdependence, or to argue that state power has been enhanced by new surveillance and data-processing capabilities. Examples include James Rosenau, for whom new media are key to explaining growing turbulence in world politics (Rosenau, 1990); Susan Strange, who uses changes in communication technologies to partly account for the rise of a networked global economy and the 'retreat of the state' (Strange, 1996); and Mark Zacher, who sees new media as one of the factors decaying the 'pillars of the Westphalian temple' (Zacher, 1992). However, communication generally remains under-theorised in IR. The studies cited above provide a good example of how new media tends to be treated in the literature: as an exogenous force, despite common agreement in other disciplines such as Communication Studies and Sociology that technology is inherently social and political (e.g. Thompson, 1995).

Nevertheless, some interesting work is emerging that attempts to theorise the effects of developments in communication technology. These represent the most sophisticated efforts to explain and understand the socio-political implications of new media within an IR context. For example, Krasner (1991) has written an influential article based on a reformulated version of realism. From the pluralist school, Karl Deutsch (1957, 1963, 1966) wrote on communication issues even before the rise of new media, and Keohane and Nye (1998) have expanded and updated their theory of complex interdependence to account for the rise of global communication. Majid Tehranian (1999) analyses global communication within a neo-Marxist/dependency theory framework. Edward A. Comor (1994) edits a volume on the political economy of global communication that is heavily influenced by the critical theory of Cox, and Ronald J. Deibert (1997) and Stephen Gill (1995) have also produced analyses of new media from an international critical theory perspective. These are notable studies that have broken new ground by introducing theories of communication into the discipline.[1] The remainder of this chapter offers a synopsis and critique of the literature mentioned above.

2.3. Realism and New Media

Any IR theorist that focuses on communications is by definition unconventional, for this represents a radical departure from the traditional concerns of the discipline. Nevertheless, some theorists tend to remain more loyal to the orthodox assumptions of the discipline than others are. For instance, realist-influenced assumptions of state centricity and the pursuit of self-interest can often be identified in the IR/new media literature. Often these are implicit, such as in the specifically foreign policy orientated literature. Much work has been done on propaganda as an instrument of foreign policy, examining the way in which states will use the manipulation of messages to solidify international support and undermine enemies (e.g. Sorenson, 1968; Zeman, 1973; Martin, 1969; Davison, 1963). There are studies that focus on the linkage between the media representation of events, domestic opinion and foreign policy outcomes, which were common following the novelty of the 'first televised war' in Vietnam (Arlen, 1969; Dorman and Farhang,

[1] For a comprehensive account of communication theories see McQuail, 1994; Mattelart and Mattelart, 1998.

1987; Entmann, 1991). There are also studies on crises communications (Deutsch, 1957; Burton, 1969; Jervis, 1976), communications in negotiation and bargaining (Lockhart, 1979; Cohen, 1991), deterrence theory (Mearsheimer, 1983; Jervis, Lebow and Stein, 1985; Achen and Snidal, 1989; Powell, 1990) and wartime and/or diplomatic communications (Wood and Sears, 1970; Cohen, 1987). However, there has a more explicit attempt to connect the study of communication with realism in IR, in a 1991 article by Stephen D. Krasner. It is a notable example of this theoretical approach.

2.3.1. Stephen D. Krasner

The approach that Krasner recommends is heavily influenced by neo-realism. Relative power considerations are a central concern. In this instance, power can be thought of as being determined by three considerations: territorial control provided by judicial sovereignty, technology and market size (which influence the ability to make credible threats) and membership in universal international organisations (which give states the ability to influence policies determined by one-nation-one-vote procedures). Krasner believes that he can demonstrate empirically that power and interests determine outcomes. He criticises pluralist speculations of the cooperative benefits of greater information as potentially interesting but not capable of delivering the same empirical evidence, and of obscuring 'considerations of relative power capabilities, which draw attention to how the payoff matrix was structured in the first place, how the available options are constrained, who can play the game, and ultimately, who wins and who loses.' (Krasner, 1991: 366)

Best known for his previous work on regime theory (Krasner, 1982), Krasner examines communication patterns and concludes that '[t]here is no single international regime for global communications'. (Krasner, 1991: 336) Krasner finds that radio and television broadcasting, telecommunications, remote sensing and electromagnetic spectrum allocation are governed by 'a variety of principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures – or in some cases, by no regime at all.' (ibid.) Therefore, to explain variation in outcomes, it was necessary to analyse 'the interests and relative power capabilities of the actors in each case.' (ibid.) Krasner dismisses cooperation theory to account for the presence or absence of regimes in differing aspects of global communications. He argues that cooperation theory focuses too heavily on market failures arising from a clash of common interests and on the need for regimes to provide information for purposes of monitoring and enforcement. As far as global communications are concerned, information flows and knowledge are not as relevant as relative power capabilities for the establishment of an international regime. Where it can be shown that there is disagreement about principles and norms amongst nation-states and there is a highly asymmetrical distribution of power, international regimes have not developed. Examples are radio broadcasting and remote sensing. However, where there are similar problems but power distribution has been more symmetrical, regimes have been established – such as the allocation of the radio spectrum before the 1970s and the telecommunications regime before the 1980s. Hence, '[t]he level of conflict has varied according to whether states were dealing with pure coordination problems or with coordination problems that

had distributional consequences. The resolution of the former has caused little conflict because the purpose of the regime has been to avoid mutually undesirable outcomes.' (ibid.: 337) However, where distributional consequences arise, disputed outcomes are largely determined by the relative bargaining power of the states involved.

Krasner's approach is problematic in a number of ways. Essentially, there is the question of the nature of the connection between knowledge and interests. Krasner takes a positivist approach, which assumes that 'facts' about the social world can be perceived independently of social context. This approach transposes the methodology of natural science to social science, but both realms are qualitatively different in the most fundamental ways. The widespread suppression of marginalized voices throughout history illustrates that knowledge has not an independent status but has a societal function and is integral to power relations (Der Derian and Shapiro, 1988: 189). 'Facts' about the world should be understood as social and historical products, and cannot be separated from the context of their genesis (Ashley, 1981: 207). The development of knowledge and theory does not have an internal logic, but is primarily influenced by the force of social change. In this regard, Krasner's approach suffers from a lack of reflexivity.

Krasner's positivist analysis is presented as neutral scientific inquiry. However, value judgements can be identified from what a theory chooses to say as well as what it does not, and silence about gross disparities of power and wealth has the effect of implicitly supporting relations of domination (Macmillan and Linklater, 1995: 10). Krasner chooses not to explore the huge inequalities that form part of world order, and if these inequalities are not challenged, effectively they are reified. Krasner's theory can be characterised as being underpinned by the 'instrumental-type rationality' that Hoffman critiques, since it is orientated by an interest in controlling and predicting events within its own narrow frame of reference (Hoffman, 1987). Thus, rather than contributing to the realisation of human potential, it expands the capacity for repressive control. Krasner attempts to predict state behaviour under the deterministic constraints of systemic influence. There is little or no recognition of the historical conditions that produced this state system, or the possibility of future transformation. Communications are not theorised as an independent variable, or as a source of power. Krasner does not recognise or acknowledge emancipation as a concern, and focuses instead on describing the status quo rather than exploring immanent possibilities for change in world order. Hence, the emancipatory potential of new media is not considered or analysed.

2.4. Pluralism and New Media

The pluralist school emphasises the role of technology as a source of power in international relations, and so implicitly acknowledges the role of communication technologies in world politics. However, generally there have been few pluralist studies that focus on communications, with the notable exceptions of three prominent scholars: Karl Deutsch (1957, 1963, 1966) and Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye (1998). More than any other scholar, Karl Deutsch is most associated

with the communications/International Relations nexus. His work is unique in that it assigns a central role to communicative interaction in world politics, unusual in itself, and even more so before the dawn of new media. Although his unique approach cannot be easily categorised, Deutsch can be associated with the pluralist school because he regarded a multiplicity of actors as internationally significant, and he conceptualised technology as an important source of power (as opposed to the traditional realist focus on states and military force). Keohane and Nye are influential IR scholars and their recent work on global communications represents the definitive pluralist account to date. Each are dealt with in turn below.

2.4.1. Karl Deutsch

Deutsch's work is characterised by a striking contrast between the qualitative and the quantitative – his analysis is usually preceded by detailed historical description, which is both well researched and intelligently interpretative (e.g. Deutsch, 1957, 1963, 1966). However, Deutsch was a positivist at heart, and argued that only through statistics could facts be ascertained and evidence divined. Therefore his analysis of communication is restricted to the one aspect that is measurable: flow. Deutsch was interested in communication flows as quantifiable indicators of levels of national and international integration. Separate communities can be identified through concentrated clusters of communication patterns, such as the density of postal or telephone exchange. The irregularity of this distribution provides a partial explanation for the prevalence of nationalism. Deutsch hypothesised that community could be expanded with broadening of communication flows.

Perhaps Deutsch's work can best be understood as a part of the modernisation tradition of scholarship that was developed between 1950 and 1980 by sociologists, political scientists and development theorists (Puchala, 1981). These scholars assigned an important role to media, being concerned with the ability of technology to improve communication flows. Such flows were perceived as representative of the potential to subsume parochial identities in favour of national identities, as part of a project of community building. Increased literacy and the development of a centralised mass media were seen as integral to this project. Deutsch expanded the concerns of modernisation beyond state borders by investigating the possible emergence of a European security community. His influence can be discerned in the subsequent work of other IR theorists (e.g. Bull, 1966; Adler and Barnett, 1996).

The difficulty with Deutsch's analysis is twofold. First, he makes a simplistic equation between community integration and increased communication. Assimilation is not the unproblematic result of intensified communication; rather, the opposite can often be the case (Connor, 1972). Increased communication flows do not necessarily guarantee the formation of common identities between tribes, localities, nations and regions, and analysing communication flows in isolation reveals little about the nature of the interaction. Second, the value of a mainly quantitative analysis of communication flows can be criticised epistemologically. Nonetheless, Deutsch illustrates his analysis with historical detail, and it is possible to identify a muted

normative interest in his work. The introduction of ethical concerns into the discipline by Deutsch was pioneering, and could have been furthered if his approach had engaged in complementary qualitative analysis, self-reflection and societal critique.

2.4.2. Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye

I now turn to Keohane and Nye, who developed their complex interdependence thesis with respect to new media in the 1998 article, 'Power and Interdependence in the Information Age'. This furthers their analysis of 'soft power'[2] in earlier well-known works (e.g. Keohane and Nye, 1977; also see Nye, 1990). Throughout the article, Keohane and Nye stress the continuing relevance of governance and 'real world' patterns of power and privilege, which they complain are often trivialised by cyberspace prophets. They argue that rules will be necessary to govern the internet, such as protecting legitimate users from criminals and safeguarding intellectual property rights (Keohane and Nye, 1998: 82). Moreover, the information revolution is anything but universal, and the majority of the world's population are so poor that they are effectively excluded from participation (ibid.). However, Keohane and Nye do recognise that developments such as the growth of the internet 'has dramatically changed one feature of what we described in *Power and Interdependence* as "complex interdependence" – a world in which security and force matter less and countries are connected by multiple social and political relationships.' (ibid.: 83) The information revolution 'has vastly increased the number of channels of contact between societies, one of our three dimensions of complex interdependence.' (ibid.: 84)

Nonetheless, Keohane and Nye protest that the information revolution has not affected the other two conditions of complex interdependence – military force remains significant and security is still prioritised over other issues of foreign policy (ibid.: 88). The reason for this limited influence is that information does not exist in a vacuum, but is accessed in a political space. Also, complex interdependence is a condition between peaceful, democratic states. Outside of this, 'realist assumptions about the dominance of military force and security issues remains valid.' (ibid.: 84) In the future, the situation is likely to change as the costs to states of remaining apart from these patterns of interdependence increase. In this respect, the information revolution is affecting power measured in terms of resources. Whereas once territory, population and infantry provided the power resources on which a state relied, in this century, 'information technology, broadly defined, is likely to be the most important power resource.' (ibid.: 87) Although new communication technologies make states easier to penetrate and provide non-governmental actors with greater opportunities to mobilise and disseminate their views, the state's role will not be completely reduced. Indeed, in some cases it is likely to be strengthened, particularly in regard to the collection of intelligence, and large democratic nations are well placed to benefit from an 'information society' (ibid.: 93). The resilience of the nation-state should not be under-estimated, but states will undergo transformations since there will be a greater reliance on soft power to

[2] 'Soft power' refers to the ability to set the agenda and establish the framework of debate, and is associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology and institutions (Nye, 1990).

achieve objectives. Overall, '[t]he future lies neither exclusively with the state nor with transnational relations: geographically based states will continue to structure politics in an information age, but they will rely less on material resources and more on their ability to remain credible to a public with increasingly diverse sources of information.' (ibid.: 94)

Keohane and Nye present a considered account of the possible political implications of new media, but also an essentially conservative one. They are concerned with tracing evolution in the international system, and assign a balanced role to new media. However, they fail to provide a normatively motivated critique of the vast inequalities in world order, despite detailing such disparities, and only consider the role of new media in reconstituting power in terms of state governance, rather than in terms of promoting human emancipation. Keohane and Nye's theory incorporates historical and normative elements and so can be described as more sophisticated than Krasner's approach. However, it has limitations since it does not engage in critique of injustices and inequalities, and fails to reflect on its own ideological bias. Thus, Keohane and Nye's theory has a close relationship with Krasner's 'instrumental-type rationality' since both approaches lack a self-reflective capacity and contribute to the reification of world order. The theories perform an ideological function by legitimising and stabilising the status quo, where the instrumental interests of the state are realised at the expense of wider emancipation. Both theories are framed by a problematique set by an ultimate interest in control, which excludes questions of transformation and ethical progress.

2.5. Neo-Marxism/Dependency Theory and New Media

Analysis of new media has also emerged in IR from the neo-Marxist/dependency theory school. This builds on a theoretical tradition that is quite well established within the Communication Studies literature. Although not an IR scholar, Schiller's influential analyses have resonated with dependency theorists. Schiller has been associated with the so-called 'cultural imperialism thesis', and has been a fierce critic of US cultural dominance and the growing influence of transnational corporations. He argues that power is being concentrated in these institutions to such an extent that US cultural imperialism is being transformed into 'transnational corporate cultural determination.' (Schiller, 1992: 39) Schiller informs the work of IR theorist Majid Tehranian, who has recently published a leading text in this field.

2.5.1. Majid Tehranian

Tehranian conceptualises domination as a perennial fact of history, demonstrated by successive historical world systems of 'imperialism', such as the agrarian and industrial era. For Tehranian, the latest stage of domination can be understood as 'informatic imperialism', characterised 'by control of knowledge industries and information channels, including science, technology, patents, copyright, data, ideas and images.' (Tehranian, 1999: 6) The historical transition between each phase of imperialism can be understood as entailing four (r)evolutionary

processes: developmental, democratic, communication and control. It has also produced four versions of modernity: capitalist, communist, socialist and totalitarian, each of which has privileged freedom, equality, community and order respectively. Crucial to each of these modernizing strategies has been the pathology of 'ideological purism', which Tehranian defines as: 'a reductionist approach in which the complexity of social and cultural life worlds (the so-called lifeworlds) is abridged into a single and powerful myth and identity.' (ibid.: 6) Modernity has also entailed the rise of global capitalism through the processes of colonisation, decolonisation and the emergence of postcolonial national elites. Postcolonial regimes have often practised internal repression in an effort to control the dissent caused by the tension existing between traditional and modern society, economy and culture (ibid.: 3). This type of struggle between forces of modernity and traditionalism also takes place on the world stage. Resistance has developed amongst marginalized populations in both Northern and Southern countries as a reaction to modernization (ibid.: 91).

Global communication, from print to the internet, has played a central role in this process, 'homogenizing and differentiating markets, centralizing and dispersing power, and integrating and pluralizing cultural identities.' (ibid.: 7) The 'macromedia' has generally facilitated globalisation, whilst the 'micromedia' has assisted the forces of resistance and opposition. In contrast, the 'mesomedia' (such as professional and academic journals, journals of opinion, and the internet) are the communication networks through which like-minded groups are forming a global civil society. Thus, global communication has a contradictory nature: simultaneously stimulating economic growth by improving the efficiency and reach of advertising, and promoting political democracy by disseminating democratic concepts and norms (ibid.: 81-2).

Tehranian terms the current stage of capitalism as 'pancapitalism', in which 'information technologies have made it possible for national capital to assume transnational proportions and penetrate the farthest reaches of the world.' (ibid.: 7) Pancapitalism is delivering ever-increasing profit, but only at the expense of deepening the divide between the world's rich and poor, within and between states. It provides the conditions for the establishment of global hegemony, but Tehranian believes we can identify important sources of resistance. Global communication offers the capacity for the diffusion of ethnonationalist, neotraditionalist and neoconservative philosophies of resistance against the centres of power (ibid.: 71). Global communication has also contributed to the growth of a postmodern culture that is deconstructing past metanarratives in favour of nihilism and ecumenicalism (ibid.: 66). Tehranian illustrates his argument in this regard with particular focus on the Islamic world. He concludes that the cycle of the global state-corporate system of organised violence will continue to be met by sporadic counter-violence unless diversity is recognised and celebrated by developing mutual tolerance and devolving power down to the smallest communities.

Tehranian develops an approach that contrasts sharply with that of Krasner, Deutsch and Keohane and Nye in that it takes communication inequality as its central focus. His analysis can be characterised as being oriented by an emancipatory interest, because it contains a normative

critique of relations of domination and subordination. Tehranian provides a historical narrative of the international system and the role of communication in world politics, and offers an original account of the dynamics that govern the structural transformation of world order. He brings a fresh perspective to IR by incorporating culture as a key component of his theory. By focusing on the ways in which global communication facilitates counter-hegemonic resistance, Tehranian also demonstrates an interest in identifying contradictions in world order that may indicate emancipatory potentialities. Nevertheless, his work can be criticised for emphasising the importance of cultural difference to such a degree that culture is overstated as a unifying or divisive force amongst individuals and communities. Tehranian tends to treat culture as an unproblematic descriptive term, rather than concentrating on exploring its essentially contested nature. Moreover, Tehranian's historical narrative of the changing forms of domination is uncomfortably close to over-simplistic caricature.

2.6. Critical Theory and New Media

Critical international theorists have also written about new media from the perspective of the political economy tradition. They have largely focused on the transition from the post-war hegemony of the US to a world order led by transnational corporations and their home states. Research in this area has demonstrated the extent of state and transnational corporate power, the increasing ownership concentration in media industries, and the growing trends towards vertical integration (the corporate control of production within a specific sector) and horizontal integration (the corporate control of production across sectors within and outside the media industry). Critical international theorists share common concerns about the ways in which these trends can create and consolidate social and political inequalities in world order (e.g. Herman and McChesney, 1997; Bagdikian, 2000; Wilkin, 2001). Unfortunately, much of this literature is notably underdeveloped in its analysis of the potential for emancipatory transformation in world order. In what follows, I shall review a selection of the key literature and demonstrate how this criticism applies to a range of theorists. First, I shall discuss Edward A. Comor's neo-Gramscian approach; second, Ronald J. Deibert's 'ecological holist' approach; and third, Stephen Gill's critique of surveillance in the political economy.

2.6.1. Edward A. Comor

Edward A. Comor has edited a volume on the political economy of communications that derives from the neo-Gramscian school of IR, and is heavily influenced by the work of Robert W. Cox. In the introduction, Comor outlines a political economy of communications (PEC) perspective, which focuses on the material circumstances in the communication process, and how the capacities of the participants affect, and are affected by, the physical capacities of the media accessed. 'How and what human beings think (and therefore how they act) is directly conditioned

by the communication process, who controls it, and how this control is exercised.' (Comor, 1994: 3)

A PEC approach takes place of two levels of analysis, the 'macro' and the 'micro'. The micro level refers to the 'audience' and its relationship to information producers and/or distributors and/or the means of distribution. This relationship involves both the explicit and implicit exercise of power. In most PEC analyses, audiences are conceptualised as participants in the ongoing social construction of reality, and so this power relationship is complex and reciprocal. The macro level of analysis refers to large-scale developments in communication, such as digital convergence of computer and telecommunication technologies. There is often a conflict between technological development, and political, economic, or cultural considerations, and so PEC scholars focus upon the importance of power capacities, from the local to the global level. Such studies usually involve 'the development and application of resources in the explicit and implicit construction and reproduction of what Antonio Gramsci called 'common sense'.' (ibid.: 3)

Comor attempts to develop a PEC approach to complement Coxian international critical theory. He focuses on Cox's category of 'ideas' as an illustration of how a PEC perspective can be used to supplement underdeveloped aspects of critical theory. Whilst Comor finds interesting theoretical potential in Cox's categorisation of 'ideas', he criticises the lack of 'a necessary theorisation of the *capacity for thought* in both the individual and the collectivity, and the dynamics conditioning its production and reproduction.' (ibid.: 8) In other words, Cox's 'ideas' acts as a catch-all term for describing 'common sense' thought as well as the existence of 'alternative thought'; however, the potentials and limitations of thought are not fully explored. Consequently, 'ideas' are understood to be the result of an ongoing interaction with other categories. There are no means for evaluating the influence of one category on another – for example, the influence of 'material capabilities' or 'institutions' on 'ideas' – which limits our capacity to speculate what may influence 'ideas' in the future (ibid.). Cox does lend weight to the role of 'organic intellectuals' in this regard: a Gramscian concept that refers to an elite around whom a coalition of social forces can form (Cox, 1987: 294). Organic intellectuals have the ability and structural capacity to redefine the 'national interest', and to transcend and redefine economic interests in turn – co-opting subordinate groups in the process. For example, Cox suggests that the emerging 'transnational managerial class' are successfully adopting the role of organic intellectuals, whose philosophy is being adopted worldwide by government institutions and senior personnel (ibid.: 299; Cox, 1983: 173). But whilst Comor finds his conclusion persuasive, Cox's failure to specify the communication process is a problematic omission in his work, which limits 'his attempt to elaborate on the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the internationalising state.' (Comor, 1994: 8)

Comor's work is a valuable and thought-provoking addition to the literature, an original attempt to illustrate how communication issues can be integrated into a discipline where they have been traditionally excluded, even amongst the most radical schools of thought. Comor endorses the epistemological and ethical convictions of Cox: the importance of reflexivity, historical awareness, and normative critique of unequal power relations. Extending Cox's theory to account for

communicative processes may be viable in the way that Comor suggests, but it is telling that Comor does not develop his suggestions into anything more substantive, and neither do any of the contributors to his book. Developing a theory of communication in Cox's model of historical change would not be an unproblematic 'add on' as Comor appears to imply, but instead would entail a whole-scale revision. If Comor is concerned with developing a critical theory of communication, it is curious that he does not even give mention to the work of Jürgen Habermas, where communication is a defining theme. Comor's assertion that 'Robert Cox's work on the "internationalising of the state"...constitutes the most promising analysis of communication in [international political economy]' is not backed up by a comparative evaluation of the contribution of other critical theorists, notably Habermas (ibid.: 4). Coxian theory was not designed to incorporate communication issues, but Habermasian theory expressly was, and Comor fails to convince that the study of new media would be productive within the former.

2.6.2. Ronald J. Deibert

Ronald J. Deibert has made one of the most original and sustained attempts to connect developments in communication technologies and transformations in world politics, even though his overall argument is not entirely persuasive. Deibert resists easy categorisation as an IR theorist because he takes a multi-disciplinary approach and draws heavily on literature outside of the discipline (understandably so given the conventional narrow focus of IR). Nevertheless, his theoretical influences and his historicist and holist approach indicate sympathy with the critical theory school.

Deibert's main contention is that 'the landscape of world politics is undergoing rapid and fundamental transformations related to the advent of digital-electronic communications – what I call the hypermedia environment – and that the most useful way to fathom these transformations is through the lens of "medium theory."' (Deibert, 1997: ix) The incorporation of medium theory into International Relations is novel, and offers a fresh perspective from which to theorise about world order change. Medium theory, most famously promoted by Harold Innis (1951) and Marshall McLuhan (1964), proposes that changing modes of communication have effects on the values and beliefs of societies and the trajectory of social development. It traces these effects to the changing material properties of communications environments, rather than the content of the message itself, hence McLuhan's soundbite: 'the medium is the message.' (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967) Deibert is keen to emphasise that although Innis and McLuhan were ambiguous in terms of the influence that they attributed to modes of communication in human history, he wants to adopt an open-ended, non-reductionist approach (Deibert, 1997: 26-31).

Deibert reformulates medium theory, embedding it in what he terms an 'ecological holist' framework. He uses an evolutionary analogy to describe the processes by which marginalized social forces and ideas gain general acceptance by the unintended consequences of technological change (ibid.: 30). This analysis stresses the importance of contingency – that is, change occurring as a result of a lucky chance meeting between social forces, ideas and communication

environments. Related to this change are two conceptually distinct effects: distributional changes and changes in social epistemology. Deibert attempts to account for past world order transformations with reference to changes in the mode of communication, such as the parchment codex and the growth of the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, and the invention of the printing press and the evolution from medieval to modern forms of political authority. He then goes on to speculate what transformations we are witnessing at present and what we may expect in the future as a result of the emergence of the hypermedia environment.

In terms of the invention of printing, distributional changes occurred in two respects: the medieval world order was undermined whilst the modern world order was established. Deibert suggests that the properties of printing favoured the strategic interests of the Protestant Reformation and scientific humanism at the expense of the papal-monastic network (ibid.: 95-100). This contributed to the weakening of the ties that linked Europe into a single Christian Commonwealth (ibid.: 97). Printing also facilitated the rise of the urban bourgeoisie, who, in alliance with state monarchs, created standardized rational policies and administrative bureaucracies (ibid.). In terms of social epistemology, printing provided a communications environment in which flourished a cognitive bias towards visual, linear, and uniform representations of space, and modern notions of individual subjectivity and autonomy (ibid.: 95). Further, the standardization of printing allowed for common identities to form based on shared language, thus providing the basis for the modern ideology of nationalism (ibid.: 104-8). These changes 'formed the "metaphysical underpinnings" for the architecture of modern world order, and thus contributed to the characteristic differentiation of political authority into territorially distinct, sovereign nation states.' (ibid.: 204)

Deibert's historical research provides the context for examining the current 'hypermedia' environment. This term is adapted from Jean Baudrillard, and it attempts to capture notions of technological convergence as well as the wide penetration and ubiquity of electronic media in the contemporary era. 'Furthermore, the prefix "hyper"...emphasizes two central characteristics of this environment: the speed by which communications currently take place, and the intertextuality or interoperability of once-discrete media.' (ibid.: 115) The hypermedia environment facilitates the diffusion of production across territorial borders and global finance, as well as the growth of a global civil society. These distributional changes offer a serious challenge to centralised and hierarchical forms of rule, such as the state apparatus. Social epistemological changes are equally as profound, favouring '[p]ostmodern notions of "decentred" selves, pastiche-like, intertextual spatial biases, multiple realities and worlds and fragmented imagined communities...' (ibid.: 205) Although cautious about making bold predictions of how the nature of political authority may be transformed as a result, Deibert suggests that we should expect significant changes (ibid.: 206).

Deibert asserts that the most important change is the dispersal of authority to overlapping sites, partially caused by the structural power of transnational corporate interests (ibid.). In response to the pressure exerted by these interests, many state decision-making powers and other centralised functions have been devolved to local levels and to private authorities. As a

consequence, there is a much more complex pattern of governance structures than has existed previously, both 'above' and 'below' the nation-state. Although Deibert does not go as far to suggest the state is 'withering away' as a result, he does identify a significant change in the values that motivate most states (ibid.). Whereas economics were traditionally subordinate to politics, there has now been a reversal of values in favour of the interests of capital. There has been a shift in priority from state self-sufficiency, autonomy and survival, to multi-lateral cooperation, regional and international organisations and regimes, and the accommodation of corporate interests. 'Indeed, if there is one clear "winner" in the hypermedia environment, it is the collective interests of transnational capital.' (ibid.)

Another characteristic in the dispersal of political authority is the growing number of transnational social movements, many of which largely mobilise through the internet (ibid.: 207). It is difficult to generalise about these movements: they are greatly varied in terms of their underlying political philosophies, perceived legitimacy and the effectiveness of their actions. Nonetheless, transnational social movements add another layer of complexity to the contemporary web of governance by presenting a challenge to traditional conceptions of state sovereignty and primacy in world affairs (ibid.).

Interesting trends that Deibert suggests are worth tracking are the growth of planetary surveillance, the rise of intra-state rather than inter-state conflict, the dynamic between forces of social fragmentation and integration, and the political rivalry between transnational capital and civil society movements (ibid.: 208-9). These new areas of focus demand revised versions of the concepts that IR theorists have traditionally employed to theorise about world politics. Conventional assumptions about the unitary and territorial nature of authority are of limited utility, as are binary definitions of 'inside' and 'outside', and the 'domestic' and 'international' spheres (ibid.: 210). The discipline requires fresh thinking in order to better equip itself to understand and explain contemporary global transformations.

Deibert brings a fresh perspective to IR through medium theory: the attempt to account for world order change with reference to developments in communications technologies. Throughout, Deibert consistently emphasises that communication technologies are not 'master variables', and he disassociates himself from the mono-causal reductionism that many medium theorists have been accused of (e.g. ibid.: 41). In the conclusion, he seeks to reinforce his findings with those of other theorists working from different theoretical perspectives: for example, Ken Booth (1991), Ronnie Lipschutz (1992), James Rosenau (1990) and John Ruggie (1993). However, Deibert cannot satisfactorily explain the reasons why he chooses to adopt a medium theory perspective. Innis (1951) and McLuhan (1964) were proponents of medium theory because each to some degree argued that communication media had a determining influence on society. Whilst a much criticised position, it is at least easily understandable. But since Deibert disassociates himself from such determinism, the utility of medium theory remains much less clear. Deibert argues that it offers a new 'analytical and theoretical lens through which to examine the relationship between changes in modes of communication and world order transformation.' (Deibert, 1997: 202) Yet he fails to

elaborate on why this 'analytical lens' is of greater value than another: in other words, the rationale behind privileging communication as a variable.

This problem is compounded by the limited normative content of Deibert's work. Deibert's main interest lies in exploring re-descriptions of world politics that challenge traditional IR theory, in an attempt to equip the discipline to assess contemporary transformations in a more productive manner. Deibert insists that: 'Whether these changes should be applauded, lamented, or encouraged in certain directions over others are questions that will wait a further study.' (ibid.: 217) However, he points to interesting possibilities that communication technologies may promote emancipation when he concludes: 'With the means of two-way communications and the breakdown of mass broadcasting, new forms of democratic participation and acts of creativity become feasible. A growing civil society concerned with issues of ecology and human rights may eventually meliorate the worst excesses of the global market system.' (ibid.: 217) However, this extremely limited speculation is as far as Deibert is willing to go in exploring the potential for emancipatory change. His account suggests an implicit critique of the surveillance capacities of communication technologies and of inequalities in access, but the emphasis throughout is on description rather than overt normative critique. Deibert's historicist approach represents a sophisticated attempt to theorise new media within an IR context, but ultimately his approach is unsatisfactory.

2.6.3. Stephen Gill

I turn to consider Stephen Gill's critique of the surveillance capacities provided by new media to states and corporations (Gill, 1995). Gill expresses concern that new levels of technological sophistication can enhance the power of states and internationally mobile fractions of capital: he argues that this capacity can be applied instrumentally for the purposes of social control. He characterises practices of surveillance as a 'global panopticon', which illustrate 'a dystopia latent in modernity: the possibility of developing a system of control that reduces the individual to a manipulable and relatively inert commodity.' (ibid.: 2)

Gill acknowledges the close relation between postmodernism and critical theory, but is keen to distinguish his approach by positioning his essay as a constructive critique of neo-Foucauldian interpretations of neoliberalism (ibid.: 3). Although Foucault's ideas on power and surveillance inform Gill's thought, he argues that 'to make sense of social forces driving the transformation we need a more historicist and structural form of analysis that is sensitive to the dynamics of change and has an adequate means for integrating capital into the question of power.' (ibid.) Gill outlines a method of conceptualising the transformative potential represented by new technologies that owes much to the Coxian notion of historical structures. He considers the various ways in which these technologies are being used to increase exploitation and oppression with reference to changing patterns of social power, forms of states and civil society, and world order (ibid.: 40).

Gill argues that the recent extension and deepening of global market forces have not been accompanied by effective and accountable structures of global governance. Therefore, the

surveillance capacities of new media tend not to be used in the interests of transparency and accountability (for example, for macroeconomic regulation), but rather, in the interests of citizen surveillance for the purposes of social control, which is indicative of a crisis in social order and government legitimacy (ibid.). Gill bemoans the excesses of neoliberalism and its negative consequences with regard to human development and the integrity of the biosphere. He argues it may be possible to avert impending human and environmental catastrophes if global governance structures are made more representative and democratic, and forums are established to exercise an oversight function over a range of international organisations (ibid.). He speculates briefly on the form these forums might take – they could involve elements of global civil society and include grassroots organisations, worker's representatives, indigenous, environmental and women's movements. These disparate groups could be brought together 'by a recognition of a common interest in protecting the biosphere, in reregulating the global economy so that it is made more stable, more sustainable, and more equitable, and a common aversion to fundamentalism of either a religious or political kind.' (ibid.: 41)

Gill's political economy critique is persuasive and his recommendations for a future emancipatory politics intriguing – but underdeveloped. It is implicit in the quotation above that Gill is referring to some notion of the public sphere, and indeed he makes an indirect reference to the concept in his closing paragraph:

> All of this would presuppose the mobilization of a collective and highly differentiated political will at local, global, national, regional, and international spheres of political life. For such a mobilization to succeed would require not only ideas and networks but also institutional and material capabilities, access to resources, and the capacity to demonstrate in practical ways the ability to meet the broad needs of the people. (ibid.: 42)

He proposes that this will require the 'constructive and creative use of technology', but does not consider if it is possible to currently identify such creative uses, or how technologies may be used by these groups in the future (ibid.). In short, Gill fails to systematically theorise about the potential for emancipatory change. Gill touches upon some vague notion of the public sphere, which could offer a promising model with which to conceptualise these issues, but he does not develop this beyond the sketchy outline quoted above. Nevertheless, the themes that are central to Gill's critique are also central to the developing project of reconstructing public sphere theory: for example, the effect of new media on world politics, globalisation and transformations in the structure of political authority and the possible emergence of transnational communities of shared identities and interests (e.g. Bohman, 1998). Thus, public sphere theory potentially offers an ideal method to continue to develop critical thought on these issues.

Public sphere theory is centrally concerned with the political implications of media and communication technology, so there is a capacity to develop an approach that can bridge the IR/Communication Studies nexus. Public sphere theory is also oriented by an explicit normative

interest, and so can contribute to the development of international critical theory. The concept of a public sphere is a theoretical ideal that enables effective critique of the reproduction of inequalities in world order. It is a realm where all affected actors can engage in dialogue and where direct claims to power are inadmissible. Hence, public sphere theory can balance a 'cautious and contingent' universality with respect for difference (Hoffman, 1988: 93). Habermas's depiction of a public sphere is flawed but historically informed, and serves as a valuable method of societal critique. A reformulation of Habermasian theory could offer a productive way to develop analyses of new media in world politics that avoids the deficiencies and limitations of the literature discussed so far.

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter has offered a brief disciplinary history of International Relations, and has demonstrated that the conventional focus and boundaries of the subject have excluded analysis of communication. Even when traditional theory came under sustained challenge in the 1980s with the rise of radical theory, communication issues continued to be neglected within IR. In recent years, this omission is beginning to be rectified. There have been a number of publications within the field that attempt to conceptualise the effects of new media by theorists of radically different persuasions. There have been studies based on reformulated versions of realism, pluralism, neo-Marxism/dependency theory and critical theory. This chapter has reviewed and evaluated the most notable examples of each type of theoretical approach. It is possible to identify an unfulfilled need within IR for a critical, normatively motivated inquiry into the role of new media in world politics. Public sphere theory potentially offers a valuable method by which to develop critical thought on these matters.

As shall be seen in the next chapter, some theorists have recognised the promise of public sphere theory, and have attempted to develop such an approach within IR. Unfortunately, it is possible to identify similar limitations in much of this literature that also characterise the work reviewed so far: there is a common failure to systematically theorise about emancipatory possibilities. It is therefore necessary to reconstruct public sphere theory from its basic presuppositions to develop a more reflexive, critical and sophisticated approach. Hence, I review Habermas's description of the bourgeois public in conjunction with the recent public sphere literature, in order to propose a reformulation of the concept that will enable critical inquiry into the possibility of public spheres emerging beyond the nation-state.

3. Emergent Transnational Public Spheres: A Theoretical Framework

The study of new media is underdeveloped in International Relations, which is a notable admission in an age where it is commonly thought that communication developments are intrinsically connected to transformations in society and the state. Most relevant literature in the discipline is descriptive and empirical, and only a few select works attempt to theorise the effects of changing communication technologies (e.g. Deibert, 1997). Critical international theorists such as Edward Comor and Stephen Gill have convincingly argued that a theoretical approach underpinned by a critical epistemology can aid in the explanation and understanding of the socio-political implications of new media (Comor, 1994; Gill, 1995). However, they have not developed a comprehensive research methodology. Nor have they explicitly considered the utility of public sphere theory in conceptualising these issues, despite the evident thematic relevance. Indeed, it is possible to argue, as Nancy Fraser does, that 'something like Habermas's idea of the public sphere is indispensable to social theory' (Fraser, 1992: 111). The concept of the public sphere also has a potentially significant contribution to make to the further development of critical international theory, since it is guided by an emancipatory interest in the extension of dialogic participation.

Therefore, in the first section of this chapter I shall revisit Habermas's classic expression of the concept in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. There are a number of difficulties with the Habermasian definition of the public sphere that need to be resolved before the concept can be appropriated. Examples include the dichotomous division between public and private realms, non-recognition of counter publics and idealisation of the bourgeois public sphere. Particularly problematic in an era of new media is the way in which the public sphere is conceptualised as territorially bounded. Even radical critiques of Habermas's work have failed to problematise this state-centricity (e.g. Fraser, 1992; Ryan, 1992). The 'sovereign' nation-state has been conventionally understood to be the addressee of public deliberation because public sphere dialogue concerns processes of governance. Indeed, framing the public sphere in the context of a shared national territory seemed to make intuitive sense before the onset of the internet and new media revolution. However, a public sphere describes a mode of discursive engagement about political authority, rather than a geographic space. An unavoidable question in contemporary public sphere theory is whether the growth of 'global governance', coupled with the increased capacity to communicate across state borders, has contributed to further significant transformation of public spheres (Stevenson, 1993: 67). Once Habermas's approach has been modified with respect to these deficiencies, it should provide a valuable basis with which to theorise about the structural preconditions for the emergence of transnational public spheres.

In the second section of the chapter, I turn to consider the conceptual differences between 'transnational public spheres' and 'global civil society', and argue that the former is an appropriate theoretical framework for the purposes of this thesis. I defend this argument with reference to Jodi Dean's postmodern critique of public sphere theory (Dean, 2001). If my project is to be guided by a

self-reflective rationality, then Dean's alternative perspective has much to contribute to the development of my thought. Contra Dean, I maintain that the concept of the public sphere can effectively incorporate analysis of new media and a potential for normative critique. A reformulated version of public sphere theory also presents an innovative perspective to IR and could contribute valuable insights into world politics.

Third, I demonstrate the relevance of recent literature concerning the expansion of public spheres beyond the state, and identify some common shortcomings that need to be addressed in future research. There is a rough division that can be made between two main approaches: a focus on expanded public spheres of state actors (e.g. Lynch, 1999, 2000; Mitzen, 2001), and a focus on expanded public spheres of non-state actors (e.g. Guidry, Kennedy and Zald, 2000; Bohman, 1998, 1999). Unfortunately, much of this literature can be criticised for failing to specify the preconditions of existence for expanded public spheres, thus making the unfounded assumption that they are 'actually existing' institutions. It is also possible to identify the same failure to systematically theorise about emancipatory possibilities that characterises the work reviewed in the previous chapter.

In the concluding section, I build on my appraisal of Habermasian theory and the expanded public spheres literature to propose a reformulation of public sphere theory. I outline a functional, non state-centric, multiple spheres model of transnational publics, and delineate three structural preconditions for their emergence. These are: developing communicative capacity across state borders, transformations in sites of political authority and emerging transnational communities of recognition.

3.1. Habermas and the Public Sphere

Hitherto, international critical theory has been chiefly concerned with challenging the positivist bias in IR, and reinterpreting concepts such as sovereignty and security. Haacke describes the invaluable contribution of Habermasian-influenced IR theorists as threefold. They are able to: '(1) reveal the possibilities for change immanent in social relations; (2) offer a compelling normative base for its critique; and (3) illustrate real-world instances of a reconceptualised praxis.' (Haacke, 1996: 256) However, apart from a few exceptions (e.g. Comor, 1994; Gill, 1995), new media has not been a focus of international critical theory. Although this gap in the commentary is evident in all schools of IR thought, it is perhaps most noticeable within the critical theory canon, since the media has been a central theme of the Frankfurt School (e.g. Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979; Adorno, 1991). There is evidently a need within IR in general, and international critical theory in particular, for a comprehensive approach to the study of new media (Deibert, 1997: 217; Comor, 1994: 8). Public sphere theory is an ideal method for developing critical thought on these issues, and if designed adequately, it can correspond to all of the criteria that Haacke outlines above. The concept of the public sphere provides a normative model of discourse that is useful in critiquing and evaluating the social and political effects of new media in the context of increasing

challenges to state authority. Critical inquiry into the evidence relating to the possible transformation of public spheres should be oriented by an emancipatory interest in the potential for change in world order.

Although traditionally the public sphere has been defined in a local or national sense, it is appropriate to ask if globalisation processes and new media could provide for the emergence of transnational public spheres. There are two main reasons why this might be the case.

First, public sphere theorists are primarily concerned with the conditions that facilitate and constrain the emergence of public spheres, by tracing the historical development of communication media and discourse (e.g. Habermas, 1989; Dewey, 1927; Arendt, 1958; Keane, 1984). There are international parallels that can be drawn here due to developments in communication technologies and the evolving nature of political authority. Conventionally, the public sphere was described as geographically situated in relation to a local or national political authority, when communication media had a more limited reach than at present, and when the nature of state sovereignty was less problematic than it is under conditions of globalisation (Baynes, 2001). Whilst public sphere theory has rarely extended beyond media and discourse within state borders, the possible restructuring influence of globalisation and new media can no longer be ignored (Stevenson, 1993: 67). A public sphere refers to a mode of engagement in relation to processes of governance. If cross-border communicative capacity is increasing and global governance structures can be identified, it is appropriate to ask whether expanded public spheres could emerge.

Second, the concept of the public sphere is derived from a long established tradition of critical theory scholarship that has not been fully exploited in International Relations, which could benefit from the fresh perspective it offers. Inquiring into the potential emergence of a transnational public sphere will further develop the common themes of international critical theory (e.g. Cox, 1981, 1987; Linklater, 1990a, 1990b, 1998). For example, it could significantly contribute to debates about the evolving role of the state, the expansion of moral and political community, contemporary forms of exclusion, and the transformative role of counter-hegemonic social movements (e.g. Neufeld, 1995; Hoffman, 1991; Cox, 1999; Linklater, 1996a). Public sphere theory also has evident relevance for the project of discourse ethics, by investigating the structural potential for the possible expansion of dialogic community (e.g. Linklater, 1990c, 1994, 1998).

There are a variety of versions of the concept of the public sphere, ranging from Koselleck's study of the role of secret societies such as Freemasonry in challenging absolutist authority (Koselleck, 1988; see also Jacob, 1991) to Arendt's conception of the agnostic public (Arendt, 1958; for a critique, see Benhabib, 1995), to Dewey's description of small town meetings in American history (Dewey, 1927). However, the most famous expression of the concept, and the *locus classicus* of all debate, is Jürgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989). My reformulation of public sphere theory will be based on this seminal work. In this section, I will argue that although Habermas's approach has strong potential, it also contains many weaknesses. These have been subjected to common criticisms that in some cases have recently been accepted by Habermas himself. Habermas's model of the public sphere needs to be

significantly altered before it can be adapted to an investigation of the possible emergence of transnational public spheres. I will therefore outline Habermas's public sphere theory; consider common critiques of his approach; and summarise Habermas's responses to his critics and his subsequent theoretical revisions.

3.1.1. Habermas and 'The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere'

The notion of a public sphere refers to a realm for free and open discussion, in which all potentially have the chance to participate, and no one has an advantage over another (Habermas, 1989: 27-30). In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas argues that eighteenth century England witnessed the development of a bourgeois public sphere, which mediated between society and state (ibid.: 57-66). Similar to the practice in Ancient Greece, private citizens would meet at a public forum to discuss matters of state. Better transportation, the growth of urban culture, and the 18th-19th century media provided for the establishment of this public sphere, which was associated with the emergence of differing public arenas such as theatres, museums and coffeehouses (ibid.). The result was greatly increased social intercourse, albeit only between members of the literate bourgeois (ibid.: 31-43). The public sphere was a realm of informed and reasoned debate, where government policies were scrutinised and arguments and opinions rationally discussed. As Habermas argues:

> In this [bourgeois] stratum, which more than any other was affected *and* called upon by mercantilist policies, the state authorities evoked a resonance leading by the *publicum*, the abstract counterpart of public authority, into an awareness of itself as the latter's opponent, that is, as the public of the now emerging *public sphere of civil society*. For these latter developed to the extent to which the public concern regarding the private sphere of civil society was no longer confined to the authorities but was considered by the subjects as one that was properly theirs. (ibid.: 23)

It is possible to identify 'institutional criteria' relating to the public sphere according to Habermas's historical description of its emergence. The following quote illustrates how the public sphere developed in separation from the state to act as a means of calling it to account. The state was the addressee of debate in the public sphere, which was:

> ...a forum in which the private people, come together to form a public, readied themselves to compel public authority to legitimate itself before public opinion. The *publicum* developed into the public, the *subjectum* into the reasoning subject, the receiver of regulations from above into the ruling authorities' adversary. (ibid.: 25-6)

The emergence of this public sphere was assisted by the development of the press:

> Because...the society now confronting the state clearly separated a private domain from public authority and...a subject of public interest, that zone of continuous administrative contact became "critical" in the sense that it provoked the critical judgement of a public making use of its reason. The public could take on this challenge all the better as it required...the function of an instrument with whose help the state administration has already turned society into a public affair in a specific sense – the press. (ibid.: 24)

Further, this sphere was constituted of participants that recognised one another as legitimate participants in debate. This is demonstrated by the normative condition of publicity, where opinions are made intelligible and publicly accountable, direct appeals to power are inadmissible, and debate is inclusive of all affected actors. In the bourgeois sphere the social status of the participants was transcended during the course of free and equal debate, so that 'the authority of the better argument could assert itself against that of social hierarchy and in the end carry the day' (ibid.: 36). In other words, the public generated rational-critical debate oriented towards consensus. Deliberation was, in principle, inclusive. All propertied and educated readers, listeners and spectators could take part in discussion (ibid.). Thus, Habermas argues that even where numbers were small, gatherings were *conscious* of themselves as representative of a wider public. In Habermas's words: 'Wherever the public established itself institutionally as a stable group of discussants, it did not equate itself with *the* public but at most claimed to act as its mouthpiece, in its name, perhaps even as its educator – the new form of bourgeois representation.' (ibid.: 37) Therefore, we can summarise the basic preconditions of emergence of the public sphere as follows: ability to communicate (assisted by the development of the press), separation from public authority (i.e. the addressee of public sphere debate) and development of a 'community of recognition' (i.e. participants are conscious of themselves as representative of a wider public, and recognise each other as legitimate participants in debate, as demonstrated through the normative condition of publicity).

Habermas identified two normative possibilities arising from these developments. First, the public use of reason as a method of arbitration between competing power claims; and second, a transformation in the nature of power claims themselves. The bourgeois public began to articulate their interests in contrast to state claims of authority, that 'would entail, if it were to prevail, more than just an exchange of the basis of legitimation while domination was maintained in principle.' (ibid.: 28) In other words, the bourgeois conception of the state as law-based and legitimatised by public opinion contained a normative ideal of eradicating the state as an instrument of domination. The intention behind public sphere dialogue was to balance authoritative state rule – for public domination to triumph over state domination (ibid.: 27).

However, Habermas argues that the situation worsened during the first half of the nineteenth century, when the public sphere came to be dominated by a strengthened state and a press infiuenced by commercial interests (ibid.: 181-235). A process that Habermas terms the 'refeudalization of the lifeworld' was under way, where the role of the media was transformed from the arena of free and rational debate, to the manipulator of public opinion, for the advantage of

allied political and economic interests (ibid.: 196-210). The rise of the public sphere depended upon a clear separation between public and private interests, and so the gradual integration of both was disastrous. In its place, there developed an intermediate sphere of state actors absorbed in society, and social actors absorbed in the state (ibid.: 177). This sphere was inferior to the bourgeois public sphere in that it did not foster rational-critical debate on the part of private people:

> The process of the politically relevant exercise and equilibration of power now takes place directly between the private bureaucracies, special-interest associations, parties, and public administrations. The public as such is included only sporadically in this circuit of power, and even then is brought in only to contribute to its acclamation. (ibid.: 176)

An effective illustration of the decline of the public sphere is the semantic change of the term 'publicity'. In its original sense, 'publicity' simply referred to the condition of being public; nowadays it is more commonly associated with manipulative politics. 'Public opinion' does not now suggest critical participation, or is thought of as determinative. Rather, it is determined and plays a central part in the legitimation process. As Peters (1993) points out, the very language of public and private contributes to the structural transformation of the public sphere.

Habermas identifies two inherent possibilities created by the emergence of this intermediate sphere and the associated rise of the social welfare states that succeeded the constitutional liberal states of western democracies. There is an anti-democratic tendency, in that a policy process in which a number of social organisations compete with one another for favourable treatment by the state prevents the realisation of a public sphere. The role of the public is minimised as much as possible during this process, chiefly by securing consensus through manipulative publicity (Habermas, 1989: 178). However, there is also a remedial democratic tendency, in which the state upholds the constitutional rights of all citizens in a manner that enables valid social and political participation (ibid.: 232-3). This would replace the earlier bourgeois public sphere of private people with a public sphere of organised private people. In Habermas's opinion:

> Only such a public could under today's conditions, participate effectively in a process of public communication via the channels of the public spheres internal to parties and special interest associations and on the basis of an affirmation of publicity as regards the negotiations of organisations with the state and one another. (ibid.: 232)

The above situation represents hope for the democratisation of a capitalist, social welfare state. The anti-democratic, anti-critical tendency of public manipulation represents a significant obstacle in the way of its realisation.

Structural Transformation remains an influential work decades after it was written because it systematically addresses a central problem in democratic theory: what are the conditions for debate about public issues between private persons where reasoned argument is privileged over

power status? As Boyd-Barrett argues, the influence of the theory also relates to 'the weight it gives to the everyday culture of a social class and its use of the media gives it a sociological, not to say ethnographic, authenticity which is impressive and which underlines the dearth of equivalent work for other media in other historical and social contexts.' (Boyd-Barrett, 1995: 231) The particular strengths of Habermas's approach derive from the critical theory tradition from which it draws. It develops a normatively motivated account of existing social conditions and is guided by an interest in emancipatory transformation, informed by an intuitive perception that if a decision is to be morally defensible, all those affected by it must be able to participate in dialogue.

This teleological position has received vitriolic criticism from postmodernists, who attack the 'meta-narratives' of rationality and universalism in Habermas's work (e.g. Lyotard, 1984: 65). Mark Poster, in a comprehensive discussion of the Habermas/postmodernist debate, has suggested that Habermas disconcerts postmodernists most with his belief in the desirability of revitalising elements of emancipatory reason in modern society. He argues that:

> ...when Habermas defends with the label of reason what he admires in Western culture, he universalises the particular, grounds the conditional, absolutizes the finite. He provides a centre and an origin for a set of discursive practices. He undermines critique in the name of critique by privileging a locus of theory (reason) that far too closely resembles society's official discourse. (Poster, 1989: 23)

However, Habermas's defence of a universally accessible public sphere enables him to critique as well as suggest alternatives to the status quo – which is infinitely more problematic for postmodernists who deny the existence of any universal normative standard, and so are limited to offering only resistance, not emancipation (Blaug, 1994). As Calhoun argues, to be meaningful, politically and theoretically, theory must provide a base that allows 'for critical judgements to be arguable, defensible, in discourse across the lines of cultural, ideological, or other differences.' (Calhoun, 1995: 119) Habermas provides such a base that most postmodernists cannot. Yet a critical theory should be reflexive, and postmodern criticisms must be given serious attention. Indeed, multiple developments in Habermas's intellectual path have revealed him to be a scholar who continually subjects his base assumptions to the same searching critical analysis to which he submits those of others. Habermasian theory is universalist, but it avoids the worst excesses of universalism in that it concerns only the procedural matters whereby decisions are made, whilst also defending space for individual views to be heard (Benhabib, 1992: 84). The concept of a public sphere relates to the conditions for discourse, not to substantive outcomes. This would be to overstep the capacity of theory, and to rob participants of a say in their own affairs. Habermas does not provide guidance as to *what* to do about problems we confront; he is not concerned with imposing a utopian model on society. Rather, he is interested in *how* we may open up debate as wide as possible to choose upon the fairest course of action. In this way, Habermas persuasively balances universalism with respect for difference (Holub, 1991: 161).

However, there are serious difficulties with Habermas's approach that have received persistent and justified criticism over the years (some examples from a massive literature include Curran, 1991; Schudson, 1992; Mahieu, 1988; Scannell, 1989). These limitations need attention before it is possible to consider how the concept of a public sphere can be adapted for analysis at the transnational level. Therefore, a critique of Habermasian theory follows, divided into five thematic areas that cover the most problematic aspects of Habermas's thesis: alternative histories of the public sphere, social equality and democracy, private interests, multiple public spheres, the potential of new media, and state-centricity. I then go on to outline Habermas's responses to such critiques and his revised version of public sphere theory.

3.1.2. Alternative Histories of the Public Sphere

It has been a long-standing criticism of Habermas that he idealises the public sphere in the eighteenth century and overstates the measure of free debate (Schudson, 1992). Postmodernists have particularly criticised Habermas for the construction of this idealised past to fit within his version of 'grand narrative' (e.g. Poster, 1989). It is now the commonly accepted view that such a public sphere has never actually been realised, 'at best there has been some initiative' such as acceptance of the right to free speech (Verstraeten, 1996: 349). Habermas has even conceded this point (Habermas, 1992a: 463). The bourgeois public rested on key exclusions of gender (Fraser, 1992) and class (Eley, 1992). *Structural Transformation* is fundamentally problematic since it is based on the proposition of an ideal public sphere that was never historically realised.

Overstatement is a key weakness of *Structural Transformation*, evident in Habermas's failure to be even-handed in his treatment of the bourgeois public sphere and the transformed public sphere of late capitalism. As Calhoun argues: 'Habermas tends to judge the eighteenth century by Locke and Kant, the nineteenth century by Marx and Mill, and the twentieth century by the typical suburban television viewer. Thus Habermas's account of the twentieth century does not include the sort of intellectual history, the attempt to take leading thinkers seriously and recover the truth from their ideologically distorted writings, that is characteristic of his approach to seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.' (Calhoun, 1992: 33) Moreover, his treatment of the earlier period fails to take into account the trashy branches of the press that sensationalised crime and scandal, and the rabble-rousing of travelling orators (ibid.). Such examples suggest that the degeneration of the public sphere is overestimated by Habermas.

Habermas also fails to examine competing public spheres developing in tandem with, and in opposition to, the liberal bourgeois public sphere. These counter publics were characterised by opposing values, such as solidarity rather than individualism (Keane, 1984: 29). Mary Ryan (1992) has documented the variety of ways in which nineteenth century North American women of different classes and races gained access to public political life despite their exclusion from the official public sphere. These ranged from the establishment of a civil society of female voluntary associations by elite women to supporting roles in trade union protest activities by working class women. Ryan's work reveals the multiple ways of accessing the public sphere that were secured by

women in the absence of formal political incorporation through suffrage. This illustrates one of a number of competing counter publics that Habermas pays little attention to, with nationalist, peasant and proletariat publics being further examples (e.g. Warner, 1992, 2002a, 2002b; Negt and Kluge, 1993).

Further, these counter publics had conflictual relations with the bourgeois public, since by their very nature they challenged the latter's exclusionary boundaries, and articulated alternative norms and behaviour. As Eley argues: 'the emergence of a bourgeois public was never defined solely by the struggle against absolutism and traditional authority but...addressed the problem of popular containment as well. The public sphere was always constituted by conflict.' (Eley, quoted in Fraser, 1992: 116) Habermas treats these exclusions and conflicts as merely characteristic of the period, but they deserve more serious attention than this. To disregard such evidence is indicative of a bourgeois, masculinist bias (Meehan, 1995; Young, 1996).

3.1.3. Social Equality and Democracy

Habermas's account of the bourgeois public sphere lays emphasis on the claim to be open and accessible to all, but as detailed above, this principle of accessibility was never fully realised. There were exclusions on the basis of gender, race and property status (Fraser, 1992: 110). Habermas appears to suggest that these historical exclusions can be overcome and so do not affect the value of the ideal public sphere. For example, with regard to Carol Pateman's scepticism about whether women could be integrated into a patriarchal public sphere (Pateman, 1988: 82), Habermas argues that: 'this convincing consideration does not dismiss rights to unrestricted inclusion and equality, which are an integral part of the liberal public sphere's self-interpretation, but rather appeals to them.' (Habermas, 1992a: 429) A more inclusive public sphere could continue to operate according to the bourgeois conception, which held that participants in debate disregard one another's social and economic status and address one another as equals (Habermas, 1989: 36). The assumption underlying this principle is that social equality is an unnecessary condition for political democracy. Habermas does not fully explore the validity of this assumption (Fraser, 1992: 121).

Revisionist historiography suggests that social inequalities were not effectively disregarded by participants, but continued to function in debate. As Nancy Fraser observes, 'discursive interaction within the bourgeois public sphere was governed by protocols of style and decorum that were in themselves correlates and markers of status inequality.' (ibid.: 119) These informal barriers to equal participation in debate can persist long after more formal exclusions are lifted. Feminists such as Jane Mansbridge have carried out contemporary research that illustrates how political deliberation can mask subtle forms of control: 'Even the language people use as they reason together usually favours one way of seeing things and discourages others. Subordinate groups sometimes cannot find the right voice or words to express their thoughts, and when they do, they discover they are not heard. [They] are silenced, encouraged to keep their wants inchoate, and heard to say "yes" when they have said "no".' (Mansbridge, 1990: 127) Though writing mainly on

the experiences of women, Mansbridge's findings can be extended to the experiences of other marginalized groups (for example, based on race or class).

This leads to another problematic assumption of Habermas's – that the public sphere can be a place where cultural differences are transcended. This points to a failure to recognise that certain cultural styles are valued more than others in all societies, which has the informal effect of marginalizing the contributions of those from subordinate social groups (Young, 1996: 123-4). Such an effect is magnified by economic inequalities, which affect the means of access to and participation in the public sphere. These pressures can promote exclusions even in the absence of formal rules of exclusion.

Fraser argues that these considerations should lead us to seriously reconsider whether it is possible even in principle for participants in discourse to disregard their social and economic status and that of others in a public sphere that is situated in a society constituted by unequal power relations (Fraser, 1992: 119). It poses the question of whether effective deliberation can be achieved in the face of deep-seated social inequality. This has been a common theme of critical theory, and one that deserves more sophisticated treatment than it receives in *Structural Transformation*.

3.1.4. Private Interests and the Public Sphere

Habermas conceptualises the public sphere in an idealistic way, as a neutral forum in which citizens are able to separate themselves from their interests in the realm of the private sphere, and discuss issues rationally, in an attempt to reach consensus (Habermas, 1989: 24). Habermas makes the assumption that there is an unambiguous separation between public and private issues and that it is always undesirable for private interests to intrude upon the public sphere. He draws on the conventional patriarchal definition of the division between the public and private realms (Calhoun, 1992: 35-6).

Although Habermas professes to have a normative interest in a universally accessible public sphere, he legitimises an interpretative framework for the discussion of political issues that is supportive of unequal power relations (Benhabib, 1992: 93). Separating the 'public' and 'private' spheres has proven to be one of the most effective ideological ways in which to silence women (Pateman, 1987; Sylvester, 1994). To revive an old cliché, for women, the personal can be political. Issues such as domestic violence and marital rape, which generations ago were commonly thought of as private matters, have now been successfully brought into the public realm by a feminist counter public (van Zonnen, 1991; McLaughlin, 1993). The division between the public and private realms does not just have a disadvantageous effect on women – by excluding the economy from the public sphere, Habermas also neglects the issues of relations of production and the grievances of workers (Negt and Kluge, 1993). Such examples demonstrate that there is no naturally given boundary demarcating private from public matters, as Habermas appears to suggest. What is of public concern will be a topic of disagreement amongst participants. Therefore no subjects should automatically be ruled as out of bounds (Benhabib, 1992: 93). Rather, for a public sphere to be

truly open to all, efforts should be made to provide marginalized groups with the opportunity to argue that issues commonly thought of as private matters should be of public concern (Phillips, 1998).

In theorising about the public sphere, one should be careful of the rhetoric of the 'common good', and sensitive to the unequal power relations it may uphold. Consensus might be reached through debating processes that reflect the hegemonic ideology of dominant groups. Thus, deliberation framed from the standpoint of 'we' may serve as a device by the exploiters to delegitimise the grievances of the exploited. As Mansbridge argues: 'the less powerful may not find ways to discover that the prevailing sense of "we" does not adequately include them.' (Mansbridge, 1990: 131) The neglect of issues deemed to be private matters by the bourgeois public sphere indicates how concepts of the 'common good' may promote anything but that.

The terms 'public' and 'private' should not be thought of as neutral. It is imperative in public sphere theory to reassess them as terms that reify unequal power relations by delegitimising certain viewpoints, topics and interests and prioritising others (Calhoun, 1992: 37). This remains an area of difficulty with Habermas since he regards the maintenance of the division as important, and goes on to revive it in a new form in his discussion of systemic intrusion of the lifeworld (e.g. Habermas, 1987).

3.1.5. Single or Multiple Public Spheres?

Habermas details the rise and decline of the bourgeois public sphere, treating it as a unique example and a singular, homogenous entity. As suggested above, not only is this historically inaccurate but it is informed by an underlying assumption that a single public sphere better serves democracy than does a multiplicity of publics. However, a single public sphere is likely to further disadvantage subordinate groups, if there are no specialised arenas for dialogue (Keane, 1984: 29). Instead, they would have to deliberate under conditions of 'supervision' of the dominant groups, which as Mansbridge argues, would render them less likely to articulate and defend their common interests (Mansbridge, 1990, 1996). The danger remains that the disadvantaged would be subsumed under the banner of 'we' that reflected the interests of the powerful.

Revisionist historiography of the public sphere has demonstrated that women, the working classes, ethnic minorities and homosexuals have formed counter publics in which they develop interpretations of their identities and needs that challenge conventional discourse (Fraser, 1992: 116; Eley, 1992: 306; McLaughlin, 1993). These counter publics emerge as a result of exclusion within dominant publics, and contribute to the expansion of discursive space (Warner, 2002a, 2000b). They produce new concepts and language that describe their experiences of subordination (e.g. 'sexism', 'homophobia'). The counter publics act as a medium for specialised debate, mutual support and political mobilisation. However, counter publics are not separated from wider society, as some critics may claim, because they are formed with the aim of reducing, if not eliminating, the extent of their disadvantage within official public spheres. In this respect, they are emancipatory

(Fraser, 1992: 115-6). The ideal of equality of participation is best served by a multiplicity of public spheres rather than one single public; indeed, historically this has always been the case.

3.1.6. Potential of New Media

Habermas displays an unwarranted pessimism about the decline of the public sphere, which relates to his over-idealisation of the bourgeois public sphere (Thompson, 1990: 115-21; Thompson, 1995: 73-5; Keane, 1984). Owing perhaps too much to Adorno's pessimistic cultural industries model[1], Habermas overstates the negative qualities of contemporary media, assuming it promotes political apathy (Garnham, 1992: 360). Some argue that the 'information age' has been accompanied by increasing democratisation, which 'greatly increases the visibility of political leaders, and limits the extent to which they can control the conditions of reception of messages and the way in which these messages are interpreted by recipients...leaders [have] a new visibility and vulnerability before audiences which are more extensive and endowed with information and more power (however intermittently expressed) than ever before.' (Thompson, 1990: 115) New media also provides new opportunities for decentralised local practices by cross-border social movements (Adams, 1996: 419). It could be argued in Habermas's defence that he could not be expected to foresee the full implications of developments in communication technologies at the time of writing *Structural Transformation*. However, this pessimism is evident within his most basic assumptions. For example, Habermas analyses the media at an institutional level, excluding the so-called 'micro-level' of the experience of individuals in an everyday setting (Dahlgren and Sparks, 1991: 10-21; Dahlgren, 1995). The relationship between the public sphere and citizens is characterised as a 'top-down' process, which obscures the reciprocity of influence between both. Habermas reduces the citizen to little more than a 'consumer' of media product, yet the public sphere will only operate if citizens act as 'producers' as well – even though the scope of this may be small (Verstraeten, 1996: 350). Habermas's pessimism forecloses the potential for emancipatory change, and presents a bleak outlook for the future of the public sphere that may not be justified.

3.1.7. State-centricity

Habermas relies implicitly on locating the public sphere within the nation-state. The state is the institutional context for the public sphere; it is what defines its boundaries, and it is what provides the public with a sense of unity (Habermas, 1989: 82). Although Habermas does not

[1] Adorno analysed the industrial production of cultural goods in capitalist society and identified a trend towards producing culture as a commodity (Adorno, 1991). It was argued that this led to deterioration in the philosophical role of culture. Instead, mediated culture incorporated the proletariat into the structure of capitalism by limiting working class ambitions to political and economic goals that could be met within the existing system. This discouraged the development of revolutionary consciousness. Adorno argued that this 'culture industry' was therefore beneficial to the interests of the ruling classes. Expressed by Adorno and Horkheimer (1979) in its most pessimistic form, this critique suggests that mass culture has effectively extinguished opportunities to mobilise and conduct meaningful oppositional activity.
Habermas has since conceded that 'the strong influence of Adorno's theory of mass culture is not difficult to discern [in *Structural Transformation*]...At the time, I was too pessimistic about the resisting power and above all the critical potential of a pluralistic, internally much differentiated mass public.' (Habermas, 1992a: 438)

explicitly conceptualise the public sphere in securing identities, it is evident that he appeals to these identities as he refers to the English coffee houses, the French salons and the German Tischgesellschaften. Also, the state acts as the addressee of deliberation in the public sphere; debate is aimed at a specific government within a specific nation-state. In Habermas's words: 'The constitutional state as a bourgeois state established the public sphere in the political realm as an organ of the state so as to ensure institutionally the connection between law and public opinion.' (ibid.: 81)

This is because Habermas designed his theory of the public sphere as a normative contribution to national democratic theory. The concept served as a model whereby the democratic deficits of nation-states could be identified and critiqued (for an overview, see Ferree et al, 2002). It enabled questions to be asked regarding inclusion of citizens, the implications of private ownership of the media, and the degree of influence that public opinion has on decision-makers of the state (Calhoun, 1992: 41). Even though Habermas's appeals to Immanuel Kant have indirect reference to the notion of cosmopolitan citizenship, in each discussion he enters about the connection between deliberation and the law, deliberation and the constitution, or deliberation and fundamental rights, his concern with the project of national democratisation is evidently the normative interest behind his inquiry (ibid.).

Framing the public sphere in the context of the nation-state in this way tacitly relies on three main presuppositions. First, that there is a national communication infrastructure, including mass media that are focused on reporting affairs of state (Habermas, 1989: 73). Second, that states have sovereign power over their territory and citizens, including a national, territorially based economy that is subject, in principle, to state regulation (ibid.: 74). And third, that the citizenry recognise each other as legitimate participants in debate, due to their shared national identity (ibid.: 83). These assumptions are questionable, but they were commonly held during the time of *Structural Transformation*'s original publication. However, a public sphere describes a mode of discursive engagement in relation to political authority, rather than a geographic space. In this regard, contemporary trends suggest that statist assumptions underlying the concept of the public sphere need to be thoroughly problematised. These include the rise of new media, the increasing multi-faceted challenges to state authority associated with 'global governance', and the growth of cross-border social movements that articulate a common basis for shared identity. These developments may have historical precedents. For example, Deibert (1997) traces the evolution of international communication through the centuries; Hirst and Thompson (1996) dispute the 'novelty' of many attributes of 'globalisation', and Keck and Sikkink (1998: 39-78) describe the anti-slavery and suffrage movements as early examples of transnational advocacy networks. Nevertheless, in the present era these trends are of increased salience, and at the very least, require that any recasting of public sphere theory must seriously question the validity of Habermas's state-centricity.

However, statist assumptions have persisted even in radical critiques of Habermas's work, such as the feminist appropriations mentioned above (e.g. Fraser, 1992; Ryan, 1992; Meehan,

1995). Habermas's critics have largely focused on highlighting the exclusion of citizens within the nation-state, such as the working classes, women and ethnic minorities. Their critiques have concentrated on ways of overcoming the disparities of participation inherent in the bourgeois model, whether by aiming to ensure full access or exploring ways to enhance parity of participation (ibid.). Yet these critics failed to challenge the state-centricity of Habermasian public sphere theory – instead, they shared with Habermas a common aim to contribute to national democratic theory.

Not only can these statist presuppositions be questioned on counterfactual grounds, but also can be criticised from the normative standpoint of critical international theory. If one fails to inquire into the potential for expanded public spheres beyond the nation-state, then one effectively forecloses the potential for emancipatory change. It is the task of the critical theorist to explore immanent possibilities for transformation. Adopting a state-centric conception of the public sphere restricts such an inquiry to a bounded territory, which is incompatible with a universal interest in human emancipation. Thus, there are both evidential and normative reasons to challenge the state-centricity of Habermasian public sphere theory.

3.1.8. Habermas: Recent Writings

Following the publication of *Structural Transformation*, Habermas attempted to establish a new standpoint for critique by turning to a theory of language and communication (Cooke, 1994). His focus switched from socio-historical and institutional contextual analysis, to a more abstract and philosophical inquiry about the emancipatory potential innate in language itself (see, among others, Habermas, 1984, 1987, 1992b). Habermas identified rationality as inherent in what in he termed 'communicative action', in the capacity to comprehend the speech of another, to yield to the force of a better argument, and to reach consensus (Habermas, 1984: 286-7). He argued that this rationality could generate norms to criticise distortions in communication in processes of societal domination and manipulation, and to cultivate a process of rational discursive will-formation. He developed a model of democratic interaction – 'the ideal speech situation' – by which he was able to explore quasi-transcendental grounds for social critique (ibid.: 88).

This 'linguistic turn' generated an abundance of theoretical debate, which shall not be reviewed here, since the scope of my research question is limited to investigating the preconditions for the emergence of transnational public spheres. Although I have argued that a reformulated version of the Habermasian public sphere could offer a valuable critical theoretical approach, this does not suggest an acceptance of Habermas's later foundational claims concerning the conditions of rational discourse and the theory of communicative rationality. The situated and historically informed account of the public sphere in *Structural Transformation* interests me as a guide to researching the possible transformation of public spheres in the present. This approach can be distinguished from Habermas's later, abstract version involving communicative action theory. Nonetheless, I wish to bring to attention certain continuities in Habermas's recent work with his early analysis of the public sphere.

Habermas has recognised the validity of some of the criticisms outlined above and sought to incorporate them into his later writings on the public sphere (e.g. Habermas, 1992a). His pessimistic assessment of the decline of the bourgeois public seems to have been revised somewhat in favour of a more optimistic view where 'under certain circumstances, civil society can acquire influence in the public sphere.' (Habermas, 1992b: 373) Nonetheless, he still maintains that his analysis of a public sphere infrastructure dominated by the interests of capital and state is still applicable (Habermas, 1992a: 441).

Habermas also now favours a more inclusive definition of the public sphere, framed in the context of debate mediated through mass communications, where 'its institutional core comprises those nongovernmental and non-economic...voluntary associations that anchor the communications structures of the public sphere' (Habermas, 1992b: 366). The public sphere in this description operates to transmit the concerns of those at the margins of society to the mainstream political agenda via civil society and the media. In this regard, Habermas points to the growing influence of feminist and environmental movements over the years as examples (ibid.). Habermas distinguishes here between the 'universal public sphere' and the 'pluralistic, internally much differentiated mass public' – in some part, as an acknowledgement to those who critiqued his concept of the singular bourgeois sphere in favour of a multiple spheres model (Habermas, 1992a: 438). However, he does assert that no public can permanently intend to exclude others – 'there is no exclusion mechanism without a proviso for its abolishment.' (Habermas, 1992b: 374) In other words, he believes that all public spheres must have the potential for self-transformation: 'The labour movement and feminism were able to join these discourses in order to shatter the structures that had initially constituted them as "the other" of a bourgeois public sphere.' (ibid.) In effect, this is a full incorporation of Fraser's critique (see also Habermas, 1992a: 458; Habermas, 1996: 374).

Moreover, Habermas provides a 'two-track' solution to the problem of socio-cultural complexity of modern societies: political decision-making in institutions must be open to the general public and structured in such a way as to be effective (Habermas, 1992a: 452). The legislature provides an institutional focus for broader debate across a dispersed public sphere – it will continue to act as the addressee of public sphere debate. It is important that decision-makers have a degree of regard for the public sphere, since for public deliberation to be truly meaningful, it must exercise some measure of influence: 'the public sphere must...amplify the pressure of problems, that is, not only detect and identify problems but also convincingly and *influentially* thematize them, furnish them with possible solutions, and dramatize them in such a way that they are taken up with and dealt with by parliamentary complexes.' (Habermas, 1996: 359)

It may be more difficult for smaller public spheres to wield this type of influence via the wider public sphere through the mass media, but under certain circumstances, this may be possible. In this regard, the presentation of issues is important: 'only through their controversial presentation in the media do such topics reach the larger public and subsequently gain a place on the "public agenda".' (ibid.: 381) Mobilisation by elements in civil society can exploit a 'latent tendency' and a

'normative self-understanding' of the mass media public sphere to encourage recognition of their concerns (ibid.).

Despite this role for the mass media in Habermas's recasted notion of the public sphere, he remains ambivalent to the potential of new media in promoting equal and inclusive debate. He warns that although the internet and new media open up new channels of participation, they could also contribute to the fragmentation of civil society:

> Whereas the growth of systems and networks multiplies possible contacts and exchanges of information, it does not lead per se to the expansion of an intersubjectively shared world and to the discursive interweaving of conceptions of relevance, themes, and contradictions from which political public spheres arise. The consciousness of planning, communicating, and acting subjects seems to have simultaneously expanded and fragmented. The publics produced by the Internet remain closed off from one another like global villages. For the present it remains unclear whether an expanding public consciousness, though centered in the lifeworld, nevertheless has the ability to span systematically differentiated contexts, or whether the systemic processes, having become independent, have long since severed their ties with all contexts produced by political communication. (Habermas, 1998a: 120-1)

Habermas has also recently examined the decline of the nation-state due to the combined challenges of multiculturalism and economic globalisation, and argued that new democratic steering mechanisms must be developed in the emergent 'post-national constellation' (Habermas, 2000). He sees the potential for a new, wider forum for public debate to take place across state borders, and for new kinds of cosmopolitan solidarities to develop. He considers various environmental movements like Greenpeace as indicative of the possibility of an emergent world citizenry. However, he is also concerned that these kinds of publicising energies also be matched by an investment in decision-making forums on an international scale that can assume some of the role of nation-states in providing solutions and practical responses. In this respect, he has shown particular interest in the workings of the European Union as the model for a kind of transnational agreement that might have its parallels across the globe, and has conducted much of this argument with the emphasis on the concept of constitutional solidarity (e.g. Habermas, 1998a: 105-27). However, the public sphere still remains essential to his thought, although he does not believe that the potential for a transnational European sphere has yet been realised, as the following quote demonstrates:

> There will be no remedy for the legitimation deficit, however, without a European-wide public sphere – a network that gives citizens of all member states an equal opportunity to take part in an encompassing process of focused political communication...So far, however, the necessary infrastructure for a wide-ranging generation of diverse public opinions exists only within the confines of nation-states. (Habermas, 2001: 18)

Hence, it is important to bear in mind that *Structural Transformation* is not a definitive statement; certainly Habermas would not stand by it as being so. He has subsequently revised his public sphere theory substantially, by recognising the existence of counter publics and considering the implications of new media and the changing nature of state sovereignty on the public's continuing transformation. Thus, *Structural Transformation* best serves as a useful starting point in developing a theory of public spheres. Craig Calhoun best describes its legacy as 'an immensely fruitful generator of new research, analysis and theory.' (Calhoun, 1992: 41) Likewise, for the purposes of this thesis, it serves as a point of theoretical departure.

From the above appraisal of Habermasian theory, it is possible to identify a number of guidelines that should provide a useful basis for conducting normatively motivated research into the possible emergence of transnational public spheres. First, a multiple spheres model should be adopted. Second, research should be sensitive to the implications of unequal power relations on the means of access and participation in public spheres. Third, the conventional patriarchal division between issues relating to the 'public' and the 'private' realm should be disregarded. Fourth, research should explore the emancipatory potential of the internet and new media. And finally, the state-centricity that has conventionally underpinned public sphere theory should be reassessed. These criteria provide me with the context for a review of the expanded public sphere literature (section 3.3., p. 50).

However, in the light of the various problems associated with public sphere theory, the case has been put that civil society model is a more apposite approach by which to theorise the implications of new media (Dean, 2001). Before I turn to consider the recent public sphere literature, it is therefore necessary to evaluate public sphere theory in relation to the civil society approach.

3.2. Public Spheres/Civil Society

It is possible to identify a tendency in the literature to conflate the concepts of transnational public spheres and civil society. For example, in their study of transnational advocacy networks, Keck and Sikkink argue that: 'The new networks have depended on the creation of a new kind of global public (or civil society), which grew as a cultural legacy of the 1960s.' (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 14) However, it is inappropriate to use the terms 'civil society' and 'public sphere' interchangeably – they are not synonymous. As Downey and Fenton argue: '...it is crucial to keep them distinct and analyse the relationship between social institutions and discourse.' (Downey and Fenton, 2003: 190) It is important to consider the subtle differences between 'civil society' and the 'public sphere', as well as evaluate which concept would offer a more suitable foundation for theorising the implications of new media. I wish to argue here that public sphere theory is an appropriate theoretical framework for the purposes of this inquiry.

The term 'global civil society' is relatively new (Lipschutz, 1992; Anheier et al, 2001; Willets, 2000; Charnowitz, 1997), although the role of non-state actors in international relations has

long been an important topic in IR (e.g. Keohane and Nye, 1972). Who should be regarded as part of civil society has been the subject of much debate (e.g. Castiglione, 1998). Anheier, Glasius and Kaldor offer the following functional definition: 'a supranational sphere of social and political participation', distinct from the practices of governance and economy, but existing 'above and beyond national, regional and local societies'. (Anheier et al., 2001: 4) We can thus speak of a *global* civil society when actors participate in deliberation on rules, norms or decisions that are binding for more than one country, or corporations/individuals therein. However, there is wide variance in how formalised this interaction is (Charnowitz, 1997). For example, the United Nations regularly consults civil society actors, as does the EU (Alger, 2002). The World Bank also attempts to maintain consultation channels with civil society, in both the developed and underdeveloped world (Brown and Fox, 2001). Historically, the GATT and IMF have had much less contact with civil society, but have recently shown signs of being more responsive (Woods and Narlikar, 2001).

Whilst the concept of civil society can be distinguished from a public sphere, it is evident that the two are closely related: 'the former standing for structures and the latter for shared meanings emerging through these structures.' (Sassi, 2001: 100) However, the notion of the public sphere is more appropriate than civil society for the purposes of this inquiry. There are two main reasons why. First, the concept of a public sphere describes an ideal model of discursive engagement and so contains an inherent basis for normative critique. Public sphere theory attempts to explore the specific organisation of social bases in civil society for the development of effective critical deliberation. The ideal public sphere is where reasoned argument prevails, rather than the social status of actors. Therefore, public sphere theory focuses attention on forms of social organisation and different kinds of deliberation and political participation. The public sphere is a means by which to critique those types of social organisation that have negative implications for democracy. In contrast, the notion of civil society tends to be employed as a descriptive term, and so is a less effective method of evaluation for either reactionary or progressive social movements. For example, 'civil society' can refer to anti-racist movements as well as the Ku Klux Klan (Chroust, 2000). Advocacy groups in civil society can pursue goals that are not necessarily 'civil' and may be in direct conflict to the norms of a public sphere (Amoore and Langley, 2004). In addition, there is a wide variance in how different groups in civil society are organised. Some are democratic and transparent, and the leadership is accountable to its members. Others are the reverse. According to the above definition by Anheier et al, intermediate organisations between the state and the family are supposed to provide a counterweight to government dominance. However, it is possible to argue that such dominance may be replicated within civil society groups if the leadership does not have to justify unequal internal power structures to the membership (Drainville, 1998). A public sphere approach could effectively critique such circumstances.

This leads to the second reason why the concept of the public sphere is more relevant for this inquiry: unlike civil society, an analytical focus on communication is inherent in public sphere theory. The mere existence of public communication – the basis of civil society – does not automatically translate into a 'public sphere', although it is an essential part of it. Communication

is part of the process of realising a public sphere, enabling theorists to speculate about how civil society can organise effectively in the interests of emancipation. Public sphere theory focuses on deliberation and the generation of notions of public interest. In contrast, civil society theory focuses on influence exercised on decision-makers and decisions taken, but the concept does not rest on a notion of inclusion or contain a theory of communication and participation. A public sphere approach is appropriate for the study of new media because issues of communication and technology are central to analysis.

I wish to consider this line of argument further by considering the opposing viewpoint of Jodi Dean, who critiques the notion of transnational public spheres, and argues that the civil society model is more appropriate for theorising about the implications of new media. This is because 'the regulatory fiction of the public sphere privileges a theorization of political norms. Struggles that contest, resist, or reject its idealizations are excluded from the political terrain as remnants of tradition, say, or manifestations of a terroristic irrationalism.' (Dean, 2001: 247) In contrast, Dean argues that civil society 'privileges the concrete institutions in which the subjects of politics come to practice, mediate, and represent their actions as political.' (ibid.) Essentially Dean adopts a relativist stance. The tensions between postmodernism and critical theory have been outlined above and do not need to be revisited here, but in the interests of reflexivity, it is worth considering Dean's critiques of a public sphere approach.

Dean argues that 'politics is about unequal exchanges among people who have fundamentally different ways of reasoning, who have differing conceptions of what is normal and what is appropriate.' (ibid.: 265) Unlike the concept of a public sphere, which 'limits the political to rational conversation among people who respect each other as equals', a model of civil society is able to accommodate all discourse (ibid.). A self-reflective critical theorist should appreciate the risks of universalism that Dean highlights, and be sensitive to these when constructing theory. However, Dean's relativistic civil society approach suggests that equal validity should be accorded to all forms of discourse, despite Dean's caveat that 'normative implications' can still be drawn from certain practices (ibid.: 264). It is unclear how one might be able to engage in normative critique if one has not adopted specific criteria by which to evaluate forms of discourse. The concept of the public sphere makes a strong claim to equality, inclusion and mutual respect, and so it enables one to critique inequities and exclusions. In contrast, the concept of civil society does not incorporate these norms as robustly, and so opportunities for critique can be lost.

Nevertheless, Dean's warning that the diversity that characterises transnational discourse may not be captured by public sphere theory should be heeded. This problem is a significant one for public sphere theorists who posit a single, unified public, such as Garnham (1992: 371). However, by following Fraser's model of multiple publics, which accommodate the 'subaltern counter publics' traditionally ignored in conventional public sphere theory, this difficulty can be circumvented (Fraser, 1992). Dean argues that she is 'not convinced that adding an *s* solves the problem of the public sphere...despite its best intentions, the multi-spheres approach reinforces the priority of a bourgeois or official public sphere as a goal site, as an ideal, as the fundamental arbiter

of inclusion.' (Dean, 2001: 248-249) In fact, the multiple spheres approach was formed in direct opposition to such a notion, as a critique of Habermas's privileging of the bourgeois public. It appears that Dean misunderstands Fraser's intention here. Another criticism of Dean's regarding the public sphere is that it 'remains tied to and dependent on the state, reinforcing a state-centric conception of democracy.' (ibid.: 249-250) Dean is correct that public sphere theory has conventionally been underpinned with statist assumptions, but it is my intention in this thesis to challenge these assumptions and reconstruct public sphere theory so that transnational interaction can be theorised. A reformulation of the concept of the public sphere would thus address this limitation whilst retaining a promising potential for normative critique.

Moreover, public sphere theory has a unique contribution to make to International Relations, where Habermasian theory has been explored in a limited way (e.g. Risse, 2000; Linklater, 1998). In contrast, as indicated above, there is a relatively well-established literature on global civil society. Public sphere theory could offer a novel, important and valuable perspective on world politics.

I now turn to assess the contribution of some notable theorists who have explored the concept of public spheres beyond the nation-state. The terms used by these theorists vary widely: there are references to 'transnational', 'international', 'global' and 'virtual' public sphere/s. For the sake of convenience, I term these approaches generically as the 'expanded public spheres literature'.

3.3. Expanded Public Spheres Literature

Although a public sphere approach has not received sustained attention in the discipline, many of the themes resonant to the theory have been explored elsewhere, including Cultural Theory (e.g. Yang, 2003) and Sociology (e.g. Sassi, 2001). For example, Kratochwil has examined the role of public justifications in the development of norms (Kratochwil, 1989). There is an ongoing debate in international critical theory regarding the tensions surrounding universalist perspectives and how these might be addressed (George, 1994; Hoffman, 1987; Brown, 1992; Haacke, 1996). As detailed above, there is growing literature surrounding the topic of an emerging global civil society (Lipshutz, 1992; Koslowski and Kratochwil, 1994; Price, 1998). Andrew Linklater touches upon themes relevant to public sphere theory in his examination of the potential expansion of citizenship rights in the 'post-Westphalian' era, when the territorial link between the nation state and the public could be severed. He argues: 'The praxeological task is to use the moral resources which have been deposited in the idea of citizenship to imagine forms of political community which harmonise the claims of universality and difference by dispatching state power to stronger local and transnational political authorities.' (Linklater, 1998: 182) This literature raises critical themes that public sphere theory can potentially incorporate and further develop.

The most explicit attempt to apply a communicative action framework to IR has been provided by Risse-Kappen, in his studies of the European Union, relations among democratic

allies, and transnational networks (Risse-Kappen, 1995a, 1995b). However, his work is underpinned by an assumption that public spheres are actually existing institutions; for example in a recent article, he asserts that: 'The existence of a public sphere ensures that actors have to regularly and routinely explain and justify their behaviour...[and] they vary dramatically in international relations.' (Risse, 2000: 21) Risse-Kappen seeks to apply communicative action theory to IR before fully problematising the concept of expanded public spheres. In this section, I will demonstrate that this unsubstantiated conceptual leap is commonplace in the expanded public spheres literature. The expansion of discursive arenas beyond the borders of the nation-state through new media make the idea of expanded public spheres intuitively plausible, but the notion raises a theoretical problem that deserves closer analysis. The concept of the public sphere was not just developed to explain empirical flows of communication; it was designed to contribute to a normative theory of democracy (Keane, 1984: 2-3). It describes an arena for the airing of public opinion that represents some form of moral-political validity, so issues of inclusion are vital. The public sphere also describes a realm of citizen empowerment, separate from private and state interests. It has traditionally been framed in the context of the nation-state. In contrast, the transnational arena has no common political citizenry, and how far international institutions can be considered as analogous to the nation-state is a matter of intense controversy. Theorists such as Alexander Wendt do not do justice to this debate by such casual references as the following: 'relevant to the constitution of a collective steering agency at the international level are "transnational public spheres" trying to keep states democratically accountable.' (Wendt, 2001: 213) This is not to suggest that expanded public spheres are necessarily a 'phantom', to adopt Walter Lippman's term (1925). The notion is an important one for theorists interested in reconstructing critical theory in an era of significant global transformations. But it is not sufficient to refer to such public spheres in a 'commonsensical' way when the structural preconditions for emergence tend not to receive rigorous examination or analysis in the literature.

I wish to illustrate this critique further by examining some recent scholarship that similarly presupposes the existence of expanded public spheres. Below, I offer a review of examples of work in Political Theory (Calhoun, 2002) and IR (Wilkin, 2001; Brunkhorst, 2002; Dryzek, 2000), before turning to consider Molly Cochran's call for further research into the structural preconditions of expanded public spheres (Cochran, 1999).

3.3.1. Expanded Public Spheres: Actually Existing Institutions?

First, I shall further explore the difficulties that are associated with recent expanded public spheres literature, where it is assumed that these spheres are actually existing institutions. Political theorist Craig Calhoun has recently conducted an inquiry into expanded public spheres, but fails to fully investigate the structural preconditions for emergence. International Relations literature in this field has also made similarly unfounded assumptions: such as that by Peter Wilkin, Hauke Brunkhorst and John Dryzek. Molly Cochran has called for further research into expanded public

spheres but does not develop an analysis. Let me consider the problems of each of these approaches in turn.

Craig Calhoun claims that 'an international public sphere clearly already exists. Equally clearly, however, it has not yet provided the basis for cosmopolitan democracy its advocates have hoped.' (Calhoun, 2002: 1) Calhoun reviews the disparities in global access to new media and increasing centralisation in media ownership, and argues that these trends 'encourage a certain realism' about the potential for 'insurgent and activist uses of the new technologies' (ibid.: 6). The problems to which Calhoun draws attention undermine his assertion that an 'international public sphere' exists. Calhoun argues that his paper does not offer findings but instead raises questions, and concludes that it is important to 'do real research to help replace the contest of anecdotes and speculations with reasoned debate in the public sphere.' (ibid.: 22) This thesis answers that call for further research. It is my view that in the interests of conceptual coherence, the notion of expanded public spheres needs to be fully problematised and empirically assessed.

There are some IR theorists who have attempted to incorporate public sphere theory into their work; unfortunately the assumption that such spheres are actually existing institutions can also be identified here. In a recent work, Peter Wilkin analyses 'the role of the communication industries in global political-economy and the obstacles and potentials that they present to human security.' (Wilkin, 2001: 10) He argues that the twin systemic forces of world order, geo-politics and global capitalism, are both underpinned by ordering principles in the interest of dominant political and economic elites, which are in conflict with the basic principles of human security. Wilkin demonstrates how the predominance of private interests in global communication curtail the potential for democratic debate and scrutiny of government, and so present obstacles to the realisation of human security. Although the theme of human security is central to Wilkin's argument, he also makes reference to public sphere theory. He asserts that: 'Developments in the last twenty years in the technologies of communication have emerged in the context of wider social, political and economic changes that have meant that we have moved to a realm in which we can talk about overlapping public spheres operating at the four levels of world order (local, national, regional and global).' (ibid.: 37) Although one would assume that Wilkin is implicitly referring to the rest of the content of his book when he refers to these social, political and economic factors, there is no explicit theorisation of what specific relation they bear to the structural transformation of public spheres. Wilkin deals with these issues in brief: he refers to Habermas's notion of the 'refeudalisation' of the public sphere when he identifies the danger of the increasing concentration in ownership and control of communication industries for 'the notion of an *open* public sphere that is crucial to the possibility of free and uncoerced discussion and agreement in political and economic life.' (ibid.: 43) There is a possible contradiction here that finds fuller expression in the conclusion of Wilkin's work. He argues that: 'Public spheres are no longer simply local or national realms of political debate and analysis; they are now, more firmly than ever, also regional and global in their reach.' (ibid.: 270) Yet also muses: 'It is difficult to see how a global public sphere, which encourages and promotes autonomy can be reconciled with the interests of

such unbridled private power [in the communication industries].' (ibid.: 272) There is an obvious need for a fuller examination of the conditions of possibility for expanded public spheres so as to provide a more secure theoretical grounding for utilising the concept.

Hauke Brunkhorst (2002) makes a greater attempt to refer to the genealogy of public sphere debate by arguing that Fraser's distinction between weak and strong publics offers a useful contribution to IR theory in explaining expanding networks of problem-solving communities. He sees the notion of a weak public, with growing moral influence, as fitting well with the globalisation of communication media and greater awareness of human rights. Indeed, he makes the assertion that at least since the League of Nations, and especially since the foundation of the United Nations, 'a weak global public can be said to exist.' (ibid.: 680) Brunkhorst substantiates his argument with reference to the existence of basic rights established by international law (what he sees as *necessary* conditions of a weak public) and the activities of transnational political movements and the existence of mass media (*sufficient* conditions). In his words: 'The constitutional precondition of this weak public is realised in the existence of a core of binding legal rights and general principles of international law. Its social precondition is enabled by the media of global communications and by a transnational network of associations.' (ibid.: 680) This intriguing analysis unfortunately only receives scant attention in a brief article, and leaves many unanswered questions. For example, what pressures do global disparities in access and ownership of new media place on the social preconditions of this 'public sphere'? If these disparities do not affect the sphere's existence, does it affect the sphere's dynamic? What examples of transnational political action illustrate the supposed existence of a 'global public sphere'? Indeed, is it at all appropriate to speak of a singular public sphere? Is it not possible to identify counter publics at the global level, which must be even more diverse than the state environment? Brunkhorst has nothing to say on these issues.

Instead, the article concentrates on the question of whether global society can be said to have a constitution, and it is argued that whilst constitutive core elements of equal rights exist, there is not a democratic constitution or a 'strong' public at international level. However, Brunkhorst concludes optimistically that the current weak global public he identifies could be a 'strong public in the making' if in future it is strengthened by a framework of norms in a developing global constitution. He argues that the necessary condition of this strong public is 'the existence of a working system of hard-law human rights embedded in a well-ordered global society. Its sufficient condition is a public sphere enabled technologically by electronic media in interplay with associations and individuals that make communicative use of these.' (ibid.: 690) Again, there is no consideration of the possible implications that global inequalities of access and ownership of new media may have for the concept of a 'global public' – indeed such inequalities are not even acknowledged. For Brunkhorst, the international legal framework of norms is the only relevant variable that could strengthen the embryonic global public.

Brunkhorst's speculations regarding the possible future development of this 'global public' is of limited value because of his failure to address the issues of inclusion and the validity of the

concept of a singular public. Nonetheless, he provides a useful contribution to the IR public sphere literature because of his attempt to outline the preconditions of a 'global public sphere' by referring to the basic precepts of the public sphere theoretical tradition. Hence, his intention is to demonstrate that the structural preconditions of a 'global public sphere' can be identified in the present world order, but because he does not fully consider the implications of these preconditions, his conclusion that a weak public exists is questionable.

Another important theorist is John Dryzek, who employs a communication-based model of interaction that can operate with the 'fluid boundaries' of the global arena. He argues that such deliberative accounts are more appropriate for examining 'the character of political interaction that generates public opinion, without worrying about whether it is confined to particular territorial entities.' (Dryzek, 2000: 129) For Dryzek, 'governance without government', in other words, 'the creation and maintenance of order and the resolution of joint problems in the absence of such binding decision structures' can arise from 'spontaneous co-operation on decentralized systems'. (ibid.: 120) This model is based on discursive sources of global governance and order, and Dryzek links it to the concept of the public sphere. He asserts that: 'Civil society and public spheres also exist in the international system', without exploring the preconditions that enable 'international public spheres' to emerge (ibid.: 130). His account is unsatisfactorily vague in this regard, as illustrated by the following quote:

> While one can quibble about definitions here, and the supposed association of civil society with either narrow, rights-based conceptions of political action or unremitting distance from state power, in practice little is lost by treating transnational civil society and transnational public spheres as covering similar territory. As in domestic society, the transnational public sphere can be treated as the politicised aspect of transnational civil society; that is, it has an orientation to power, as constituted in states or elsewhere. (ibid.)

Although Dryzek distinguishes the concept of civil society from the public sphere, this is the extent of his attempt to do so. It has the unfortunate effect of appearing to largely conflate the two terms, or suggest that the differences between them are insignificant – mere 'quibbles' of definition. Whilst the concepts are closely related, the distinctions between them are significant and deserve greater attention than this (see section 3.2. above, p. 47, and section 6.1., p. 129). This conceptual imprecision undermines Dryzek's argument and renders it problematic. Questions are raised such as: what is the nature of the 'orientation to power' to which Dryzek refers? What is the institutional framework for expanded public spheres that Dryzek implicitly suggests is analogous to the state? Is there a singular expanded public, or a multiplicity of spheres (Dryzek uses the singular and the plural terms interchangeably)? How do we understand the *methods* by which expanded publics communicate? In short: what are the basic preconditions of existence for expanded public spheres? Dryzek does not focus on the technologies that enable cross-border communication, or how associated disparities in access and ownership may affect inclusion, which is directly relevant to discursive democracy theory. This is before we even question what the structural preconditions

for the emergence of expanded spheres might be – but Dryzek makes an unsubstantiated assumption that they exist.

All of the approaches discussed here exhibit significant weaknesses because the key concept that they rely on – expanded public sphere/s, whether phrased as 'international' or 'global' – are theoretically and empirically ambiguous. This poses a serious challenge to the logical consistency and validity of each of their arguments. To return to Calhoun's appeal above, it is evident that further research into the preconditions for expanded public spheres is required (Calhoun, 2002: 22).

3.3.2. Expanded Public Spheres: The Call For Further Research

This need for further research has also been recognised by other international critical theorists (Baynes, 2001). For example, Molly Cochran has made a strong case for the potential contribution that public sphere theory could make to the development of normative thought in IR. She identifies expanded public sphere theory as a fruitful area of research that illustrates how 'moral imagination might help us think about the material, institutional bases of power that prohibit effective critique and resistance to forms of community practices.' (Cochran, 1999: 261) She recognises that future work must 'give some indication of how publics become institutionalized. It must inquire as to how public spheres could exercise power in international politics and when they should seek to exercise that power.' (ibid.: 271) However, beyond this, and a brief discussion of Fraser's distinction between 'strong' and 'weak' publics, Cochran does not develop an analysis. Her purpose instead is on orienting research questions and identifying topics that require further theorisation. These include the distortion of democratic participatory parity in IR, the roles of non-state actors as sources of international ethical critique, and the possible construction of alternative institutional forms to the state (ibid.: 270). This outline presents a promising basis from which to develop a comprehensive inquiry into the preconditions for the emergence of expanded public spheres, since it incorporates issues of communication, global civil society and transformations in sites of political authority. Cochran concludes that: 'The emergence of international public spheres is in many ways contingent. However, the prospects for the incorporation of marginalized groups in world politics and the possibilities for improving beyond the actually existing institutions of international practice provide compelling reasons for pursuing them further.' (ibid.: 272) This underlines the potential contribution to the literature that this thesis can provide – public sphere theory can be a valuable next step in the development of international critical theory. However, it must avoid the shortcomings of the approaches detailed so far, and inquire into the structural preconditions of expanded public spheres.

A number of theorists have attempted such a task, and offered a considered and theoretically informed account of the emergence of expanded public spheres. I will now turn to a discussion of the key literature in this regard. Once again, I emphasise that there is no common agreement about how to term public spheres beyond state borders (e.g. 'global', 'cosmopolitan', 'virtual' sphere/s), therefore I use the term 'expanded public spheres' to incorporate all these

divergent approaches. However, this literature can be roughly divided between those that focus on *expanded public spheres of state actors*, and those that focus on *expanded public spheres of non-state actors*. My discussion of scholarship in the former camp includes IR theorists Marc Lynch (1999) and Jennifer Mitzen (2001), and in the latter camp, I consider the work of Colin Sparks (1998), John Keane (2000), Martin Köhler (1998), Guidry, Kennedy and Zald (2000), and John Bohman (1997, 1998, 1999). I will demonstrate that this literature is theoretically sophisticated, but is subject to a number of significant limitations.

3.4. Expanded Public Spheres of State Actors

Marc Lynch has delivered the most focused and rigorous treatment of public sphere theory in IR to date (Lynch, 1999, 2000). He draws on the work of Habermas to attempt to 'develop an international public sphere theory based on communicative action, public sphere structure, and the constitution of identity and interests through public deliberation.' (Lynch, 1999: 7) In doing so, Lynch 'argues for placing communication at the center of International Relations theory', and claims that public sphere theory can offer a synthesis of rationalist and constructivist approaches (ibid.: 3, see also 9-13). Lynch conceives the structure of global politics as comprising both traditional forms of 'strategic interaction' (resembling the market) and a public sphere of 'communicative action (resembling the forum) based on deliberation, dialogue and persuasion. He sees the public sphere as involving 'the exchange of arguments oriented toward producing consensus, which can have a constitutive rather than only a constraining impact.' (ibid.: 21) The 'international public sphere' is where state action is defended, justified, interpreted and contested. Lynch is concerned not with finding instances of 'interest-free, power-free behaviour, but rather to identify the conditions under which the need for public justification oriented to shared norms, goals or identity produced behaviour different from behaviour absent such demands.' (ibid.: 40) Such justifications succeed, he argues, 'where they satisfy the procedural rules of consensus formation and the demands of rational argumentation oriented toward mutually held norms.' (ibid.: 41) Lynch focuses his study on the Jordanian and Arab public sphere, but he emphasises that this is one of many overlapping public spheres that are identifiable in the international realm (ibid.: 268-9).

The rationale behind privileging states as actors in the public sphere is problematic given the conventional conceptualisation of the public sphere as a site separate from state authority. Lynch recognises that: 'Habermas (1996) explicitly distinguishes the public sphere from the formal political decision-making institutions', yet does not fully problematise the implications of this for his model of an international public sphere of state actors (ibid.: 21). Lynch does acknowledge that non-state actors can have a 'powerful voice' in an 'international public sphere', but chooses instead to concentrate on the theorisation and exploration of state participation instead (ibid.: 61). The concept of the public sphere was originally developed to explain processes by which citizens could establish democratic constraints on the state; radical reconstruction is required if the theory is transposed to explain state interaction. Whereas in the domestic model, the state was the addressee

of debate in the public sphere, in an international model of state actors, it is not clear what the institutional context is and so what is the addressee of inter-state deliberation. An alternative approach that would seem to be more consistent with the lineage of public sphere theory is if citizens continue to be conceptualised as participants addressing decision-making powers; one could consider cross-border social movements as emergent publics, for example. An approach that might have a stronger theoretical grounding would be to reconstruct public sphere theory with decision-making bodies as actors (such as international regimes) with reference, for example, to Fraser's conception of a 'strong public' (see section 7.3., p. 180). However, Lynch does not explicitly associate his argument with such theory. Instead, he argues that it is possible to strip the public sphere 'down to its function as an institutional site of discursive communicative interaction' (ibid.: 47). This is a fair argument, but it is incumbent on Lynch to explain why he focuses on state interaction rather than on the input of other actors.

There is a later reference to the peculiarity of international conditions that indicates why Lynch privileges the state. He argues that: '[The] tension between international deliberation and formal anarchy, in which deliberation can produce only a nonbinding consensus, stands at the heart of international public sphere theory.' (ibid.: 37) Elsewhere, he states: 'The manipulation and contestation of an international consensus takes the place of the effort to influence state policy as the defining characteristic of public activity.' (ibid.: 47) The effects of anarchy are central to Lynch's thought, indicating an acceptance of IR's conventional state-centricity. If the assumption of states as key sovereign actors were fully problematised by Lynch, it would make for a more convincing theory.

Another limitation of Lynch's theory is a failure to fully explore the effects of changing communication technologies on cross-border deliberation. Although Lynch does recognise that 'the characteristics of the primary mode of public discourse profoundly structure that discourse', there is thin treatment of these issues, and discussion is largely restricted to analysis of 'old' media such as radio (ibid.: 57). This could be indicative of the specific circumstances of the states in question. For example, Lynch points out that: 'Jordanian electronic media...remained tightly controlled and restricted to a narrow range of pro-government positions.' (ibid.: 63) However, since Lynch does not choose to focus on the activities of counter publics, interesting questions involving the potential for innovative use of new media by oppositional movements are not fully investigated.

Lynch's study can also be criticised from a critical theory perspective in a teleological sense. Indeed, Lynch admits that: 'I have hardly engaged with the normative theory that has been the primary application of Habermas in IR theory to this point.' (ibid.: 268) He is concerned with demonstrating the usefulness of public sphere theory, and has made an invaluable contribution to IR by providing the most consistent application of the theory in the discipline to date. However, public sphere theory has traditionally been designed to provide normative critique, and Lynch instead provides a largely descriptive analysis. He theorises the interaction between the states in question rather than attempt to produce an abstract or normative model of an expanded public sphere. States are the referent objects of Lynch's theory rather than individuals. From a critical

theory perspective this approach can be criticised since it restricts the potential to inquire into immanent emancipatory possibilities.

Following Lynch, Jennifer Mitzen (2001) has recently completed a thesis on the 'international public sphere', where she reconstructs Habermasian theory to analyse deliberative processes between states. She draws a distinction between 'weak' publics of non-state actors, and a 'self-regulating' dynamic among states, which she terms an inter-state public. By focusing attention on this dynamic, Mitzen argues that it is possible to address a fundamental problem of global governance: that of violence. A stable communication context between states can provide the necessary condition for public spheres between states to emerge, whereby violence can be regulated. Mitzen's research is normatively motivated but since she focuses on state interaction, her approach can be criticised in similar terms to Lynch. State boundaries promote categories of inclusion and exclusion that may form obstacles to the realisation of human emancipation. Therefore, the deliberation of state actors may not directly relate to the emancipatory interest of their citizens, or of the citizens of other nations. In Ken Booth's words: 'Let us ask the victims of world politics to reinvent the future...The world they would conceive would surely point to "justice as fairness" more closely than the world traditionally described by the academics of the powerful.' (Booth, 1995: 348) The public sphere is a concept designed to contribute to normative theory, and notions of citizen empowerment are crucial to its critical force. Lynch and Mitzen perhaps do not fully appreciate the potential of the public sphere as a method of normative critique.

3.5. Expanded Public Spheres of Non-State Actors

The scholars that have focused on expanded public spheres of non-state actors can be located in a number of disciplines, such as Communication Studies and Sociology (e.g. Dahlberg, 2001a, 2001b; O'Donnell, 2001). Here, I discuss the works of scholars that have the most relevance to IR: Colin Sparks, John Keane, Martin Köhler, Guidry, Kennedy and Zald, and James Bohman.

3.5.1. Colin Sparks

Colin Sparks is a notable sceptic of the notion of what he terms the 'global public sphere'. Sparks outlines two hypotheses about the global public sphere, as follows:

> **P1** We would expect to find that the media that constitute the global public sphere display at least as much universality in terms of availability and access as do the existing media of state-limited public spheres...
> **P2** We would expect to find clear evidence that built into the media of the global public sphere are mechanisms which tend to lead it beyond any current limitations it may display. (Sparks, 1998: 112-3)

The 'media' to which Sparks refers to above are defined by him as 'traditional' mass media – in the course of his article, he examines television, newspapers, and even radio – but he does not

discuss the impact of new media technologies such as the internet. Sparks concludes that there is no evidence for the emergence of a 'global public sphere' (also see Sparks, 2001: 89). He argues that a convincing case for the globalisation of the mass media cannot be made; there are some exceptions such as BBC World Service, but generally their total audiences are very small and do not bear comparison with the scale of the audiences for state-based media. Further, the audience of this limited 'global' media are disproportionately spread amongst the English-speaking, well-educated and wealthy elite. Sparks argues that this falls far short of the ideals of universality and equality, and so negates hypothesis P1. He also claims that there is as yet inconclusive evidence as to whether there are any self-correcting mechanisms built into the global media that will enable disparities in access and participation to be overcome, and so hypothesis P2 is also negated. Moreover, he suggests that such global disparities are so entrenched that it would require a very long historical period for such a mechanism to emerge and begin to take effect. The global elites are 'even more sharply differentiated from the mass of the population than were the bourgeois participants in the eighteenth-century coffee houses that formed the original inspiration for this concept.' (Sparks, 1998: 121) Therefore, Sparks concludes that the term 'global public sphere' should be abandoned since it is 'manifestly inadequate' to describe the trends that he highlights (ibid.: 122). He proposes an alternative descriptive term: "The one that fits the evidence best is 'imperialist, private sphere'." (ibid.)

There are many difficulties with Sparks's thesis. First, he concentrates almost wholly on the possibility of the public sphere being realised through 'traditional' mass media. This is strangely old-fashioned. It means that Sparks's conception of participation in the 'global public sphere' is, in his own words, 'almost entirely restricted to consumption' (ibid.). Even fuller, active participation is only 'limited' in the 'formation of global public opinion' (ibid.):

> The main fora, the newspapers and television programmes in which this process takes place, are highly capitalised and their columns and discussions are dominated by the views of the political and economic elite, either directly or as retailed through professional mediators (ibid.).

This is an extraordinarily restricted definition of participation in a public sphere. Sparks ignores other active forms of participation through new media that one could argue is a prime characteristic of the decentralisation dynamic of globalisation. It is also through such methods of communication that one can find evidence of participation by the kind of marginalized groups that Sparks voices concern about. By limiting the scope of his inquiry, Sparks forecloses consideration of any such intriguing phenomena, and so offers only a partial account of the impact of contemporary transformations on public spheres.

Further, Sparks defines a public sphere in the singular, and argues that: 'We cannot use the term 'public sphere' in anywhere near its full sense to describe a situation in which there are systematic exclusions, upon whatever grounds, of whole classes of citizens.' (ibid.: 112) However,

defining a public sphere in this way has a disadvantageous effect on marginalized groups, in that it delegitimises the deliberative practices of counter publics. Fraser famously made this critique in a seminal 1992 article, yet whilst Sparks references this article when highlighting the masculinist bias of the bourgeois public, he does not acknowledge Fraser's related theoretical argument in favour of multiple publics (ibid.: 111).

Moreover, the conditions of possibility for the emergence of the 'global public sphere' that Sparks outlines in the above hypotheses do not incorporate institutional conditions. In conventional public sphere theory, the institutional framework of the state and its relation to a public sphere was integral. How then can we theorise about a public sphere displaced from state borders? How can we understand its relation to structures of political authority? Sparks offers no guidance in thinking about these questions. This problem is compounded by the simplistic and limited definition that Sparks employs of globalisation: a phenomenon which he argues can best be understood if we accept that it is characterised mainly by the 'symbolic [as] the prime site' (ibid.: 110) There is little analysis of the wider socio-political transformations associated with globalisation, and the possible implications for state sovereignty. Such wider considerations are excluded from Sparks's analysis because of his media-centric conception of the public sphere, which causes him to neglect its function as a means of discursive engagement about processes of governance. These shortcomings render Sparks's account of the possible transformation of the public sphere wholly inadequate.

3.5.2. John Keane

John Keane concentrates on the role of new media, arguing that the new microelectronic technologies strengthen 'the hand of individual reception and *narrowcasting* against conventional broadcasting patterns and *socialize* certain tools of communication by encouraging the perception of communication as complex *forms of opinion* through networks of public spheres.' (Keane, 1991: xii) Keane conceptualises three different types of public spheres: micro-public spheres, meso-public spheres and macro-public spheres. He does not suggest that these spheres are mutually exclusive – rather they are overlapping networks. Micro-publics involve 'dozens, hundreds, or thousands of disputants interacting at the sub-nation state level...[they] draw their strength from the fact that they are mostly latent', meso-publics 'normally comprise millions of people interacting at the level of the nation state framework, [and] may also extend beyond its boundaries...[they] display considerable tenacity.' (Keane, 2000: 77-8) Macro-publics 'normally encompass hundreds of millions and even billions of people enmeshed in disputes at the supranational and global levels of power...[they are] the consequence of the international concentration of mass media firms previously owned and operated at the nation state level...the Internet stimulates the growth of macro-public spheres: there are citizens who generate controversies with other members of a farflung 'imagined community' about matters of power and principle.' (ibid.: 84) Keane outlines promising themes for future public sphere research, such as the role of new media, the emergence of transnational social movements, and the changing nature of state authority. However, one might question the usefulness of his typology of different spheres seeing as he argues himself that they

are highly interconnected networks, 'defined by the lack of differentiation between spheres' (ibid.: 77).

3.5.3. Martin Köhler

Martin Köhler concedes that national public spheres are transforming. Yet he argues that what he terms a 'transnational public sphere' cannot be identified, since 'the very concept of the public sphere is intrinsically bound up in structures of authority and accountability which do not exist in the transnational realm.' (Köhler, 1998: 233) However, globalisation is encouraging the development of what he terms the 'cosmopolitan public sphere', which 'reflects the ongoing centrality of the state for civil society actors, and acknowledges that state politics is the result of transnational coalition-building and interest aggregation.' (ibid.) Köhler is correct in his observation that much civil society action is domestic, even if there is transnational support for it, but he neglects the numerous examples of transnational civil society coalitions that direct their activities to international institutions (one only needs to think of the series of protests at meetings of the World Trade Organisation, or the G8). Köhler believes that at present such groups have not superseded the institutional coherence of the state, but is prepared to countenance the possibility that future foundations may be laid 'for an integrated global public sphere in which the distinctions between state and non-state actors may eventually be overridden.' (ibid.: 247) 'Yet as long as the state continues to be the only site of political authority in international relations', he argues, 'it is impossible for a transnational public sphere – in which a global politics would have to be embedded – to emerge.' (ibid.: 233) Köhler presents his argument in quite bald terms, and his assertion that state authority is secure in conditions of globalisation is questionable. Contemporary transformations in sites of political authority are putting pressure on the concept of state sovereignty, and may be providing the international institutional framework for transnational public spheres to emerge. However, Köhler discounts these possibilities without considering them fully.

3.5.4. Guidry, Kennedy and Zald

Guidry, Kennedy and Zald adopt an alternative approach influenced by Habermasian theory. They argue that an emerging 'transnational public sphere offers a place where forms or organization and tactics for collective action can be transmitted across the globe...More generally, the spread of human rights ideologies and movements exemplifies the power and consequences of this public sphere's global reach.' (Guidry et al, 2000: 7) The activities of these movements illustrates the globalisation dynamic of the 'transnational public sphere', in that it is 'realized in various localised applications, potentially quite different from the original production of the discourse or practice in question.' (ibid.) In other words, the transnational public sphere involves 'action at a distance', and can be identified at a number of levels: local and national as well as global. Therefore, localised activity may have relevance for the 'transnational public sphere' since '[t]he principles and practices that emerge in globalized space evoke local responses that transform and contest global practices in their applications.' (ibid.) In an increasingly interconnected world,

'local movements are always potentially global', and analysing a range of different social movements operating at this level is an ideal method of research into the 'transnational public sphere' (ibid.: 9).

However, Guidry, Kennedy and Zald caution that one must bear in mind a number of caveats. First, that globalisation is an historical contingency rather than a process driven by a specific teleology; second, that globalisation should not be understood as a singular process, but rather as forms of 'globalisations' that are experienced by differing peoples in a variety of ways; and third, that 'we need to retain that very tension between the proliferation of diversity, through multiple publics, and the homogenization and globalization suggested by a single transnational public sphere in order to recognize the ways that social movements can generate contingencies, transformations, and reconfigurations of both identities and power.' (ibid.: 11) Here, Guidry, Kennedy and Zald's argument is unclear. If, as they acknowledge, '[t]he coherence of a common public sphere that invites multiple publics to participate is...a difficult concept to grasp', and indeed, '[w]ithout the unity afforded by the nation it appears nearly impossible', then it would seem logical to disregard the notion of a singular, transnational public sphere, in favour of a multiple spheres model (ibid.). This would be consistent with propositions elsewhere in their argument that stress diversity: for example, their conception of globalisation(s). A multiple spheres model would focus attention on the variety of publics that Guidry, Kennedy and Zald identify and accommodate their interest in the potential for wider debate between publics and the reconstruction of opinions and identities. Further, it could do so without the associated conceptual difficulties of the singular public sphere model, such as the tendency to oppress or marginalize certain topics, forms of speech, and certain speakers. Guidry, Kennedy and Zald do not further clarify why they have a preference for this peculiar hybrid model of multiple publics within a single transnational sphere, so this aspect of their argument does not convince. Nonetheless, they go on to outline a further two cautions for future transnational public sphere research that seem instructive. They advise that 'one should attend to the variety of ways in which social movements enter the transnational public space, are potentially transformed by the encounter, and perhaps even influence globalizations themselves', and that one also attend 'to the transformation of normative issues and identities in various globalizing discourses.' (ibid.: 12-13) These appear to be logical precepts for public sphere research. It alludes to the relationships between methods of communication, institutional frameworks and the norms of publicity that are main themes of public sphere theory. Questions regarding the relative influence of each of these categories on one another and the transformative potential of deliberation are central to public sphere research.

Guidry, Kennedy and Zald provide a valuable contribution to the IR literature, despite some confusion over their attempt to combine a model of a singular transnational public sphere with an account of multiple publics. They offer one of the few serious attempts in the discipline to outline a research approach to expanded public sphere(s). However, this theoretical engagement is limited to the introduction of their volume. They put forward a persuasive argument that a case study approach to a variety of publics can illustrate the operation of the transnational public sphere,

and each of the following chapters is supposed to contribute to this aim. Thus follows a number of articles by a variety of authors on the activities of numerous social movements. Whilst informative, the relevance of each of these articles to the theme of the transnational public sphere is implicit, but never overtly stated, with the exception of two isolated mentions in Guidry's own case study on social movements in Brazil (ibid.: 154, 173). Greater efforts to incorporate the theoretical framework in the case study chapters would have made for a more consistent approach.

3.5.5. James Bohman

James Bohman offers considered and theoretically informed reflections on the hyperbole surrounding the 'globalisation of the public sphere'. He has mainly written on the topic in Political Theory, but has also introduced the debate to International Relations (Bohman, 1999). He counters unsubstantiated assumptions about the 'global public' by mediating on the conditions of possibility for an expanded public sphere:

> For a global public sphere to be possible, three conditions must be met: the existence of a mass media of global scope and equipped with the technological capacities of speed of communication; the emergence of a variety of transnational and local public spheres and sub-publics which organize their own audiences and develop their own forms of publicity; and finally, the requisite organization and institutions of civil society, the state and international organizations which support and make possible a variety of public spheres. (Bohman, 1998: 201)

Bohman argues that if we compare these conditions with the reality of current forms of global media, the nascent state of transnational civil society and the lack of institutional structures, then 'it is hard not to think of the global public sphere as little more than an aggregate public.' (ibid.: 214) Nonetheless, Bohman does not want to disregard the possibility that a global public sphere may be created in the future – he considers that this could be a difficult, but not impossible task (ibid.). In order to theorise about these issues, Bohman argues that we need to broaden the traditional European model of the public sphere and adopt a definition sympathetic to cosmopolitanism, 'that takes into account manifestly different historical conditions.' (ibid.: 201) This is a fundamentally important consideration for my inquiry into the structural preconditions for the emergence of transnational public spheres. As Bohman notes, a definition of a transnational public sphere will have to be broad enough to be historically generalisable, to enable analysis of contemporary global transformations, and to be sensitive to different cultural contexts (ibid.).

Bohman also makes the valuable point that public spheres must retain the functional requirement of being 'locations for social and cultural criticism.' (ibid.: 202) Adopting this useful generalised definition, Bohman argues that it is possible to identify the gradual transformation of local public spheres through transnational civil society into cosmopolitan forms of publicity, where critique, translation and the extension of accountability occurs across state borders (ibid.: 213). Bohman refers to no empirical examples; his is a theoretical account. He concludes that these

'cosmopolitan' spheres *can* be considered 'global' in the specific sense that participants display a commitment to the norm of publicity. This involves making their opinions intelligible and accountable to all citizens of other publics. A 'global public sphere' in a more universalist sense will not be realised until media systems are created of matching scale over a social space where political and economic decisions will impact (ibid.: 214). However, this would raise further problems since 'such a projection of the public sphere onto a global scale alters its forms of publicity, creating problems of anonymity and undermining the public sphere as a space for accountability and for social and cultural criticism.' (ibid.)

Bohman has elaborated further on this conception of a 'cosmopolitan public sphere' elsewhere. He argues that the public must not only perform a 'scrutinising' function, but also have 'agenda-setting' influence on the basis of consensus reached about issues of common concern (ibid.: 183). They 'must also be able to debate, discuss, and deliberate in such a way as to produce public agreements that would be acceptable "from the point of view of everyone" affected by decisions made within any legitimate political institutions.' (Bohman, 1997: 187) He goes further: citizens in this public must also 'be dynamic enough to reshape the framework of existing political institutions to require acknowledgement of the rights of members of the universal community outside the boundaries of its territories and membership.' (ibid.: 187) Thus, the deliberation of a cosmopolitan public provides the cultural basis for transformations in sites of political authority – in favour of greater inclusion. Bohman is interested in the self-reflexive political process that characterises the historical development of publics such as the civil rights movement: an example of where the public thinks and acts self-referentially, and transforms the conditions of political deliberation as it undergoes a process of self-transformation (ibid.: 192). By forming a new public with which institutions interact, the public is able to change institutions indirectly. 'In the process', Bohman argues, 'institutions are changed in a variety of ways: in their concerns, in their ongoing interpretation of rules and procedures, in their dominant problem-solving strategies, and so on.' (ibid.: 191) If institutions are not responsive in this way, they will lose legitimacy.

Although new media will be central to cosmopolitan publics, Bohman argues that it is imperative that the media are not controlled or restricted by private interests, since 'media institutions are the only means powerful enough to achieve a cosmopolitan public sphere, although they are currently not part of it.' (ibid.: 196) These institutions are largely unconcerned about cosmopolitan publicity, and do not consider themselves as part of the transnational civil society where Bohman locates cosmopolitan publics. Nevertheless, such media do not present insurmountable obstacles to the realisation of public spheres, since they remain 'conceivable as channels by which to appeal to an indefinitely large audience and by which social movements in civil society may gain and structure international public attention to shared problems.' (ibid.)

Bohman's approach provides an excellent model with which to theorise about new media and public spheres. It has many characteristics to recommend it. Bohman provides a more theoretically informed account than is to be found elsewhere in much of the literature, and his delineation of the conditions of possibility for expanded public spheres offers an ideal entry point

for further research. His exploration into effective political dialogue also demonstrates a concern with possibilities for human emancipation. A minor criticism is that whilst Bohman reaches intriguing conclusions, it is difficult to assess how convincing they are because of the lack of empirical evidence to illustrate his claims. Another more substantial criticism is that Bohman does not focus on the disparities of access and ownership of communication technologies – arguably the most fundamental barriers to inclusion.

Following the above review of the expanded public spheres literature, I am able to identify a number of common limitations, shortcomings and under-theorisations that need to be addressed in my project to reconstruct public sphere theory. First, a functional, generalisable, non state-centric model of an expanded public sphere needs to be developed, similar to that of Bohman. This is a most appropriate model for constructing a theoretical probe into the preconditions of expanded public spheres, and it allows for sensitivity to different cultural contexts. A focus on non-state actors and citizen empowerment retains the normative interest that orientates public sphere theory. Second, in contradistinction to Sparks, a multiple spheres model, as opposed to a singular public sphere, is more appropriate at the transnational level. Therefore, I characterise my approach as an inquiry into *transnational public spheres*, a term which is indicative of my non-state, multiple spheres model. Third, the limitations of Calhoun, Wilkin, Brunkhorst and Dryzek's individual approaches must be avoided: it cannot be assumed that these spheres are actually existing institutions. Fourth, developing communicative capacity across state borders provided by new media must be considered as a precondition for the emergence of transnational public spheres, especially regarding issues of inclusion and exclusion, which are central to normative public sphere theory. An unfortunate limitation of Bohman's approach was that he did not focus on these issues. Fifth, further to Cochran's call for more research, the institutional framework for transnational public spheres must also be considered as a structural precondition for emergence. This is because public spheres have traditionally been conceived in relation to the nation-state. Lastly, Guidry, Kennedy and Zald's interest in the nature of potential participants in emergent transnational public spheres must be explored further. Questions that must be asked include: is it possible to identify amongst these participants a sense that they form a 'public'? And do they recognise one another as legitimate participants in debate despite the fact that they do not share common citizenship? In the following section, I intend to integrate all of these concerns in a reformulation of public sphere theory, as part of a critical-theoretical project to identify emancipatory possibilities in the present world order.

3.6. Preconditions for the Emergence of Transnational Public Spheres

Since *Structural Transformation* was published, there have been revolutionary developments in communication technologies that have contributed to contemporary transformations in world order. It is valuable to ask what effect, if any, these developments have

had on public spheres. Some argue that the growth and legitimisation of transnational social movements, the ongoing transformation of the state, and the increasing structural potential for cross-border dialogue offered by new media may provide some of the conditions for the emergence of transnational public spheres (Bohman, 1998). Habermas can be criticised for being too conservative in his speculations about the potential of the public sphere. However, the enormous intensification of cross-border communicative interaction, which creates shared spaces of experience, argumentation and language, has rendered it almost impossible to ignore the transnational dimension when theorising about public spheres. Such theoretical activity does not necessarily rely upon an assertion of their institutional existence. Rather, it asserts the existence of deliberative *spaces* containing the *potential* for rational-critical dialogue orientated towards consensus. In this sense, new media and international institutions may provide the structural preconditions for the emergence of transnational public spheres.

The concept of transnational public spheres is related but not directly analogous to local or national public spheres. Following Bohman, I have determined that a functional definition of a public sphere, which makes no assumptions regarding location or the substantive content of dialogue, is best used as a 'plausibility probe' for the emergence of transnational public spheres. Therefore, I shall define a *transnational* public sphere as a site of deliberation in which non-state actors reach understandings about issues of common concern. Note that this definition allows for the existence of multiple, overlapping spheres. The existence of counter publics to the bourgeois public sphere suggests similar, if not greater fragmentation beyond the national realm. This should not be construed negatively – as argued above, equality of participation is perhaps best secured by a multiplicity of publics, and such heterogeneity could be said to be constitutive of meaningful deliberation. What is important is that political action is justified in public; and this includes the requirements of rational-critical debate orientated towards consensus, the inclusion of all affected actors in deliberation, the treatment of all included others as legitimate speakers, and the inadmissibility of direct appeals to power. These criteria can be summarised as the normative condition of publicity. Although this definition may be inferior to Habermas's in terms of historical specificity, as Bohman argues, it needs to be general if it is to apply at the transnational level and incorporates the diverse historical and institutional experiences of non-Western cultures.

In the above discussion of Habermas's public sphere theory, I identified three basic conditions of possibility for public spheres. These were as follows: ability to communicate (assisted by the development of the press), separation from public authority (i.e. the addressee of public sphere dialogue) and development of a 'community of recognition' (i.e. participants are conscious of themselves as representative of a wider public and recognise one another as legitimate participants in debate, demonstrated by the normative condition of publicity). Following this, I propose that three similar structural preconditions could provide for the emergence of transnational public spheres: developing *communicative capacity* across state borders (assisted by the development of new media), contemporary *transformations in sites of political authority* (varied global governance structures acting as the addressee/s of public sphere dialogue), and emerging

transnational communities of recognition (as with domestic counterpart above, only the basis for participants recognising one another as legitimate participants in debate would rest on a foundation other than shared territory/citizenship). These trends are all interrelated and can be understood as processes of globalisation (for a discussion about the definition of globalisation, refer to section 5.1., p. 110). Let me briefly outline each structural precondition in turn.

First, developing communicative capacity across state borders refers to the development of the internet and other new media technologies in terms of access, participation and ownership. It also refers to technological developments such as digitisation and the intertextuality of once separate media. The innovative ways that certain transnational social movements have used the internet and new media may indicate that this technology could provide the communicative infrastructure for transnational public spheres. However, the constraints and exclusions that are associated with this media also indicate that there may be significant obstacles in realising its emancipatory potential.

Second, there are transformations in the traditional sites of political authority. Although states still retain the supreme legal claim over exercising authority within their own borders, this has been complicated in recent years by a number of factors, including the increasing jurisdiction of international institutions, the development of international law and the complex identities of citizens. The term 'global governance' is often used to describe the spectrum of distributed responsibility amongst formal organisations and regimes that form the rules and norms of world order under these conditions. These transformations may indicate emerging institutional preconditions for transnational public spheres, albeit at an embryonic stage.

Lastly, there are emerging transnational communities of recognition, through the formation of transnational social movements. The dynamic relationship between each of the above factors can be examined by studying transnational social movements as representative of potential sites of struggle in late modernity. There are indications that traditional forms of national politics are disaffecting voters, as evidenced by a pattern of decreasing electoral turnout and party membership in mainly developed Western states. At the same time, we are witnessing a rise in a new political culture of citizens directly claiming interests and entitlements, sometimes at the transnational level, through single-issue pressure groups. The participants in these social movements may attempt to achieve their aims at the local, national or transnational level, defining meaningful political borders as they see fit. As Köhler observes: 'The borders of the political community become meaningless in the traditional political sense of mobilization for specific goals. The new borders are differences of language and political culture, and they do not necessarily combine with community borders.' (Köhler, 1998: 238-39) Through these contestatory processes, we may witness evidence of the normative condition of publicity that indicates the emergence of transnational communities of recognition: a further precondition for the emergence of transnational public spheres.

In the chapters that follow, I propose to examine each of these three preconditions to ascertain whether they are coalescing to provide the structural context for transnational public spheres to emerge. This inquiry will represent a continuation of the normative and political

concerns that motivated Habermasian public sphere theory, as well as provide a rigorous and systematic analysis of the conditions of possibility for expanded publics, and therefore an essential contribution to transnational public spheres scholarship.

3.7. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to outline a method, grounded in the international critical theory tradition, with which to theorise about the socio-political implications of new media. It has expanded and modified Habermas's public sphere approach in order to assess the potential for the emergence of transnational public spheres. This topic is of evident relevance to the main themes of international critical theory, such as the evolving role of the state, the expansion of moral and political community, contemporary forms of exclusion, and the transformative role of counter-hegemonic social movements.

Following an appraisal of Habermasian public sphere theory and recent public sphere literature, I have identified a number of principles that have enabled the construction of a theoretical framework for a normatively motivated inquiry into the possible emergence of transnational public spheres. The implications of unequal power relations on the means of access and participation in a public sphere will be an important consideration in this inquiry. I have adopted a functional definition of a public sphere, that allows for the presence of multiple publics, but that does not assume that such transnational public spheres are actually existing institutions. I have identified three structural preconditions for the emergence of transnational public spheres: developing communicative capacity across state borders, transformations in sites of political authority and emerging transnational communities of recognition. In the chapters that follow, each of these preconditions shall be examined in turn, and their implications considered in more detail.

4. Developing Communicative Capacity Across State Borders

There has been an unprecedented transformation of the world's media landscape since the mid-nineteenth century (Hugill 1999). Until this time, the few transnational communication channels that did exist were the preserve of the royal, wealthy and military elites (Solymar, 1999). Since the invention of the telegraph in 1870, the transmission capability and service demand of communication technologies has risen exponentially (Frederick, 1993: 17). It is possible to identify long-term trends of increased global access to communication technology (Winston, 1998). The type of information and communication technologies useful for studying information and communication access include radios, televisions, fixed telephones, mobile telephones, personal computers (PCs) and the internet. New media[1] technologies such as the latter three are responsible for the recent explosion in cross-border communicative activity. I suggest that this expansion in communicative capacity could provide a structural precondition for the emergence of transnational public spheres.

A transnational public sphere depends on communicative infrastructure that enables participants to communicate across state borders with ease. Public sphere dialogue should include all affected actors, and so access and ownership of communication technology should be as widely diffused as possible. Dialogue should be open, oriented towards consensus, and free of restriction or censorship by state or corporate interests. However, new media technologies are not evenly distributed and there are significant exclusions to communication access throughout the world. The ownership of global media is concentrated to such an extent that it resembles an oligarchic market. Many states also attempt to restrict communication and censor media content. These and other associated factors represent considerable obstacles to the realisation of transnational public spheres.

The purpose of this chapter is to review developments in communication technology from the early twentieth century onwards to the present day, to provide an historical understanding of the evolution of global media and its structures of power and inequality. This will enable evaluation of whether increased communicative capacity across state borders is indicative of emergent transnational public spheres. This chapter is split into six sections. First, I detail the historical development of global media, second, I outline the emergence of the new media environment, third, I examine the rise of neoliberalism and its effects on new media, fourth, I describe the continuing expansion of global media to the present day; fifth, I focus on the rise of the internet; and lastly, I outline the disparities and inequalities of the 'information age'.

[1] 'New media' refers to computer-mediated communications and the digital convergence of formerly discrete technologies. Here, I also use the term 'global media', to encompass new media as well as 'older' forms of mass media, such as newspapers. However, it is important to bear in mind that new media technologies are often integrated with older media, so the distinction is not clear-cut (Axford and Huggins, 2001: vii).

4.1. The Historical Development of Global Media

The emergence of the global media market is a relatively recent development of the twentieth century, reflecting the globalisation of the market economy (Gorman and McLean, 2003). However, the origins of global media can be traced back decades further than this, perhaps even centuries (Soonce, 2000). Examining the historical evolution of global media will aid understanding of crucial developments in the last twenty years that have shaped the structure of the media system to the present day. Thus, the following section is devoted to identifying the historical precursors to contemporary global media.

4.1.1. The Emergence of Global Media

Global media was built upon the establishment of local and national media. The first mass medium of newspapers only achieved dominance in the nineteenth century in Western Europe after centuries of social, political and economic upheavals following the invention of the printing press (Harris, 1996; Jones, 1996). The growth of the press, journalism and literacy rates were a central component of democratisation. Media were almost exclusively local or national until the twentieth century; subsequently its reach expanded, along with modern capitalism, beyond state borders (Smith, 1979). The history of media systems has often tended to reflect the patterns of the overall political economy, and the press is no exception (Dyson and Humphreys, 1990). Towards the end of the eighteenth century, in most western nations, the press was at first explicitly political (Frederick, 1993: 33). It soon became regulated and censored by the government, and subsidised by the state or sectional political interests. As capitalism developed and the profit incentive in commercial publishing became apparent, sections of the press also began to come under private control. Indeed, this is the historical process that Habermas describes in *Structural Transformation* (1989: 184). Commercial media generally developed as small businesses in competitive markets, evolving over time into large corporations operating in monopolistic markets. Competitive pressures gradually led these firms to internationally expand. Thus, Western corporations and governments exerted the greatest influence on the development of global media in its formative period (Herman and McChesney, 1997).

Global media developed tentatively in the nineteenth century. Periodicals and newspapers were written primarily with a national audience in mind (Deibert, 1997: 84). Indeed, Anderson sees the daily consumption of newsprint as a crucial factor that helped to foster a sense of nationalism (Anderson, 1991: 26). Along with language difficulties, this limited the export potential of newsprint. In the late-nineteenth century era of colonisation, Europe and the United States allowed their national press corporations a foothold in the emerging media industries of their colonies, thus adding an important facet to their imperial rule. This pattern would also be repeated later, with the development of colonial radio systems (McChesney, 2001).

New transportation and communication technologies were to prove paramount in the growing development of capitalism, by facilitating trade across time and space. The

telecommunication age was inaugurated by the invention of telegraph and underwater cables in the mid-nineteenth century. For the first time in history, information could travel faster than a train carriage. Up until this point, train offered the fastest means by which correspondence could be sent, at an average speed of 35 miles per hour (Postman, 1985: 64).

As global trade became increasingly significant, so did the commercial value of rapid relay of world news through the wires. Thus, the wire-based international news agencies, such as Reuters, Havas and Wolff became the first important purveyors of global media. They formed a cartel for global news production and distribution, the so-called 'Ring Combination', in the 1850s. Their dominance was closely linked to territorial colonialism (Read, 1992: 60, Boyd-Barrett, 1980: 23). The Associated Press (AP), a cooperative venture of US newspaper publishers, and the commercial United Press, established by its domestic rivals, also gradually managed to force their way into this cartel. These news agencies effectively represented all there was of global media until well into the twentieth century. Even after the broadcasting revolution, they remained largely unrivalled in their dominance of international journalism (Thussu, 2000: 21). As late as the 1970s, their monopolistic position provoked a New World Information and Communication (NWICO) debate amongst Southern countries (Singh and Gross, 1981). NWICO proponents charged that the agencies served the agenda of their home countries, rather than represent a genuinely international viewpoint. For less developed countries with media that could not afford to support their own foreign news desk, these news agencies enjoyed an effective dictatorship of world news reportage. The late twentieth century has witnessed the weakening influence of the news agencies as the world media has globalised to a greater extent.

4.1.2. The Development of Radio and Film Broadcasting

Global media significantly extended its reach in the first half of the twentieth century with the development of two new media technologies – motion pictures and radio broadcasting. Motion pictures achieved ascendancy without the prolonged period of local industrial competition leading to monopoly that characterised the history of newspapers and periodicals. Rather, following the pattern of industrial organisation then on the increase, the movie industry developed quickly into an oligopoly. Thus, the movie industry was the first media market to operate in a genuinely global manner (Gomery, 1991; Balio, 1976). This oligopoly was practically all based in Hollywood, and with close connections to important Wall Street financial interests. American dominance was secured early, with 85 per cent of world film audiences watching US films as far back as 1914. In 1925, US films provided over 90 per cent of film revenues in the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Argentina, and 70 per cent in France, Brazil, and Scandinavia (Herman and McChesney, 1997: 14).

Radio broadcasting emerged around 1920, initially on medium-wave. Broadcasting is inherently international, since it is impossible for nation-states to limit the reach of airwaves to their territories. However, in practice, long distance signal transmission was prohibitively expensive. Also, broadcasting had to be limited to a small number of frequencies and broadcasted

for simultaneous transmission in order to avoid extensive interference. This posed a specifically Western European problem, owing to the large population, relatively small land mass and a variety of nation-states. During the 1920s and 1930s, a series of international conferences were held in order to divide the medium-wave frequencies amongst states. Since each state was left with a limited number of channels each, there were vigorous debates as to how best they could be developed. In a number of countries, the general feeling was that broadcasting was too much of an important resource to abandon to unregulated commercial exploitation, and so the state took a controlling interest. The most well-known and successful of such state-owned broadcasting systems was the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), funded by an universal license fee from all consumers, and widely assumed to be publicly accountable and relatively impartial. At the other end of the spectrum were the state-controlled propaganda systems, as typified by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union (Taylor, 1998).

Radio broadcasting developed in a very different way in the US, where private interests were fast to secure control of the industry – which they rightly perceived as a powerful advertising tool – before a system of public service could be established (Barnouw, 1968). In particular, two powerful national networks managed to stave off opposition to commercial broadcasting: the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) (Taylor, 2002). Each were relentless in pursuing the international expansion of their media empires, but were met with considerable defiance in Western nations with strong public service systems.

In the late 1920s, broadcasting acquired a genuinely global potential when the short-wave band was developed. Indeed, the nature of short-wave made it unsuitable for local and often national broadcasting, but a relatively inexpensive option for international transmission. Established media companies, such as the BBC, NBC and CBS initially took advantage of the short-wave band, which boosted its popularity to such an extent that by the late 1930s practically all radio receivers included short-wave bands. Short-wave radio broadcasting had greater influence in the field of politics than it did of commerce. Totalitarian regimes such as Nazi Germany, fascist Italy and the Soviet Union exploited the medium as a way of making foreign language broadcasts (Etlin, 2002), as did public service providers such as the BBC (Hajkowski, 2002, MacKay, 2000). Broadcasting formed an integral part of ideological warfare during World War II, and for these purposes was soon taken up by the US government when it entered the war, by wrestling control from MBC and CBS and establishing Voice of America (VoA). These wartime experiences consolidated the importance of communication on the political agenda, which influenced the post-war development of US media firms. Whereas previously, US firms had largely remained within domestic territory, now they were expanding abroad with the active support of the government. It was a top priority of the US to seal their dominance in international communication by taking advantage of the position of the weakened allies after the war.

Thus, an initial strategy of the US was to pressure for the end of wartime capital controls in favour of currency exchange, and for a gradual reduction of tariffs through international agreements. In order to pursue its media interests, the US used its power and influence within the

International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and relationships garnered with other countries under such projects as the Marshall Plan and other Cold War related activities. The US advocated the concept of the 'free flow of information' as a universal principle, and was successful in getting this adopted as the official policy of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 1945). Free flow was presented as a democratic principle, yet could also be interpreted as an ideological mask for US corporate interests. It was an early product of neoliberal thought since it defended the right of media firms to operate internationally, with a minimum of governmental restrictions.

The influence that the US had over the post-war reconstruction of German, Italian and Japanese media systems was utilised to exert pressure in favour of adapting the US commercial model (Whelan, 2003). It was during this period that the structure of the contemporary global media system began to emerge more fully. The dominance of English as the language of global media became apparent, assisted by Britain's imperial legacy and the hegemonic post-war position of the US (Fuhrmann, 2002). American firms established themselves as presences abroad, combining interests in film, music, publishing and broadcasting into embryonic empires. The full potential of these corporations would be fully realised in the latter decades of the century, with the advent of new media.

The prime members of the global media system prior to 1945 – the news agencies and the Hollywood film industry – experienced important changes after the war. The Wolff news agency collapsed following scandal surrounding its involvement with the Nazi government, and Havas was renamed the Agence France-Presse (AFP). The old giant agencies remained unchallenged, but AP and UP gained the upper hand over Reuters and AFP. The agencies expanded their services to include radio, and later, television – for which a number of specialised 'news-film agencies' were formed such as Visnews and UPITN. The former was created from a partnership between the BBC, Reuters and a number of smaller broadcasters, and the latter was the result of an alliance between UPI and British broadcasters. Along with US firms CBS and ABC, these news-film companies were an elite group that controlled international journalism.

The film industry was also mainly owned by a select number of US companies, such as Columbia, Warner Brothers, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, MCA (Universal), Twentieth Century Fox, United Artists and Paramount. Domestic film industries grew successfully elsewhere, such as India and Japan, but none posed any challenge to the primacy of the Hollywood export market (Barnouw and Krishnaswamy, 1980). Similar trends were to be found in the music industry, where three of the five dominant music transnational corporations (TNCs) were American and each were subsidiaries of a greater media empire: CBS, Warner Brothers and RCA. The other two of the 'big five' were European: EMI and PolyGram (Hull, 1998).

Television was also an important media technology of the post-war era (Wyver, 1989). As with other media, ownership and usage of televisions was mainly the privilege of Western nations, and particularly the US, and programming for export largely the sole preserve of US firms (Dunnett, 1990). Many nations in the rest of the world filled their television schedules with

imported material, usually lacking the funds and expertise for their indigenous programming (Hoskins and Mirus, 1988). Hollywood, NBC, CBS, and ABC were able to take commercial advantage of this with little competition from elsewhere, since the major broadcasting networks in other developed nations were mainly public service systems, and therefore lacking profit motive or export incentive (A. Smith, 1995).

Commercial advertisers propelled the US television boom, and similarly international advertising lay behind the growth of global media (Schiller, 1992: 95). US advertising companies broke new ground in international advertising campaigns, establishing themselves as global agencies through their foreign investments and overseas offices, and thereby capturing the emerging market. In the early 1970s, seven out of the ten largest advertising agencies were American, and the remaining two were partly based in the US (ibid.). The huge American corporate interest behind the international advertising sector made a significant impact in the battle to commercialise broadcasting. For example, the J. Walter Thompson agency of the US was well known for its covert role in the introduction of advertising to British broadcasting in the 1950s. In later years, public service broadcasting principles continued to be eroded in the West to such a degree that by 1970, only Belgium and the Scandinavian countries still upheld a ban on television advertising (Tracey, 1998).

4.1.3. The Growth of the Telegraph and Telecommunications

The invention of the electric telegraph was a pivotal moment in the history of communication technologies. It is perhaps this innovation more than any other that ushered in the modern era of communications (Cookson: 2003). The first submarine cable, which linked France and the UK, became operational in 1851, and the first transatlantic cable, between Britain and the USA, was laid in 1866. From 1851 to 1868, submarine cables were laid across the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and the North Atlantic (Beauchamp, 2001). The following twenty years saw Britain linking up via cable to all the main areas of the Empire, which gave it an early predominance in the emerging international communication network.

Deep-sea cables required large capital investment, which meant that these cable networks were mainly in the hands of the private sector: of a total cable distance of 104, 000 miles, less than 10 per cent was owned by national governments. Nonetheless, financial provision and regulation by the colonial powers was vital support for the growth of cable technology (Headrick, 1981: 129-30). The International Telegraph Union was founded in 1865 as an inter-governmental regulatory body, with 22 members, all of which were European, with the sole exception of Persia: 'the first international institution of the modern era and the first organisation for the international regulation of a technical network' (Thussu, 2000: 17). It recorded an increase in the number of telegraphic transmissions from 29 million in 1868 to 329 million in 1900 (ibid.).

The first transpacific cable was completed in 1902, and was shared in ownership between the governments of Australia, New Zealand, Britain and Canada. This was followed quickly by the completion of a second transpacific cable by US interests in 1903, providing a link between San

Francisco and Manila, to Honolulu and Guam (Gordon, 2002). In an era of imperial rivalry, control over cables was almost equal in importance to control over sea routes: as Headrick observed, the cables were 'an essential part of the new imperialism.' (Headrick, 1981: 163) Initially, the British Empire enjoyed a comfortable dominance over international telegraph traffic, which was consolidated following the invention of wireless transatlantic telegraph transmission in 1901. In 1904, 22 of the 25 companies that managed international cable networks were affiliates of British firms, and Britain deployed 25 ships weighing at 70, 000, compared to the French cable fleet of six ships totalling only 7, 000 tons. This translated into over half of the world total of submarine cable networks being under the control of the Empire by 1910, or around 260, 000 kilometres. In contrast, France controlled only 44, 000 kilometres (Thussu, 2000: 18). The only serious contender to Britain's supremacy – at least until the end of First World War – was the United States.

However, unlike cables, the US was quick to establish its dominance over the developing technology of telephony (Hills, 1998). The patent to the telephone was held by the Bell Telephone Company, which later joined forces with American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) to maintain a virtual monopoly position over US telephone networks from 1885 to the 1960s. At the end of the nineteenth century, the US had the largest number of telephones in the world, mainly due to high domestic production. International Western Electric (owned by AT&T) became the first multinational telephony company, setting up branches in Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Japan, China and Australia. However, telephones did not acquire a genuinely international potential until the first telephone cable was laid under the Atlantic in 1956. This was quickly followed in 1957 by the completion of the first transpacific telephone cable, which began the gradual replacement of the telex and telegraph by telephone. These cables provided less than a hundred voice paths, at a cost of $500, 000 each, but growth of demand and the falling costs in laying cable over the next few decades saw dramatic rises and declines in these respective figures. By the mid-1990s, a single transoceanic cable could carry over 600, 000 voice paths at a cost of just $1, 000 a path (Thussu, 2000: 18).

Communications satellites have also been a highly significant feature of the post-war communication landscape. In 1965 the US launched the first fully operative communications satellite, and for some years afterwards dominated the production and use of satellite technology (Luther, 1988). In order to counteract this foreseen trend, Intelsat (International Telecommunications Satellite Organization), was inaugurated in 1964 to operate a global satellite system for telecommunications services, expanding affordable access to satellite capacity for many nations (Alper and Relton, 1984). At the time of its creation, commercial satellite communication did not exist, and so tensions surrounding the organisation were mainly related to Cold War relationships. There were Soviet suspicions that Intelsat was a tool of the US to control satellite communication (Rees, 1990).

However, Intelsat was relatively successful for many years in providing these services worldwide on a non-discriminatory basis, following a policy of price averaging, using the profit from high traffic routes to subsidise routes from underdeveloped countries (Intelsat, 2004).

Nevertheless, it inevitably reflected the concerns of its largest Northern donors despite its supposedly non-profit, international co-operative status. Hence, as Intelsat's position was increasingly challenged by competition from private telecom transnational corporations, pressure grew from the Northern countries to privatise the organisation. The pressure eventually proved to be too over-whelming for opponents to resist (see section 4.3. below: 'The Neoliberal Information Age', p. 80).

However, the role of the state was essential to the growth of telecommunications infrastructure. As Hamelink observes: 'The standard of availability obviously demands international coordination. It requires that telecommunications networks are technically compatible and that common rules are adopted about access to and use of these networks...From the mid 19th century to the 1970s this coordination was governed by a stable and robust multilateral accord.' (Hamelink, 1994: 68) This dominant regulatory framework was based on the principle of natural monopoly and cross-subsidisation to provide access to minor users (Friedlander, 1995). This political and economic direction guided the development of telecommunication technology, but was to alter radically in the 1980s (section 4.3., p. 80).

Reviewing the history of the development of global media reveals a number of themes that continue to be significant in the contemporary new media environment. First, technological infrastructure has been integral to capitalist growth. Second, media systems have developed that reflect the pattern of the overall international political economy. This translates into the formation of monopolistic markets that are dominated by the North, particularly the US. Third, commercial concerns and corporate interests have been a hugely important driving force in the development of global media. Fourth, during the post-war period the US built up a strong foundation in the telephony and satellite markets. As shall be discussed below, this allowed the US to maintain its dominant position in the communications sector following the introduction of new media technologies such as the internet. Fifth, there have been numerous instances where the state has attempted to exercise control over media technologies, for the purposes of censorship or political propaganda. Lastly, states have pursued international cooperation to regulate media technologies, such as radio and satellites. It is against the backdrop of these structural influences that new media technologies evolved, which heralded the onset of the so-called 'information age'. These themes continue to resonate in the new media environment. I now turn to examine recent developments in communication technologies by analysing the technical matters and political issues surrounding new media.

4.2. The 'Information Age' and New Media

Modern developments in communication technology have revolutionised the lives of millions of people around the world. This transformation has occurred incrementally – it cannot be ascribed to a single technological innovation or a particular method of communication. Instead, as

Deibert observes, it 'reflects a complex melding and converging of distinct technologies into a single integrated *web* of digital-electronic-telecommunications – a process that has roots reaching back to the late nineteenth century, and that encompasses a series of technological innovations that continued through the twentieth century, culminating in the digital convergence that began in the late 1960s.' (Deibert, 1997: 114) Thus, a new media environment has evolved that is characterised by the inter-textuality and enmeshment of once discrete media. The internet, the mobile phone, the satellite and the fax machine are all components of this environment along with a variety of other technologies, merged into a complex global web of communication infrastructure.

Commentators and politicians often refer to these developments as representing the emergence of an 'information age' that is comparable in socio-economic importance to past eras such as the industrial age. An example of this type of rhetoric is given by former US vice-president Al Gore: 'Today in the Information Age, connecting all people to a universe of knowledge and learning is the key to ensuring a lifetime of success.' (Gore, 1998: 1) It is a useful term that also captures the sense of the immense penetration and ubiquity of information and communication technologies in media-saturated societies.

Three main technological developments since the late 1960s have been critical to the development of the 'information age'. These are: digitisation; computerisation; and transmission capability improvements, such as fibre optics and cables. Each one is dealt with below.

4.2.1. Digitisation

Digitisation refers to the encoding and transmission of all information into a series of binary digits (Pool, 1990: 20-22). This means of transmitting information is superior to analogue systems since no degradation occurs when copies are made. Also, rather than the continuingly modulating frequency of analogue, translating digital information requires only an on/off configuration, which makes it more reliable over long distances. Further, digitisation allows all information to be inter-textual or inter-translatable across different technologies, regardless of whether the content is audio, visual or text. In effect, the information becomes totally pliable (Saxby, 1990: 3). Digitisation, therefore, has specific importance for transmitting different information along the same channels, as Saxby explains below:

> In the case of analogue channels, the signal varied continuously according to the information in transmission, which meant in practice a different channel for each type of signal – for example, telephone or radio broadcast. With digital channels, the only difference to be considered was that binary transmission speed necessary to transmit the information, whether it took the form of data, image or the human voice. (ibid.: 266)

4.2.2. Computerisation

A crucial aspect of the 'information age' is computing technologies (ibid.: 265). Perhaps the key invention in this regard was the development of the microprocessor in 1969, the first one of

which included around 2, 300 transistors on each chip and could perform 600, 000 operations per second (Polsson, 1997). The microprocessor has been described by Augarten as the 'universal motor of electronics, a miniature analytical engine that could take the place of gears and axles and other forms of mechanical control.' (Augarten, 1986: 265)

Since its invention the microprocessor has become consistently more sophisticated and attained ever-higher performance levels, passing the threshold of a billion operations per second in recent years. From 1970 to the present day, the speed of microprocessors has doubled every 18 months (UNDP, 2001: 33). Today, the most advanced chips are manufactured with the use of ultra-violet light, transistors are produced with dimensions less than a micron (millionth of a metre), and such progression is likely to continue for some years yet (Deibert, 1997: 125). Countless numbers of applications have benefited from a reduction in computation time and an increase in capacity due to microprocessors.

4.2.3. Transmission Capabilities

The third area in which technological innovation has been integral to the emergence of the 'information age' relates to developments in transmission capabilities. Digital information is able to move through a variety of media, such as fibre optic cables, coaxial cables and copper wires, or in the case of wireless communications, through the electromagnetic spectrum. One of the most significant of these for the future is the fibre optic cable, which has a maximum carrying capacity of over a billion bits per second – compared to a carrying capacity of around a million bits per second for traditional telephone wires (ibid.: 126). Not only do fibre optic cables have this greater capacity, which should continue to increase for the foreseeable future, but they also have the advantage of being physically much smaller than traditional wires, so allowing more channels within a similar space.

Transmission capabilities in the new media environment have also enabled wireless communications through the electromagnetic spectrum and satellites. The electromagnetic spectrum can transmit electronic signals ranging from low frequency to microwave frequency (Akwule, 1992: 34-35). There are natural limits on how much information can be transmitted through the spectrum, but recent advances in compression techniques to improve bandwidth have increased carrying capacity to meet the demand through use of mobile phones, pagers and other wireless devices (ibid.).

Satellite systems, which operate in the microwave band, are placed in the geo-stationary orbit (i.e. the distance between the earth's surface at which the satellite's period of rotation will coincide with that of the earth, thus giving the impression that it remains stationary). These satellites operate in a similar way to ground-based microwave relay stations: they transmit information to ground antennas that relay the information to cable, copper wires or fibre optic. A satellite in this orbit has the advantage of being able to cover just less than half of the Earth's surface, and three satellites at the least could cover the entire world if placed in appropriate positions (disregarding the poles). (Kellerman, 1993: 40) However, there is a similar rationing

problem with satellites as occurs with the radio spectrum. There are a limited number of positions that satellites can occupy, leading to tough international negotiations on the principles by which satellite 'slots' should be distributed amongst different nations (Pool, 1990: 30-31). Recently, there have even been several experiments with low-earth orbiting (LEO) satellites, which have met with mixed results.

The outcome of these three technological developments has been to break down the barriers between traditional media industries and the wider communication sectors. The capacity to translate a range of information into digital format and to process it through the same channels is removing the distinction that used to exist between formerly discrete industries. Whereas once media may have been distinguishable as newspapers, motion pictures, radio or telephone, these distinctions become less significant with the advent of a 'universal media'. This process is referred to as *convergence*, whereby the traditional functions of computers, telephony, televisions and other media are merging (McChesney, 1998). As they merge, manufacturers of each industry are engaging with one another, either as a result of initiative or necessity. Neither of these media can now be said to be fully autonomous – recent technological developments mean that each are crucially linked to one another (Baldwin et al, 1996).

Convergence has heightened the importance of the media industry to the global economy. The info-communications sector has been growing significantly faster than the balance of the global economy, with international communication growing fastest overall. It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of this sector for the health of global capitalism. However, it could be said that convergence is the cause of greater insecurity in an otherwise stable global info-communication market. There has been a flurry of mergers and acquisitions (M&A) in recent years, as companies in the midst of technological upheaval have sought to protect themselves from an uncertain future by including several business interests in their ever-expanding profiles. An example is one of the largest mergers in living memory, that between AOL and Time Warner in 2000 (Houston, 2001).

Convergence will go a step further with the continuing development of wireless communications: mobile satellite communications and the combination of the internet with mobile telephony (Jameson, 1995). The wireless internet project has met with a number of notable setbacks, but is still being proclaimed by the market to represent the 'next telecommunications revolution' (Covell, 1999). It involves the greater use of satellite technology to provide multimedia access as a cheaper alternative to telephone and cable based services. An advantage that satellite technology also possesses over 'wired' services is the ability to cover lightly populated, rural areas – a crucial consideration in addressing inequality in telecommunications access, even in the developed North, where an estimated 30 per cent of customers are far from population centres (Thussu, 2000: 226).

The ability of new mobile telephones to provide internet access and high-speed data service is particularly valuable to industry, which has been a major contributor to the explosive

growth in mobile telephony. Whereas fixed line networks have taken over 130 years to reach a billion consumers, mobile telephony will take only 20 years at the current rate of growth to do the same. It has been forecast that by 2005, the number of mobile subscribers will outnumber traditional fixed lines – a revolution that would have been difficult to imagine only a few years previous. Third-generation mobiles that enable high-speed internet access are also fast becoming an industry in its own right, notwithstanding some teething difficulties.

The development of new media cannot be fully understood without an appreciation of the influence of neoliberal ideology and the global trends of liberalisation and privatisation of the communication industry. I now turn to examine the main political developments behind the ongoing technical sophistication of new media technologies.

4.3. The Neoliberal Information Age

One of the most influential developments in the recent history of new media has been the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s. This has led to the establishment of international free market trade regimes, which has had the most profound impact on global media. The deregulation and privatisation of the communication industry, coupled with the technological innovations of the 'information age', has resulted in the effective globalisation of the telecommunications infrastructure. Since the invention of the telegraph, the state had been an important provider and regulator of telecommunications infrastructure and equipment (Hamelink, 1994: 68; see section 4.1.3. above, p. 74). In the last twenty years, there has been a shift towards the privatisation of post, telegraph and telecommunication networks, led by mainly Northern countries.

Since the establishment of the International Telegraph Union (ITU) in 1865, international regulation of telecommunication was governed by multilateral agreements, which set common standards for telecommunication networks across the world, and prices for access and use of these networks. These rules were based upon principles of natural monopoly and cross-subsidisation – allowing organisations such as the Royal Mail to keep costs affordable for minor users by subsidising services from the profits of international telephony.

In the 1980s, this regulatory framework was criticised for its inflexibility, because it did not fully take account of technological innovations such as computing, fibre-optic cables and digitisation. These technologies converged voice and data transmission, and produced a rise in telecommunications traffic. The result was the growth of a strong demand from telecommunications companies for a reduction in tariffs, particularly for international services. There was also opposition to national monopoly from companies that argued that competition would improve the efficiency of services and reduce costs for the consumer. An obvious financial incentive lay behind the corporate call for deregulation; especially since data transmission was becoming vital to the development of the global market, enabling money and information to be shifted around the world faster than ever before. Hills argues that: 'deregulation, with the emphasis on the data rather than voice transmission...in practice squeezes out the interests of two-thirds of

the world community in favour of big business in the West...[it] is a move by the rich against the poor...When data still represents only a small minority of all transmission, it favours major companies in the industrialized world.' (Hills, 1986: 203)

In 1984, US President Ronald Reagan introduced his 'open-skies' policy, which broke up the public monopoly and opened national telecommunications to competition from private corporations (Horwitz, 1989). For example, AT&T, formerly the largest telecommunications company in the US, was split into 22 local firms. As a result, the US telecommunication sector was gradually deregulated, liberalised and privatised (Hamelink, 1994). UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher took similar steps soon after, opening the way for privatisation of British Telecom. The British and American examples had significant impact in Europe. For example, the European Union Commissioner for Telecommunications, Martin Bangemann, portrayed liberalisation as 'absolutely crucial', and advised the European Commission 'to push organizational restructuring of telecoms operators to prepare for privatisation.' (quoted in Venturelli, 1998: 134) Although the large European countries proceeded in this direction more slowly than did the US or UK, there was a general shift in the direction of privatisation that was to make a significant impact on international telecommunications policy (Hills, 1986; Tunstall, 1986; Duch, 1991).

The Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) took this liberalisation agenda further. Trade in services was included for the first time alongside conventional commercial and manufacturing sectors. This represented the fruits of Northern efforts to liberalise protected markets, a goal that was furthered with the establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 1995. The WTO took a lead role in arguing that the free flow of information was an essential step in trade liberalisation, a position also adopted by a number of international organisations such as the World Bank and the ITU. This growing consensus prepared the way for the successful negotiation of the 1995 General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which was the first internationally binding accord covering trade and investment in services, with considerable implications for global media. Although there are a myriad of ways in which the agreement affects communication services, the most significant is the GATS Annex on Telecommunications (WTO, 1997a). This agreement furthered the liberalisation of the world telecommunication market – a market according to Renato Ruggiero, the Director-General of the WTO, to be worth 'well over half a trillion dollars per year' (WTO, 1997b).

The Annex contained commitments from 69 governments to open up their telecommunication sector to foreign competition and to private companies for investment (WTO, 1997a). The agreement represented a clear benefit for developed nations, whose companies were the most competitive in the world and so best placed to take advantage of the opening of markets. The agreement also included 'many developing countries...and especially some of the least developed...[who] committed to significant liberalization and market access.' (Senunas, 1997) This is partly indicative of the influence of neoliberal ideology, which fostered a sense within these countries that liberalisation is 'a necessary precondition to be competitive in the new global

economy' (ibid.). However, developing countries were also subjected to pressure from their developed counterparts.

The Annex promotes liberalisation by a variety of means. It offers nearly comprehensive telecommunications sector coverage. It extends the principle of the free flow of information to both information content and communication infrastructure. It contains regulatory rules for trade in telecommunications, which stake out a right for foreign and national suppliers of telecommunications to be treated equally. Countries are required to ensure that foreign-service suppliers have equal access with their domestic counterparts to public networks, including the ability to own and operate independent telecom network infrastructure. The rules also entail detailed guidance on the free movement of information, including intra-corporate communications, database access, and publicly available information on charges, technical interfaces, standards, and registration requirements. It encourages technical cooperation and a drive towards global standards for international compatibility (WTO, 1997a).

A further three WTO accords have liberalised the global market in telecommunications. First, agreement was secured between 69 WTO countries to a wide-ranging liberalisation of trade in international telecommunications services, culminating in the 1998 GATS Fourth Protocol on Basic Telecommunications Services (WTO, 1998). The signatory countries, who represent over 93 per cent of world revenues in telecommunications services, agreed to liberalise their telecommunication networks, including all means of transmission but excluding radio and television broadcasting. The Protocol covered basic telecom services that were left out of previous agreements, such as telephone, telex, telegraph and packet and circuit switching, thereby extending the liberalisation agenda to areas not dealt with in the Uruguay Round. Second, a later agreement was reached to eliminate import duties on information technology products, known as the Ministerial Declaration on Trade in Information Technology Products (Information Technology Agreement). (WTO, 1996) This became enforceable in 2000, covering six main categories: computers, telecom equipment, semiconductors, semiconductor manufacturing equipment, software and scientific equipment. Third, the Agreement on the Liberalization of Financial Services provided for the opening up of the financial services sector in 102 countries, covering more than 95 per cent of global trade in banking, insurance, securities and financial information (WTO, 1997c). In spite of the agreements being signed, complications remained regarding implementation. Donald Abelson, of the Office of US Trade Representative acknowledged following the signing of the GATS Protocol that: 'We...have to be realistic about the timeline for implementation...After ten years, I am convinced, we will have a fully functioning institution for telecommunications, where disputes can be brought and adjudicated.' (AEI, 1997: 3-4)

The liberalisation of the telecommunications sector provoked animosity between GATT and the ITU over regulation issues. The ITU was originally founded upon the ideal of telecommunications as a universally accessible public utility (ITU, 2002a). It was therefore initially hostile to the neoliberal agenda of deregulation, supporting restrictions to the ownership and control of telecommunications instead. However, the push towards privatisation proved to be

overwhelming, and the ITU was forced to take a leading role in shaping a liberalised global communications regime. A particular source of controversy was the pressure on the ITU to drop its' traditional 'first come first served' policy with regard to the allocation of satellite and radio frequencies and re-allocate them to commercial broadcasters. It was argued by telecom corporations as well as by Northern governments that such re-allocation was necessary in an era of consistent technological innovation, where new services such as mobile telephony could not be effectively provided without additional use of the electromagnetic spectrum (Sung, 1992). It was also becoming evident that international standards for network compatibility would be required due to the ongoing increase in the number of operators as a result of privatisation and deregulation. Pressure began to build for the involvement of corporate actors in international regulation. Thus, the ITU constitution was amended at the 1998 Minneapolis conference to award greater rights and responsibilities to the ITU's private sector members. Companies were given a larger role in providing advice and making decisions on technical issues, to the extent that both public and private members were put 'on a equal footing' (Thussu, 2000: 92). Private sector members could participate in plans to 'improve the structure and functioning of the radiocommunication sector, the ITU's biggest and most expensive sector, which was labouring under an increasing regulatory burden.' (MacLean, 1999: 155) It could also contribute to reviews of international telecommunication regulations, with a view to 'adapting them to the liberalised international environment resulting from the WTO agreements.' (ibid.) In the area of 'technical recommendation', in which advice is provided and decisions made regarding technical issues, one ITU official conceded that the constitutional amendments 'effectively transfer the power to decide from government to the private sector.' (MacLean, 1999: 156) As a result of the amended constitution, the ITU now advises states to remove barriers to cross-ownership amongst broadcasters, cable operators and telecom companies. Combined with the recent WTO agreements referred to above, this has led to large-scale privatisation of telecommunications networks across the globe.

This has been coupled with extensive privatisation of satellite space (Herman, 1998). There has been incredible growth in the satellite industry over recent years, due to the high demand in telecommunication services as a result of technical progress and economic growth. Satellites are now a vital component of new media, providing an inexpensive and fast communication service that international business can rely on. However, although ostensibly an international co-operative, Intelsat's policy agenda has rather reflected its control by its largest Western donors, such as the US and the UK. This was revealed by Intelsat's recent privatisation, precipitated by increasing competition from regional and global telecommunications transnational corporations, which raises important questions about telecommunications access for the Southern countries. The privatised Intelsat is unlikely to continue subsidising low-density routes. Given their precarious economic situation, it would be most difficult for poorer countries to meet transponder expenses, let alone obtain other commercial satellite services.

The result of the recent developments mentioned above has been that the international telephony market grew from strength to strength in the late 1990s. For several consecutive years, carriers enjoyed double-digit annual volume growth, and revenues soared. Despite concurrent collapses of global capital markets, international voice traffic steadily grew by 21 per cent to 132.7 billion minutes in 2000. Annual call volume growth peaked at 25 per cent, and carrier revenues at $72 billion. However, this represented the market's zenith and since then expansion has come to an end. Call minute growth has slowed, and carriers have cut prices aggressively. However, since 2002, the market shows signs of stabilising, and price decreases are slowing (TeleGeography, 2004).

4.4. The Continuing Expansion of Global Media

The twin trends of convergence and neoliberalism in media technologies have had an enormous effect on the global media system in the last twenty years (McChesney, 2001). Although media systems still remain primarily national or local, global media corporations have continued to expand and exercise an ever-greater effect on indigenous systems. As Herman and McChesney put it: 'the dominant players treat the media markets as a single global market with local subdivisions.' (Herman and McChesney, 1997: 41)

The US has continued to exert its domineering hold on the global entertainment industry, with no serious export rivals in terms of television, film and music (The Nation, 2004). The growth in US exports has not been constant: for example, there has recently been a drop in music sales due to the rise in CD piracy (RIAA, 2003). Indeed, the value of the global pirate market is estimated to be $4.6 billion (IFPI, 2003). In addition, the hegemony of the US should not be over-stated. Some of the largest US media firms have significant foreign ownership, and a number of the world's greatest conglomerates originate from outside the US, such as Japanese Sony, Canadian Seagram, Dutch Philips, and the Australian News Corporation (Columbia Journalism Review, 2004). Nevertheless, no country can match the might or reach of the US entertainment industry (Williams, 2004).

The ten biggest media corporations in the world today are AOL Time-Warner, Disney, General Electric, News Corporation, Viacom, Vivendi, Sony, Bertelsmann, AT&T and Liberty Media, each of whom turn over more than one billion dollars worth of business a year (Shah, 2004). Robert McChesney refers to these companies as the 'first tier' of the media industry, which are followed by around 50 or so 'second tier' companies that operate on a national or regional level (McChesney, 2001). The continuing concentration of the media industry could restrict the meaningful diversity of expression that is necessary for a public sphere (Hoynes, 2002). Recent indications suggest that corporations will persist in attempting even larger mergers. For instance, Viacom attempted to buy out CBS in 1999, Comcast bid for Disney early in 2004, and AOL made the largest merger in media history with Time Warner in 2000. The deal represented $350 billion – which was more that 1, 000 times larger than the biggest deal of twenty years earlier (Bagdikian,

2000: xxi). Tom Rosenstiel of the Project for Excellence in Journalism warned that: 'what this merger invites is the possibility of a new era in American communication that sees the end of an independent press.' (BBC, 2000) These implications will be further considered below.

Recorded music is the most concentrated media industry, with only a handful of firms in charge of the global market: Polygram, AOL Time Warner, Sony, EMI, Bertelsmann and Vivendi-Universal. EMI remains the only company of these that concentrates on music, the others representing larger media empires (Burnett, 1996). The global film industry has similarly been captured by a small number of media giants: Disney, AOL Time Warner, Viacom, Vivendi-Universal, PolyGram, Sony, MGM and News Corporation (Derners, 2001: 10-11). Again, only MGM retains an exclusive interest in film, the rest with a diverse media portfolio. There are other important film industries outside of America – such as India's 'Bollywood' that exceeds US output, and is a major Asian supplier (Joshi, 2001). Apart from these few exceptions, these eight studios effectively own the commercial export market (all of which are part of Hollywood, even though not all are American-owned).

However, the changes in global media in the last twenty years are perhaps most apparent in the international rise of commercial television. The worldwide trend towards deregulation and privatisation has caused an explosion in global commercial broadcasting, since the commercialisation of national television systems has been considered a vital part of economic liberalisation. The 1990s have been a period of immense growth of commercial television at the expense of public broadcasting systems, which are facing a long-term threat to their survival across the world in the face of aggressive commercial competition. They are responding to this threat in differing ways, with the BBC's response perhaps being one of the most innovative. The BBC is attempting to pursue global commercial activities whilst sustaining their public service remit at home (BBC, 2003). In recent years they have capitalised on their well-known brand name by launching BBC World Service Television, the BBC website, and expanding BBC World Service on radio, including extending it to digital channels. The commercial branches of the corporation are seen as ensuring the future survival of the BBC by providing an important source of subsidy for public service programming, whilst retaining the prestige associated with the brand. How successful the BBC will prove in this venture is still too early to tell. However, it is the type of strategy that is only open to well-funded public service companies from the West – much of the rest of the world's public sector are facing a future of increasing marginalization, or future commercialisation.

Another major new trend in the global television industry is the rise of digital television. Satellites already provide digital television, cable companies have made use of digital converters, and there is an impending deadline for a switch-off of the analogue signal for terrestrial television in many countries (Marsden and Verhulst, 1999). Digital technology does not only provide better quality and lower production costs than analogue, but also a greater number of potential channels. However, since the collapse of ITV Digital, the future of digital terrestrial television in the UK

seems extremely unclear, and it is difficult to make predictions about possible future growth (Ofcom, 2004).

The emergence of satellite television has led to some changes amongst the global news agencies. The 'big four' of AP, UPI, Reuters and AFP still dominate the worldwide print market, and Reuters TV and Worldwide Television News remain the major global television news agencies (Alleyne and Wagner, 1993). Government-sponsored services such as Voice of America and the BBC World Service still provide global news on the radio in numerous countries, but are having to continually justify their funding in the more commercially minded neoliberal era (VoA, 2004; BBC, 2004a). However, satellite television has introduced regional and global television news channels, the best known of which is CNN International (Flournoy and Stewart, 1997). Satellite news services are increasingly becoming important providers of global journalism, as illustrated by CNN's much lauded coverage in the aftermath of September 11th, 2001. Another satellite channel that has grown into a significant presence since its inception in 1996 is the News Corporation's Fox News Channel, the chairman of which openly admits to directing its programming to the needs of advertisers and the prosperous audiences which such advertisers try to reach (Herman and McChesney, 1997: 49).

Despite the global nature of media it is important to note that there is a trend towards the regionalisation and localisation of media content to suit the cultural priorities of audiences. Robertson calls this phenomenon 'glocalization': a term that describes how Northern media adapt using new media to appeal to local languages, styles and cultural conventions (Robertson, 1992). Chevaldonne describes this process as a 'subcontracting of market niches to local companies better equipped to deal with audiences which possess special characteristics which create special expectations at the level of message: language, the place of music and dance, history, religion, and a certain way of coding the relations between the sexes, generations and social classes.' (Chevaldonne, 1987: 145) This global-local interaction can therefore be 'good for business'.

Global media moguls have such a potential degree of influence over media content and distribution that they can claim to have a sizeable role in influencing public opinion, and therefore possess an advantage in dealing with governments. As Chuck Lewis, the executive director of the US Center for Public Integrity observes: 'That kind of grip on commercial and political power is potentially dangerous for any democracy.' (Shah, 2004: 5). Notwithstanding the expression of local culture described above, powerful elites such as the media conglomerates are unlikely to be sufficiently open and flexible to fairly reflect the wide range of society's needs, values, opinions and ideas. News coverage may be particularly skewed, with distorting implications for public debate. For example, political bias may be apparent in reportage. This appeared to be evidenced the studies conducted by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR). For example, FAIR recently carried out a year-long analysis of CNN's media show, *Reliable Sources*. Their conclusions were as follows: 'Covering one year of weekly programs [December 1, 2001 to November 30, 2002] with 203 guests, the FAIR study found Reliable Sources' guestlist strongly favoured mainstream media insiders and right-leaning pundits. In addition, female critics were significantly underrepresented,

ethnic minority voices were almost non-existent and progressive voices were far outnumbered by their conservative counterparts.' (Shah, 2004: 13)

Further, media concentration can mean than companies can act together as an oligopoly or cartel. They have a common interest in avoiding public scrutiny of their actions and in marginalizing competing enterprises – even in marginalizing competing ideas. Miller considers the consequences of this trend for the US:

> Of all the [media] cartel's dangerous consequences for American society and culture, the worst is the corrosive influence on journalism. Under AOL Time Warner, GE, Viacom et al., the news is, with a few exceptions, yet another version of entertainment that the cartel also vends non-stop. This is also nothing new – consider the newsreels of yesteryear – but the gigantic scale and thoroughness of the corporate concentration has made a world of difference...the news divisions of the media cartel appear to work *against* the public interest – and *for* their parent companies. (Miller, 2002: 13)

Such distortion of public debate runs counter to the ideal of a public sphere representing an open realm for discussion, free from the influence of partisan economic forces. However, this pessimistic evaluation must be balanced by encouraging evidence that the continuing expansion of global media has dramatically expanded communicative capacity across state borders for millions of people – including those in the poorest countries of the world.

For example, Asia has surprisingly become the world's largest telecommunications market, with 36 per cent of the world's telecom subscribers. That compares with 35 per cent in Europe and 27 per cent in the Americas (ITU, 2003a). The region now leads the world in key telecom categories as measured by mobile phones per capita. Indeed, the rate of growth in such countries as China has been incredible – averaging 44 per cent in the last three years (ibid.). Countries such as China and India are not solely responsible for the growth in the region. For instance, South Korea is the most intensive internet-using population in the world, recording the highest average internet usage per month (ibid.).

It is apparent that structural influences that shaped the initial development of global media in the twentieth century continue to be of importance today. Communication technologies continue to be integral to capitalist growth. The media systems consolidated in the last twenty years reflect the pattern of the overall international political economy: namely monopolistic markets that are dominated by the North, especially the US. Corporate interests remain a powerful driving force behind the development of global media. The state has also played a significant role in trying to regulate these technologies, often through international cooperation. From the perspective of transnational public sphere theory, global media radically expands the channels of communication across state borders and so could potentially provide the infrastructure for the emergence of transnational public spheres. However, the intrusion of corporate and state interests on the development of these technologies is problematic. In Habermas's formulation, the public sphere

arena should ideally be independent from government and partisan economic forces. This is an ideal that has never historically been realised and so may not be realistically achievable – rather it serves as a useful benchmark for critique. Nevertheless, the predominance of neoliberal, profit-motivated, corporate interests behind the development of global media is disturbing.

Further, another requirement of the public sphere is that it should be open and accessible to the public. Yet new media can be characterised by huge inequalities in public access and participation. These themes will be further explored in the next section, where I examine the most iconic new media technology: the internet. I question whether the expansion of communicative capacity that the internet represents could provide a structural precondition for the emergence of transnational public spheres.

4.5. The Internet Revolution

The most symbolic technology of the 'information age' is the internet. It is unprecedented in its scale, scope and global rate of adoption. Also, more than any other new technology, the internet has excited speculation as to its revolutionary potential, due to the unprecedented opportunities that it offers for interactivity. As the *New York Times* observed: 'For very little money, and with a modicum of computer skills, virtually anyone can create his or her own Web site. Anyone with a modem is potentially a global pamphleteer.' (Markoff: 1995) Thus, the internet's potential as a component of emerging transnational public spheres is particularly exciting, and this invites careful analysis of its exponential growth. This section focuses on the internet, and examines its history and development, its main applications, and the emergence of 'filtering' technologies and censorship efforts that curtail free and open debate.

4.5.1. History and Development

Unlike the media we have examined so far, the history of the internet is only just beginning to be written. It is not my focus here to provide an up-to-date account of developments that will change very rapidly, but rather to provide a brief overview of the historical evolution of the internet that will highlight factors that will continue to be significant in future development.

The internet's origins lie with the US Department of Defense's Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (APRANET), established in 1969 as a communication network linking crucial defence and civilian branches of the US government in the event of a nuclear attack (Cerf, 1993). In 1983, continuing APRANET research was divided into civilian and military sections, with the internet being developed within the former. Eventually, ARPANET was decommissioned and replaced by the network of supercomputing centres (NSFNET) set up by the National Science Foundation. For a number of years, the internet was utilised mainly as an academic network between US universities and research bodies. However, NSFNET did also allow commercial use on a local and regional level. The profit that this provided effectively subsidised smaller academic institutions; subscription fees were lowered and so the service was made more affordable. The

exclusion of long-distance commercial traffic also stimulated the growth of competitive private networks.

By the late 1980s, the National Science Foundation decided to privatise key parts of the network and had awarded a contract to Merit Network Inc., in partnership with IBM and MCI Communications Corp., to manage and modernise the service. Contracts were also awarded to Network Solutions (to assign internet addresses), AT&T (to maintain internet directory and database services) and General Atomics (to maintain the provision of internet services to users). NSFNET was closed down in 1995, since most internet traffic had passed to the networks of commercial providers. This has had a significant effect on the nature of the networks that form the internet. In most developed countries, the digital economy now growing at roughly double the rate of the overall economy (Leiner et al, 2003).

Most people and small businesses access the internet by connecting to the host computer of an internet service provider (ISP) where they hold an account. Such connections can be made via a telephone line or other cable facilities – or increasingly nowadays, through wireless satellite and microwave transmissions. Public access is also provided at internet cafes, libraries, airport lounges, public telephone stations and so on.

Large and medium-sized organisations often have direct access to the internet. In the mid-1990s, such firms began to run Transmission Control Protocols/Internet Protocols (TCP/IP) on their intra-organisational communication networks. These private networks are termed 'intranets'. They are protected from outside interference by 'firewalls', which allow for the exchange of information from the wider internet via 'gateways'. A group of organisations can also share access to their TCP/IP protocols by forming an 'extranet', which enables organisations to exchange information with one another. Within a few years, the growth of intranets and extranets was fast outstripping that of the wider internet network (Zona Research, 2000). Many ISPs have extended their services by providing intranets and extranets: from massive conglomerates such as Microsoft Network, America On-Line and CompuServe, to smaller operations with only a few thousand subscribers, who lease line capacity from the larger companies that own the long-haul network facilities.

A variety of applications have been developed for use online. Below, rather than attempt to provide an exhaustive list, I summarise the main applications and developments.

4.5.2. Email and Newsgroups

The first applications to become available on ARPANET were Telnet (to access remote computers), FTP (to file-share) and TALK (to 'converse' in 'real-time' through the network), which are still used in modified form today. The development of electronic mail, or 'email', enabled users to send each other messages and to attach files. This can be done either between two users, or one user and several others. Therefore, email can be used for private discussion groups where a number of users have subscribed to a list. Public discussion groups were first developed through newsgroups made available through USENET. The groups are organised into different

forums and around a number of subject area. Users can debate a number of topics by posting their contributions and inviting responses from others.

Real-time interaction has also been enabled in a number of ways. For example, multi-user dungeons (MUDs) allow users to move around text-based virtual environments and talk to other users. Internet relay chat (IRC) enables participants to group together in 'channels' and converse by typing 'instant' messages to other users. Participants can create their own threads of debate, or join those started by others. Conversation through IRC can be communal or restricted to private messaging. Participants can become 'channel moderators', which enables them to exercise choice over the channel options: for instance, the topic of debate, how many participants can join the conversation, the removal of participants from conversation or the invitation of new participants to join in. IRC applications also allow users to transfer data files to one another.

The applications outlined above once required considerable technical expertise to master. However, in the 1990s, a range of 'user-friendly' interfaces were developed that made the technology a lot more accessible. Internet navigation became a matter of clicking on graphic icons rather than typing in complicated demands. Innovations such as Cuseeme and Internet Phone also allowed users to see and hear each other through audio and visual technology. These developments required continuing improvements in the speed of network connections and computers.

4.5.3. World Wide Web (WWW)

The internet began to make a wider impact when the World Wide Web (WWW) was created in 1989, which began as a network of servers using a set of common interface protocols. Any user applying these protocols could set up a 'homepage', with its own unique 'universal resource locator' (URL). Information displayed on a webpage is viewed by means of an interface known as a browser. The sources of information – whether text, audio or video files – were enabled for standardised transfer via hypertext transfer protocol (http), whilst hypertext mark-up language (html) could enable links from one document to another anywhere else on the web. This device allows users to access an incredible array of information and explore the web by linking from one source to another, deciding for themselves which information they wanted to access and which they want to skip. The addresses of webpages can be found using one of the numerous 'search engines' available, which provide access to a database.

Many webpages seek to deepen the participation of 'visitors' to their site by providing interactive opportunities. It is commonplace for instance to have a 'guestbook' facility on the site where users can offer feedback, or to provide an email address for the moderator of the webpage. Webpages are protected so that unauthorised visitors cannot alter them. It is also possible to design pages that limit access to users that have passwords.

4.5.4. Ongoing Developments

Many new internet applications now combine several applications into one facility. The most popular example of this is multi-functional WWW browsers that allow users to send email, to

use IRC, to transfer files and so on. Further, various kinds of media are now being integrated. There has been a huge proliferation of radio stations operating online, and television channels are also distributing programming through the web. Some systems also allow viewers to access the web and read and write email through their television set without the use of a computer (Slevin, 2000: 39). Internet and intranet providers have also promoted the use of 'push technologies', whereby browsers can supply buttons that enable users to access information channels, which can be viewed similar to conventional television channels. A further development of the internet involves the extension of facilities that allow sharing of applications and collaboration on work tasks. For example, two or more users can cooperate in a word-processing programme and share in the production of the document. Successful applications such as ICQ enable users to reveal and synchronize their online presence so that other users know when they are available. In a variety of ways, applications have been increasingly customised and made more 'user-friendly'.

Reviewing the history of global media reveals the startling success of the internet compared with other communication technologies. It took almost 40 years for radio to reach an audience of 50 million, and 15 years for television to do the same – however, the WWW achieved this goal in just over three years from its inception (Naughton, 1999). The worldwide internet population is estimated at 789 million users (see appendix, p.185). By 2005, the internet will be a truly global medium reaching an estimated 1 billion users, with currently 2.5 billion Web pages, and an extra 7.5 million new ones added every day (UNDP, 2001: 35-36).

In recent years, Internet Protocol (IP) traffic has been growing at around 1, 000 per cent a year, which compares to a rise of just 10 per cent a year in traffic on the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN). If the demand for bandwidth can be met by new technologies, then IP traffic should easily surpass PSTN traffic, with much of the growth being accounted for through 'e-commerce' (i.e. trade that occurs over the internet). In fact, business-to-business e-commerce transactions range from $1.2 to $10 trillion by 2003 (UNDP, 2001: 36).

As happened with the computer networks themselves, the implementation and further development of internet applications has become dominated by the interests of big business. There has been a strong and prolonged struggle for this market between Microsoft and Netscape Corp., each attempting to increase its market share and strengthen its position as a supplier of internet software. Microsoft have comfortably won this battle, enjoying 96 per cent of the market share for worldwide usage of web browser software, compared to Netscape's 3.4 per cent (Johnson, 2002). Research regarding the patterns of ownership in the communication industry is patchy, since it is in constant flux. Global networks and the structure of transnational information and communication corporations is highly complex, and as Slevin observes, 'it is unlikely that our understanding of these developments will be ever more than partial.' (Slevin, 2000: 39)

However, what is apparent is that smaller companies are becoming increasingly rare, as many small and medium-sized ISPs are being bought up by large corporations seeking to extend their presence in the internet market. An example is WorldCom, whose acquisitions in recent years

has meant that it carries more than half of all internet backbone traffic, controls more than half of all direct connections to the internet, and leases line-capacity to two-thirds of all ISPs (Slevin, 2000: 34). Concentration of ownership of internet resources affords such companies with huge strategic power. WorldCom and other large corporations have the potential power to give some users unfair advantage over others, by charging ISPs prohibitive fares for leasing lines, excluding certain users and interfering with content and the speed with which information is transmitted over sections of the network. This has worrying implications in terms of market distortion and individual ability to communicate.

From the perspective of public sphere theory, the indications of increased influence of corporations on the internet give cause for concern in two main respects. First, if network application companies build up a monopoly, they could be in a position to demand license fees for the use of their products. This could further limit those able to access the internet on the basis of income (Gimmler, 2001: 34). Second, those that design the applications and control the interfaces may be able to exercise considerable influence over the content of the information communicated over the web. This could represent disturbing corporate interference in the information accessed by users and their ability to communicate with others. For example, Microsoft's web browser has already been installed on new computers, which gives it an advantage in competing for users. Microsoft also has produced programmes that automatically save a number of websites in the 'favourites' section. Such developments eventually prompted the United States government to take legal action against Microsoft as an illegal monopoly. Following four years of legal battle, Judge Thomas Jackson ruled in 1999 that Microsoft had used its monopoly power with Windows to 'harm consumers, computer makers and other companies.' (Jamieson, 2002) It was proposed that the company should be split in half, but the appeals court eventually overturned the ruling, and the government agreed to a settlement (Anti-Trust Division, 2002). Controversy about Microsoft's monopoly position continues. The EU Competition Commissioner recently found the company guilty of abusing its market dominance, and an inquiry is underway in Boston investigating whether Microsoft violated the anti-trust settlement by retaliating against a computer maker for promoting the rival operating system Linux (BBC, 2004b).

There are more insidious examples of interfaces interfering with content. Some users complain of being targeted by continuous advertising (Norr, 2002). Others find that certain words have been programmed by the application as taboo, and are replaced automatically with alternative signs, such as '#'. This often occurs where information has been 'filtered', or censored completely, in order to block access to certain information. Information may be filtered or censored for a number of reasons. Commercial providers can sometimes exercise controls to limit access to sites containing 'adult material', and governments can sometimes use controls to prevent open political debate. Instances such as these restrict the potential of the internet to act as part of the communicative infrastructure of emergent transnational public spheres. I now turn to a fuller examination of filtering and censoring technologies.

4.5.5. Filtering

Filtering technologies have been developed for a variety of reasons. Many of these systems have been promoted as a means of preventing children from accessing unsuitable material (e.g. NetNanny.com, Cyberpatrol.com, Cybersitter.com). Such systems are often termed 'safe portals' – which conveys the notion of a gateway that limits access to 'harmful' websites that may contain material damaging to youngsters. However, there are a variety of other uses for software-filtering programmes – for example, by employers to control websites accessed by employees (BBC, 2002).

The invention of the Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS) was highly significant in the development of rating and filtering technologies. It enabled information to be filtered on the basis of electronic labels that can be assigned to websites. Paul Resnick, the architect of PICS, explains that 'labels can convey characteristics that require human judgement – whether the webpage is funny or offensive – as well as information not readily apparent from the words and graphics, such as the website's policies about the use or resale of personal data.' (Resnick, 1997: 106-7) The programme allows the use of such labels to set and install filtering criteria.

One of the most popular rating systems has been developed by the Recreational Software Advisory Council and is called ICRA (formerly RSACi). The Council describes its aim was 'to provide a simple, yet effective rating system for websites which both protected children and protected the rights of free speech of everyone who publishes on the World Wide Web.' (ICRA, 2004) Despite the Council claiming to be independent, it received support from a number of companies including CompuServe PointCast, Dell and Disney Online. Most importantly, the system was integrated into Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser. Users can set a 'content advisor' that regulates access to offensive material: for example, foul language and sexual/violent content.

Filtering systems such as RSACi have attracted controversy for a number of reasons (Sobel, 1999). First, if certain browsers such as Microsoft's already contain filtering systems, the labelling criteria of this system is privileged, despite the user being able to download alternatives. Second, although organisations such as the Council claim to be 'independent', they are subject to limited accountability and transparency. A company that produces a highly popular labelling system will have the potential to wield a lot of power. In the absence of an effective system of supervisory regulation, this power could be used to assign negative labels to websites from its political opponents or commercial competitors.

Third, anyone can create a PICS label that describes a website or even another provider's server. This could mean that user/s find their access to a site or server is blocked due to a decision that does not have to be publicly justified – moreover, it could be provoked by malice. Fourth, the RSACi's system has a facility that allows all non-RSAC rated websites to be blocked. According to RSAC (now ICRA), this could 'be very helpful given the nature of the web and how quickly new sites are being set up every day. Unchecking this box is your best bet for blocking unwanted content from your children!' (ICRA, 2004) However, this means that websites would be blocked for no better reason than they were not labelled. Indeed, if the user's own personal website was not RSAC rated, it also would not be able to be accessed!

Fifth, internet service providers, employers or governments could have the ability to install 'firewalls' that prevent providers from accessing certain sites. Users may subscribe to ISPs that filter out information without being fully aware of this facility or of its ramifications. Subscribing to a provider usually requires a customer to signal online asset to a long contract of provisos in small type that does not tend to be easily understandable by the average layperson. Governments could even compel providers to implement a rating system.

Finally, filtering systems can have inaccurate effects that may be undesirable (Electronic Privacy Information Center, 1997). Filtering can be an inexact science. Gratuitous material could be grouped together with information that could provide an important contribution to public debate. For example, a system that filters out sexual content with the intent of restricting access to salacious pornographic material may also block homosexual sites that discuss sexual issues in a responsible manner (or indeed, that contain no references to sex at all). A system that filters out content on sexual violence may block sites that include reports of war crimes. Weinberg expands further on this problem:

> [RSACi] classifies sexually explicit speech without regard to its educational value or crass commercialism...A typical home user, running Microsoft Internet Explorer set to filter using RSACi tags, will have a browser configured to accept duly rated mass-market speech from large entertainment corporations, but to block out a substantial amount of quirky, vibrant individual speech from unrated (but child-suitable) sites. This prospect is disturbing (Weinburg, 1997: 455).

All these concerns have led to calls by such organisations as Cyber-Rights and Cyber-Liberties for careful monitoring, greater accountability and transparency of the practices of companies that programme labelling and rating systems (Cyber-Rights and Cyber-Liberties, 2004) A Global Internet Liberty Campaign (GILC) has recently been set up in cooperation with these actors and a variety of others in order to scrutinize approaches to internet content control (GILC, 2004). Human Rights Watch is a leading participant in this campaign and produces regular reports monitoring freedom of expression on the internet (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

In a recent report, Human Rights Watch highlighted government actions that have caused international concern. Examples include state-controlled or state-influenced ISPs in Tunisia, Iran and Bahrain that filter websites containing political or human rights criticism of their governments (ibid.). This leads to another major area of concern over the development of the internet: the rise of government censorship.

4.5.6. Censorship

Censorship of media is hardly new. Over a hundred years ago, for example, Turkish customs officials attempted to keep typewriters out of the country, fearing that they could be used for producing pamphlets of dissent. Even now, the North Korean government directs the police to 'tighten controls over the use of typewriters and photocopiers.' (Larkin, 2002) Jamming of Western

radio broadcasts was commonplace in the Soviet bloc during the Cold War. However, the unprecedented speed of the internet to disseminate information has presented censorious governments with an exceptional challenge. Internet pioneer John Gilmore describes it thus: 'The internet treats censorship as system damage and routes round it.' (Corn-Revere, 2002: 13) Despite the adaptability of the medium, many lawmakers around the world have attempted to restrict certain types of expression on the internet.

There was little censorship of the internet before the 1990s, when the network was largely used only by academics. However, as its use began to expand to the general public, governments took a greater interest in controlling the content of information. Sometimes this took the form of direct censorship, often in regard to child pornography. An example of such censorship occurred in 1996, when the police instructed all internet server providers in the UK to ban over a hundred newsgroups that were believed to contain pornography (Uhlig, 1996). This measure introduced a popular and long-running police campaign to carry out close surveillance on a number of similar websites, not only for pornographic materials but also for evidence that abusers may be 'grooming' children online (BBC, 2003). Another incident of censorship occurred in 1997, when German federal prosecutors ordered an academic network that served over 400 universities to block all 6, 000 web pages provided by the server XS4ALL, since it provided access to the left-wing magazine, *Radikal*. A number of commercial organisations with websites on the server terminated their contracts with XS4ALL because of the restriction of access to their German customers. However, the censorship decision was challenged internationally, since *Radikal* was available at a number of other sites that were not under German jurisdiction (Vesely, 1997).

Sometimes governments have attempted to censor the internet for religious reasons. For example, the Vatican recently called for a crackdown on the internet's 'radical libertarianism', and the Italian police force responded in kind by recently shutting down five web sites that contained blasphemous material about the Catholicism and the Madonna (Thierer, 2002: 2). Indeed, the Italian constitution contains broad language that forbids 'publications, performances and all other exhibits offensive to public morality.' (ibid.) A recent court decision has outlined that these standards can be applied globally – not just in Italy. A tribunal held that it has the power to shut down foreign websites to the extent that they can be viewed in Italy. The court's judgement may have been influenced since one of the sites in question contained 'extremely negative defamatory opinions about the work of the Italian judicial authorities.' (ibid.)

Most often government repression is politically motivated. The most repressive examples are to be found in non-democratic states (O'Loughlin, 2001). For example, Amnesty International has recently revealed details of a campaign by the Chinese government to suppress online dissent, claiming that 54 people have been arrested from December 2003 to February 2004 for disseminating their beliefs through the internet – an increase of 60 per cent on the previous year. Their alleged crimes include organising online political petitions, expressing support for the outlawed Falun Gong movement, and for spreading 'rumours' about Aids and Sars. It was reported that the dissidents face maximum prison sentences of 12 years, that they were subjected to torture,

and that four died in detention (Amnesty International, 2004). These arrests reflect the Chinese government's concern with the rapid growth in internet use; indeed, the number of surfers rose by 32 per cent in 2003 to 78 million (Watts, 2004). There has been a 30, 000 strong 'internet police' set up to monitor chatrooms and websites, and it is widely assumed that technologies have been developed to block access to websites such as the BBC. In addition, search engines have been filtered so that no results are returned for searches such as 'Falun Gong' (Kalathil and Boas, 2003: 27; Kalathil and Boas, 2001; Zittrain and Edelman, 2003a). Internet cafes and service providers are also under increasing pressure to assist in the government's actions. The police have instructed Netbar, an internet cafe with more than 100 computers in central Beijing, to keep a record of the names and identification numbers of every user, as well as a record of every site visited in the last 60 days. The cafe (owned by a subsidiary of Yahoo!) has complied with the censorship to the extent of installing site-blocking software (Watts, 2004). Reporters Without Borders have staged an international campaign to highlight the issue, appealing to the chief executives of 14 multinationals to put pressure on the government to lift internet censorship and free jailed internet dissidents (Reporters Without Borders, 2004).

Elsewhere in Asia, the Singapore Broadcasting Authority (SBA) maintains strict regulation over the country's internet users. It regulates access to content on the internet by licensing both domestic websites and ISPs. Service providers must install 'proxy servers' that filter out content deemed by the government to be objectionable: such as that perceived to undermine public security, national defence and public morals. In July 2001, the Singapore government imposed new restrictions on political content, which led at least one organisation, Sintercom, to shut down its online activities (Reuters, 2001).

Censorship policies are pursued with particular vigour in Arabic countries. For example, Saudi Arabia bans publishing and accessing certain types of material including 'anything contrary to the state or the system, news damaging to the Saudi Arabian armed forces, anything damaging to the dignity of the heads of states, any false information ascribed to state officials, subversive ideas and slanderous or libellous material.' (Zittrain and Edelman, 2003b) All thirty of the country's ISPs are linked to a ground-floor room at the Riyadh internet entry portal, where all of the country's web activity is stored in massive cache files and screened for material deemed to be offensive before it is released to individual users. The central servers are configured to block access to certain sites that might violate 'the social, cultural, political, media, economic and religious values of the Kingdom.' (Kalathil and Boas, 2003: 113) Such sites banned include the UK-based Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia.

Another Arabic example is Syria, which bans a variety of material on the internet, such as statements that might endanger 'national unity'. This includes pro-Israeli speech. Syrian citizens can even be sent to jail for sending email to people abroad without correct government authorisation. There is only one internet server in the country, which is run by the government under heavy surveillance (Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, 2004).

Censorship policies are also imposed in Africa. One of the most notorious examples is Zimbabwe, where the Mugabe government is currently attempting tighten controls on the internet. The web was one of the few communication channels left open to government dissenters after independent publishers had been shut down and control maintained over radio and television broadcasts. Zimbabwe has a well developed internet infrastructure compared to much of the rest of Africa, with 12 large-scale ISPs and an estimated 100, 000 users. Following the ongoing dissemination of several online newsletters critical of President Mugabe, the government ordered ISPs to sign a contract in order to maintain their access to phone lines, stating that 'the use of the network for anti-national activities will be regarded as an offence punishable under Zimbabwe law.' (Meldrum, 2004) The contract requires ISPs to turn over the details of subscribers sending such messages to the police. The Zimbabwe Internet Service Providers Association has protested at the unfeasibility of the policy: 'The volume of our traffic makes that impossible. And how would we be able to judge what the government finds objectionable? It would make us the internet police instead of the internet providers.' (ibid.)

In contrast, the US has an exemplary record in protecting free online expression. Between 1996 and the present, the US courts were presented with a number of significant cases involving attempts to restrict information on the internet, which placed a responsibility on judges to assess the importance of the internet to the American constitutional guarantee of free expression. The consensus on these cases thus far appears to be that expression on the internet should be afforded the highest level of protection. The Supreme Court found that the information on the internet is as 'diverse as human thought'.[2] Judge Stuart Dalzell of the US District Court of Pennsylvania decribed the internet as 'the most participatory form of mass speech yet delivered.'[3] Another district court judge concluded that 'the internet represents a brave new world of free speech.'[4] The Supreme Court has consistently attempted to defend the 'unique character of these new electronic media'[5], and has pointed out that geography is 'a virtually meaningless construct on the internet.'[6] However, other countries that do not have such a strong tradition of free speech have seen a range of judicial and political responses to the internet, sometimes involving attempts to regulate it in a similar way to traditional media. Due to the global nature of the internet, this international legal conflict can have ramifications for freedom of speech in a number of countries, even the US.

The most noteworthy example of such legal conflict occurred when a French court ruled in 2000 that the Yahoo! website violated French law by hosting an auction for Nazi artefacts. The site was US-based, but could be accessed in France, which was the basis for the case brought by La Ligue contre le Racisme et l'Antisemitisme (LICRA) and L'Union des Etudiants Juifs de France (UEJF). They argued that presenting Nazi memorabilia for sale to French citizens violated Article R645-1 of the French Criminal Code, which prohibits the display of any symbol associated with an

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[2] *Reno v. ACLU* 521 US 844 (1997) at 851, 852 (quoting 929 F. Supp. at 842).
[3] *Ibid.* at 883.
[4] *Blumenthal v. Drudge*, 992 F. Supp. 44, 48 n. 7 (D. D. C. 1998) (citation omitted)
[5] *ACLU v. Reno*, 31 F. Supp. 2d 473, 476, (E. D. Pa. 1999) at 168.
[6] *American Libraries Association v. Pataki*, 969 F. Supp. 160 (S. D. N. Y. 1997) at 169.

organisation deemed to be criminal. The court found in favour of the plaintiffs, declaring that the mere availability of such information as 'a connecting link with France, which renders our jurisdiction perfectly competent to rule in this manner.' (Corn-Revere, 2002: 4) Yahoo! was directed to reengineer its US content servers to recognise French IP addresses and to block outlawed material to users with these addresses. It was also ordered that users with ambiguous IP addresses should be required to declare their nationality when using the Yahoo! site to search for such material. Yahoo! was given three months to carry out these changes, and was threatened with a penalty of 100, 000 francs for each day of non-compliance (Henley, 2000). The French case was widely considered to be highly significant because it points to the possibility that in future internet users may be required to declare their nationality, and so their access to certain material would be circumscribed accordingly, even when the server is located outside the state where the law would be applied. The French decision also represented an attempt of a state to apply its law extraterritorially, which would establish a legal framework whereby all websites on the internet potentially are subjected to the laws of all states, even if this requirement conflicts with domestic law (for example, a constitutional guarantee of free speech).

Due to the potential conflict with the First Amendment, the US District Court for the Northern District of California held that the Yahoo! order could not be enforced in the US (Lawson, 2001). Judge Fogel rejected the French court's finding that filtering software could be used. However, the French parties appealed the decision on the basis that Judge Fogel's decision would 'give United States Courts worldwide jurisdiction over any non-forum conduct that has the potential of offending local sensibilities.' (Corn-Revere, 2002: 11) Therefore, the tensions between the global nature of the internet and state laws limiting freedom of expression are still to be fully resolved.

In terms of transnational public spheres, this case is significant in that it illustrates ongoing attempts to regulate cross-border expression on the internet, which may have negative implications for public dialogue. It could be argued that such regulation would not affect progressive and inclusive critical deliberation, since the material affected by the ruling was of a reactionary and racist nature. However, the ruling could establish a precedent for censorship that could have unforeseen consequences. For example, a filtered site that blocked out references to Nazism could limit informed debate about the causes and consequences of the Second World War, or the implications of the current rise of the right-wing parties across Europe. It raises many questions concerning international law, internet law and civil liberties. For instance, McGuire speculates that a country such as Saudi Arabia could exploit the emerging legal framework, by objecting to any site showing women with their head uncovered (McGuire, 2000).

This issue has further progressed following the Council of Europe's (COE) Convention on Cybercrime 2001, with an additional protocol on hate-speech being signed by 12 COE member states in 2003. The 2001 treaty, also signed by the US, aims to pursue a common criminal policy against cybercrime, such as defamation and child pornography (COE, 2001). The protocol, to which the US did not sign up, aims to 'eliminate racist websites from the internet and define and

criminalize hate-speech on computer networks.' (Ramasastry, 2003: 2; COE, 2002) The principle established in the Yahoo! case may be put to the test again if the signatory states attempt to apply the protocol extraterritorially to sites based in the US that are accessible in Europe. Indeed, the protocol itself expressly makes cross-border communications of racist or xenophobic material by foreign websites illegal (Ramasastry, 2003: 5)

Legal uncertainty about net censorship may have the effect of discouraging users to freely express their views. For example, Tom Krwawecz of Blue Gravity Communications, who was ordered by Italian regulators to withdraw from hosting 'blasphemous' sites, protested: 'How are we to know what the laws of another country might be?' (Thierer, 2002: 2) Likewise, David Farber, former chief technologist at the Federal Communications Commission and the moderator of a popular listserv on technology policy warns: 'if this happens too much, and I start getting letters from overseas, it's going to water down my willingness to do things and say things.' (ibid.)

However, the internet's unique structure means that there is a latent potential to evade censorship (or at least to complicate efforts at censorship). It has proved difficult for governments to exercise control over decentralised global information flows. When sites have been banned, users can simply disperse the information to other sites. For example, when Canadian universities banned a site that published details of a legal trial that the judge had deemed unfit for public consumption, users diverted the information to an alternative site (Shade, 1996).

Internet censorship issues will continue to be contested between governments, courts and sections of civil society worldwide for many years to come. It is difficult to generalise about the constantly evolving global situation regarding internet censorship. In terms of a public sphere perspective, this analysis has presented a mixed picture. The internet can potentially provide an accessible forum for public dialogue, and in some countries such as the US, freedom of speech online has been strongly protected. However, there are many instances elsewhere of censorship and repression that have significantly curtailed the potential for freedom of expression.

4.6. Disparities and Inequalities in the Information Age

An important requirement of a public sphere is that it is open and accessible. Yet perhaps one of the most distinctive features of the 'information age' is the grave extent of global disparities and inequalities in ownership and access to new media. These disparities can be interpreted in terms of gender, race, social class, and education, amongst other factors. They reveal the severe limits to the so-called 'information revolution', and pose the question as to whether new media could potentially consolidate already existing inequalities. Indeed, growing concern has led to the UN setting a Millennium Declaration to increase access to new media worldwide. The Declaration acknowledges that communication technologies are an important tool to achieve its overall goal of poverty reduction and global development (UNDP, 2003).

Before we begin to consider the global diffusion of new media, it is important to remind ourselves of the most basic facilities that are missing in the lives of many people. Electricity, for instance, has not reached some 2 billion people – or a third of the world's population. In 1998, average electricity consumption in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa was less than one-tenth of that in OECD countries (World Economic Forum, 2003: 87). Utopian dreams about universal communication access certainly pales in the light of such salutary statistics. Recent research suggests that rural availability of radios in Africa is relatively high compared in other media – and these are usually battery-operated. New media tend to be dependent on the availability of electricity or recharging facilities, and the low ownership of these technologies suggests that the percentage of households with electricity is a key indicator in measuring the potential for new media access in developing countries (ITU, 2003b: 8-9).

However, even the oldest of communication technologies has not diffused as evenly as one might expect. Although the telephone has been around for over a hundred years, access to this technology remains out of reach to millions (see figure 1, p. 185). Indeed, more than half the world's population have never even used a telephone (Hamelink, 1998: 71). In OECD countries there is more than one mainland connection for every two people; however, in developing countries the figure is 1 in 15 – and 1 in 200 for the least developed countries. Nevertheless, there have been slight improvements in global telephone access in recent years, and the 1990s saw a mainline density increase from 22 to 69 per 1, 000 people in developing countries by the end of the decade (UNDP, 2001: 42). Mobile telephony has also enabled infrastructure constraints to be overcome, and is beginning to seriously challenge the dominance of mainlines. Africa has experienced the highest growth rate of mobile subscribers in the world since the mid-1990s – the technology proving particularly popular in a region characterised by poor mainline infrastructure (see figure 2, p. 185). However, the technology gap has also been widened by mobile phones, since they are more readily diffused in developed countries than elsewhere (see figure 3, p. 186).

The information divide between North-South exists for older communication technologies. Newspaper circulation stands at 286 per 1, 000 people in the North, but only 44 per 1, 000 people in the South. Newsprint consumption per ton is estimated at 21.2 per Northern person, and a paltry 1.8 per person in the South. Consumption density of radios per 1, 000 inhabitants is a massive 1, 045 in the North, yet 198 in the South. Likewise, 544 people per 1, 000 own TV sets in the North, and the South is far behind with a total of 153 per 1, 000 (Thussu, 2000: 248). Similar patterns of disparity exist for access to new media as well, particularly the internet. This is commonly termed the 'digital divide'. In this section, I attempt to define the 'digital divide', and explore the characteristics of the global and intra-state digital divide.

4.6.1. The Digital Divide

There has been recent interest in the so-called 'digital divide', following the rise of the internet – indeed, it has become 'one of the most discussed social phenomena of our era' (Warschauer, 2001: 1). The term has been used with reference to a variety of different phenomena

(Gunkel, 2003: 502-504). However, the popular definition of the term follows that provided by the 'Falling Through the Net' series of reports provided by the US Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). Here, the 'digital divide' has been defined as 'the divide between those with access to new technologies and those without.' (NTIA, 1999: xiii) The NTIA outlines the significance of the digital divide to American citizens thus: 'To be connected today increasingly means to have access to telephones, computers, *and* the internet. While these items may not be necessary for survival, arguably in today's emerging digital economy they are necessary for success.' (NTIA, 1999: 77) The NTIA reports focuses on the US internal digital divide, but the concept has also been used to describe inequalities of access within other countries and also at the international level (see figure 3, p. 186). For example, the OECD uses the term 'digital divide' in its analyses of telecommunications structure in OECD and non-OECD countries. However, it expands the definition beyond the NTIA version to include issues of implementation and use for effective development. Thus, according to the OECD, 'the term "digital divide" refers to the gap between individuals, households, businesses and geographic areas at different socio-economic levels with regard to both their opportunities to access information and communications technologies and to their use of the Internet for a wide variety of activities.' (OECD, 2000: 5) This wider approach is more appropriate, since technology access is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for full inclusion. What use, for example, is access to the internet if one does not have the education or the technical expertise to operate it? Unequal *competence* can be as problematic as unequal access (Gandy, 1988).

Nevertheless, it is important to be careful about making simplistic generalisations about literacy and competence, in terms of a binary divide between those who are 'capable' in an information environment and those who are not. A number of scholars have argued that the binary form 'literate/non-literate' is an exaggeration and even a false dichotomy. Studies of literacy have revealed that there is not one, but many different kinds of literacy, and that the meaning and value of literacy varies according to social circumstances. Therefore, competence in this regard is best understood as existing on a continuum (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000; Gee, 1996). Warshauer explains that there is considerable variability in the information that one possesses, and the ways in which this can be accessed and used:

> Compare, for example, a professor at UCLA with a high-speed 'internet II' connection in her office, a student in Seoul who uses a cyber-café, and a rural activist in Indonesia who has no computer or phone line but whose colleagues in her NGO download information for her. The notion of a binary divide is thus inaccurate and can be patronizing, as it fails to value the social resources that these diverse groups bring to the table (Warschauer, 2001: 1)

Likewise, statistics on disparities in access to media in the developing world may not take into consideration the widespread sharing of resources: for example, in Africa, ten people may read the same newspaper or share an internet account, and a whole village may share a single telephone

line or television set (World Economic Forum, 2003: 86). Therefore, although the 'digital divide' is a useful term with which to refer to the global disparities of access to new media, an important caveat to make is that there are significant variations in access, competence and use of the technology of which it is useful to be aware. This approach can be coupled with a sensitive appreciation of different forms of literacy to conceptualise the 'digital divide' as a 'social stratification' based on varying degrees of access and use, rather than a simplistic binary definition (ibid.). This will be further illustrated in chapter six, where I examine instances of effective transnational networking that incorporate peoples of differing literacy competencies and means of technological access, such as the alliance between the indigenous peoples of the Zapatista rebellion and Northern anti-globalisation protestors (see section 6.6., p. 156).

The digital divide has become a subject that has become increasingly high on the global political agenda, as the following quote illustrates. It is taken from the G8 Charter on the Global Information Society signed in Okinawa in July 2000:

> Our vision of an information society is one that better enables people to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations. To this end we must ensure that [information and communications technologies] serves the mutually supportive goals of creating sustainable economic growth, enhancing the public welfare and fostering social cohesion, and work to fully realise its potential to strengthen democracy, including transparency and accountability in governance, promoting human rights, enhancing cultural diversity and to foster international peace and stability (G8: 2000).

Despite the seeming consensus at the international level that internet access is desirable and should be promoted, there has been little positive action taken to reduce the startling disparities between the privileged and the marginalized. There are some encouraging steps, such as in the work of organisations such as the G8 'dot.force', the UN ICT Task Force, the World's Bank Global Development Gateway, the non-profit sector, and governments adopting digital divide policies. Also important is the adoption of 'social inclusion' policies by the private sector[7], as well as the emergence of organisations such as Digital Partners, Technology Empowerment Network (Technology Empowerment Network, 2003), Digital Nations, and the Stockholm and Rome Challenges (Stockholm Challenge, 2004; GJC, 2004). There is also evidence of community and grassroots initiatives to improve access (Hunt, 2001; Molina, 2003: 145-147), as well as campaigns led by concerned academics (e.g. e-inclusionsite, 2004). However, these efforts have made small changes, and the huge challenge of reducing the digital divide will require a more concentrated and coordinated effort on behalf of all such actors, with the committed support of national governments.

[7] For instance, ICL states: 'as a leading IT services company, we aim to make a significant contribution to "social inclusion" in today's Information Society.' (http://www.icl.com/about/community/index.htm). Many other corporations make similar pledges. See for instance http://www.digitaldivide.org./corps.html for social responsibility declarations and policies from over 50 corporations.

I now turn to examine the characteristics of the digital divide, in order to explore the scale of this challenge. It is possible to separate analysis of the digital divide into two categories: the *global digital divide* (the disparity that exists between states, particularly between North and South) and the *intra-state digital divide* (internal state disparities).

4.6.2. Global Digital Divide

There is a deep global digital divide (see figure 3, p. 186). Although almost every country in the world has a direct connection to the internet, there are only an estimated 789 million people online globally, which represents around 12 per cent of the world's population (see figure 4, p. 187). Further, the United States has more computers than the rest of the world combined, and represents 41 per cent of the world's users (Digital Divide Network, 2004). In contrast, only 4 per cent of the world's online population are located in South America (ibid.), and only 5 million in Africa have access to the internet from a total population of 816 million (World Economic Forum, 2003: 86). In countries such as Bangladesh, a computer is an unimaginable luxury for most, costing eight years average pay (Rao, 2001).

The digital divide is slowly narrowing, but there remains an enormous gap in internet use across countries (see figure 3, p. 186). A key indicator for developed countries is the percentage of households with internet access from the home. There are vast international disparities in the availability of home internet access. For example, Sweden ranks as the nation with the highest percentage of home internet connections at 68 per cent, whereas only 27.2 per cent of Spain's homes are online (ITU, 2003b: 9). The majority of households in developing nations do not have access to new media such as the internet. The usual places of access for most users within these countries are through relatives, friends, work, school, or in public places such as internet cafes. It is therefore more pertinent to study such community access facilities when evaluating internet access for the underdeveloped world. Making international comparisons with this data can be quite striking. For example, 34 per cent of secondary schools have internet access in Malaysia, compared to 26 per cent in Mongolia, and only 0.4 per cent in Malawi. At the other end of the scale, 93 per cent of Switzerland's secondary schools are online (ibid.: 15). Business connections are also responsible for a large proportion of internet access in developing countries: for example, medium-sized firms account for 60 per cent of Chile's total online population of 23 per cent (ibid.).

A further highly significant characteristic of the internet that demonstrates the extent of the global digital divide is the predominance of English (Cyberatlas, 2000). This is reflective of the internet's development in the US, and subsequent fast growth in the English-speaking world. A recent survey of several million webpages revealed that English provided 72 per cent of the text, followed by Japanese with 7 per cent and German with 5 per cent, and then French, Chinese and Spanish trailing at between 1-2 per cent each (Nunberg, 2002: 12). Although figures such as these are invariably inexact and simply provide an indication, it can be stated with certainty that English will remain disproportionately high for some time to come. For example, the number of internet hosts in English-speaking countries increased during 2000-2002 by about 450 per cent, against 420

per cent in Japan, 375 per cent in the French-speaking world, and 250 per cent in the German-speaking world (ibid.). Moreover, many English language sites are based in non-English-speaking countries. In some developing countries, that may be due to the fact that not many other local speakers are online, and there is also an incentive to use English to try and garner an international audience. English predominance persists despite the fact that numbers of non-English speakers online far outweigh English native speakers. Non-English speakers account for 64.2 per cent of the world online population, and for 5, 822 million of the global population, as compared to native English speakers, who account for just 35.8 per cent of the world's online population, and for 508 million of global population (Global Reach, 2004).

Notwithstanding English dominance, there are indications that the internet can also strengthen other national and regional languages (see figure 5, p. 187). An example is the diffusion of news. In terms of print and broadcast, it has been the English-language media (more specifically the US media) that have managed to gain a significant worldwide news distribution. However, on the web, there are around 30 online French language newspapers to choose from, as well as many direct radio transmissions. Less widely used languages are also in evidence: the webserver Yahoo! lists electronic versions of newspapers from around 80 nations, including Malaysia, Indonesia, Columbia, Turkey and Qatar. It is also becoming easier for the members of these language communities to gain remote access to government information, educational materials, scientific journals, and the digitised collections of major national libraries. The internet allows easier distribution of cultural products from other nations. In addition, online discussion groups also exist in a variety of languages, providing dialogic forums for members of geographically dispersed communities.

The global digital divide can also be demonstrated by advanced applications of new media such as e-commerce. E-commerce is dominated by the US, which has 64 per cent of the secure servers in the world. This compares with the UK, which has just 5.32 per cent, and the vast majority of underdeveloped countries, which have less than 0.1 per cent (Rao, 2001). Indeed, a dilemma for underdeveloped countries is beginning to emerge, due to the intense pressure to compete in an information economy, which requires the widening of communication access. Thus, telephone tariffs need to be reduced and the sector opened up to commercial operators, thereby undermining the often-subsidised domestic telecommunications service (Antonelli, 2002). As the UN statement on Universal Access to Basic Communication and Information Services stated:

> We are profoundly concerned at the deepening maldistribution of access, resources and opportunities in the information and communication field. The information and technology gap and related inequities between industrialised and developing nations are widening: a new type of poverty – information poverty – looms (ITU, 1997).

In a recent article, Robert Lucas suggested that this information gap between rich and poor countries would only be of temporary significance (Lucas, 2000). He proposes a model based on an

interpretation of economic history that argues that latecomers to industrialisation grow faster than earlier industrialisers by a factor proportional to the average income gap between the two groups, since latecomers avoid the costs of technological innovation. Further, as more of the world's countries industrialise, and world economic growth slows down, income gaps will gradually be reduced. Eventually, Lucas suggests, all or most countries could be at similar levels of income in around 100 years time.

However, Lucas's model makes a mistaken assumption that the world's technological stock is unchanging, or changing only very slowly, when the reality is obviously quite different. It is extraordinarily difficult for latecomer countries to catch up to similar levels of affluence and technological proficiency enjoyed by pioneer countries when technological innovation is continuously rapid. As Henry Lucas and Richard Sylla argue in response to Robert Lucas: 'Suppose...that the Internet and related IT are really epochal innovations such as those of the British industrial revolution two centuries ago...If so, these new technologies...might well increase inequality in the world for decades, with political and social consequences that do not differ from those that came with inequalities brought by industrialization after 1800.' (Lucas and Sylla. 2003: 7) Earlier financial, transportation, communication and electrical network innovations failed to benefit many people and large sections of the world for long periods of time. Disproportional access seems to be a characteristic of new network developments (Barabasi, 2002). Lucas and Sylla suggest this pattern if being repeated by the internet, and support their claim by using regression analysis of internet host data. They find that while certain developing countries are increasing their hosts at a high rate, they are dominated in absolute numbers by countries with a significant internet presence. This data suggests that the gap among states on internet participation continues to grow (Lucas and Sylla, 2003: 14).

In summary, the global digital divide is highly significant and can be illustrated with reference to data on disparities in access, ownership, the predominance of English online and US dominance of e-commerce. The global digital divide may have negative implications for developing countries in the context of an emerging information economy. However, there are some positive indications. The internet has spread more rapidly in a shorter space of time than any other comparable communication technology, and access continues to steadily rise. Indeed, a recent report estimates that users from developing countries could constitute 50 per cent of the world's internet population in the next five years (UNCTAD, 2003). There is also evidence that the internet can strengthen other national and regional languages other than English. Therefore, it is possible to identify a general trajectory towards wider use.

4.6.3. Intra-state Digital Divides

However, information inequalities cannot be generalised as existing purely *between* countries, as they also exist most profoundly *within* them. For instance, in wealthy America internet use is growing by more than 30 per cent a year: though that still means that only 12 per cent of the entire population will be online by 2005 (UNDP, 2001: 35). Low household incomes

limit wider expansion. Some recent research has uncovered some interesting indications of the emergence of an 'information underclass' in the US who for a variety of reasons are excluded from internet access. The Pew Internet and American Life Project found that 57 per cent of those who have never used the internet have no intention of going online in the future (Pew Internet, 2004). The research firm Ipsos-Reid found a similar statistic internationally (Ipsos-Reid, 2001). They found that 33 per cent of these respondents had chosen not to go online, with the most popular reasons being lack of need (40 per cent), no computer (33 per cent), no interest (25 per cent), lack of knowledge for use (25 per cent) and general cost involved (16 per cent) (ibid.).

The obstacles to bridging the digital divide in the US pales in comparison to those faced by much of the rest of the world. Less developed countries are often plagued by poor infrastructure, low income and literacy levels, and restrictions on freedom of expression and political participation. In countries where citizens struggle for food, water and shelter, access to new media can seem like an academic rather than practical aspiration. Nonetheless, it has been widely recognised that new media can be crucial in enabling NGOs, governments and citizens to improve the quality of life (Annan, 2004).

Nonetheless, intra-state digital divides in both developing and developed countries holds back progress. For example, India provides evidence of an 'information underclass' comparable to that of the US. It is home to Bangalore, rated by *Wired* magazine as top 11th in a chart of global hubs of technological innovation and excellence. Yet India ranks 63rd in the 2001 UNDP technological achievement index, since although the country has the world's seventh largest number of scientists and engineers, in 1999, mean years of schooling were only 5.1 years and adult illiteracy stood at 44 per cent (UNDP, 2001: 38).

The characteristics of the majority of internet users are similar worldwide. In this sense, intra-state digital divides mirror the global digital divide, since those that enjoy the most access to new media are elites that possess similar characteristics. In most countries, most internet users are relatively affluent. The ITU estimates that high-income earners make up over 43 per cent of the world's internet users. In contrast, low-income earners only represent 1.3 per cent of internet users (see figure 6, p. 188). Internet users are also predominately male, young, well-educated and urban. In some countries such as the US and Thailand, the proportion of male and female internet users is relatively equal; however, in Argentina and the UK, women only represent 43 per cent of internet users; in China and France, only 39 per cent, and in Germany and Indonesia, just 37 and 35 per cent respectively (see figure 7, p. 188). All countries follow a pattern of the younger population being more likely to use the internet than the old: in Australia, 18-24 year olds are five times more likely to be online than those over 55. Likewise, in Chile, 74 per cent of users are under 35, and in China the share is 84 per cent. Users are also usually well-educated. For example, in Chile, 89 per cent of internet users have had tertiary education, in Sri Lanka 65 per cent, and in China 70 per cent. Users are also more likely to be urban, such as in India, where 1.3 million of the country's 1.4 million total internet users are concentrated in five states: Delhi, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Mumbai. (UNDP, 2001: 40)

There are encouraging signs that some of these disparities are being successfully challenged, particularly in terms of gender. For example, in Thailand, the share of female users jumped from 35 per cent in 1999 to 49 per cent in the space of a year, and in the US, the use of women users similarly increased from 38 per cent in 1996 to 51 per cent in 2000. (ibid.: 38) Yet there is much further progress still to be made.

In summary, intra-state digital divides exist in both developed and underdeveloped countries, with the digital elite having the same characteristics worldwide: they are largely male high-income earners, well educated, and often live in urban areas. From a public sphere perspective, this divide represents a significant obstacle to open and equal participation, although there are indications that inequalities are being reduced in some countries.

4.7. Conclusion

I have identified developing communicative capacity across state borders as a structural precondition of transnational public spheres. All affected actors should be able to participate in deliberation about subjects of public interest, therefore access and ownership of technology must be as widely diffused as possible. Political action should be justified in public, and so the restriction or censorship of debate by state or corporate interests is contrary to the ideal of a public sphere. A transnational public sphere will also rely on a communications infrastructure that enables users to communicate across territorial borders with ease. Evaluating the evidence presented in this chapter presents a mixed picture, and the findings cannot be easily generalised in summary.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, there has been a fantastic global information revolution, the scale of which has been almost entirely unpredicted. This chapter has detailed the historical growth of the global media over the last hundred years or so, up to the present so-called 'information age'. It is possible to identify a long-term trend of rising access to communication technology worldwide, both internationally and within developed and developing states, as new media break down the historically impenetrable barriers of time and space. This massive growth in communicative capacity across territorial borders may be partially indicative of emergent transnational public spheres.

However, there are entrenched exclusions to ownership and access to new media worldwide, which presents a considerable obstacle to the realisation of transnational public spheres. Instances of government interference also give cause for concern. States have consistently attempted to retain control over the development of communication technologies (for example, by regulation through international cooperation), which sometimes has negative implications for wider public access. For instance, the neoliberal international drive to privatise communication networks have been to the detriment of subsidised services to marginalized sections of the community. In addition, some states have attempted to use communication technologies for the purposes of political propaganda, or have used censorship to stifle free and open debate. The huge influence of corporate interests in the development of new media is also disturbing. Global media markets are

monopolistic and dominated by the North, particularly the US. Consequently, a handful of firms wield considerable potential power to both limit access to new media and to distort public debate. For example, large internet firms could charge smaller ISPs prohibitive prices or exclude certain users. They can also interfere with information access, through technologies such as filtering.

The digital divide is widely recognised as problematic in the context of an emerging information economy, and has attracted much attention from academics and policy-makers regarding how it can be tackled. Richard Joseph argues that the digital divide 'will not be understood if it is viewed as purely a technological phenomenon.' (Joseph, 2001: 335) Increasing access to information involves wider questions of international economic development, as well as evolving supranational regulatory regimes. As Joseph observes: 'Property rights, market and regulatory institutions and information infrastructures (in their broadest sense, not just technological) will be crucial... So too will be the informational and political aspects of policy modelling and decision-making in developing countries.' (ibid.) One could also add to Joseph's analysis that the implications of policies in developed countries are equally significant, since as this chapter has illustrated, the digital divide is also an intra-state problem. The challenge of lessening the divide is immense, highly complex and multi-faceted.

In conclusion, there are some indications that new media could provide the communicative infrastructure for transnational public spheres. Yet there are also serious impediments in terms of access, participation and ownership in achieving inclusive public spheres of free and open debate. I now turn to consider the institutional structural preconditions for the emergence of transnational public spheres.

5. Transformations in Sites of Political Authority

In recent years, in both academic and popular debate, a widely held belief has developed that the present era is one of unprecedented socio-political transformations. These phenomena are commonly associated with the concept of 'globalisation' (for different interpretations of this term, see Scholte, 2000: 15-17). Globalisation is said to encompass elements as diverse as capital, labour, war, disease, ideas, information, images, news, entertainment, drugs and pollution (Tomlinson, 1999: 165). These phenomena transcend state boundaries and connect people across the world with increasing speed and widening scope. Cultures, economies and politics appear to be merging through expanding networks of communication and the investment strategies of multinational corporations. The strength of these and other global forces are posing significant challenges to the status of the nation-state as the site of supreme political authority (Cerny, 1996).

There have been a host of claims that we are witnessing the 'retreat' or 'demise' of the state, and that the economic forces driving globalisation are constructing novel forms of political organisation (e.g. Strange, 1996; Ohmae, 1995; Albrow, 1996). Saurin proclaims that globalisation marks the end of the state-centric discipline of International Relations, and argues that: 'only by rejecting *a priori* analytical primacy accredited to the state can one begin to approximate a credible explanation of global social change.' (Saurin, 1995: 258) Some of these claims are undoubtedly hyperbole, however it cannot be denied that the state has lost some of its predominance as a site of governance as a result of globalisation processes (McGrew, 1998).

These developments have particular significance when considering the historical evolution of public spheres. Habermas's conception of the public sphere operating inside the self-contained democratic community of the nation-state is problematised by recent mutations in state identity. In *Structural Transformation*, Habermas portrayed national government as the addressee of public sphere debate, which implicitly assumed the primacy of the state as a site of governance (Habermas, 1989: 82). However, globalising processes have brought about alterations in sites of political authority that may form part of the developing structural preconditions for the emergence of transnational public spheres. Therefore, this chapter will examine contemporary transformations in patterns of governance, state identity and world order. It will illustrate that Habermas's unquestioning acceptance of the primacy of the state in *Structural Transformation* must be re-assessed, since state sovereignty and authority is being compromised by changes in several domains (not least new media, but since the developments in this area are discussed in detail in the previous chapter, they will not be separately examined in depth here). Indeed, in what follows I argue that the concept of international anarchy has become less relevant to the analysis of world politics, because it is possible to identify the development of multi-layered global governance in the international system, characterised by a transordinate structure of international authority.

My argument in this chapter proceeds as follows. First, I begin with an introductory discussion about the definition and nature of globalisation, and consider the challenges it poses to traditional conceptions of state sovereignty and autonomy. Second, I illustrate these challenges

further by examining developments in three areas regarding the transformation of state autonomy, governance and national identity: the globalisation of politics, the growth of international law and the complex identities of citizens. Third, I consider how we can re-conceptualise authority in this context, and argue that the emergence of international authority problematises the concept of the state as the prime site of governance. Lastly, I argue that transformations in sites of political authority provide a structural precondition for the emergence of transnational public spheres.

5.1. Defining Globalisation

'Globalisation' is an essentially vague concept, elastic in its scope and application to a variety of phenomena. Susan Strange captures the flexibility of the term when she observes that it can 'refer to anything from the Internet to a hamburger.' (Strange, 1996: xiii) As such, it is difficult to define. In a general sense, globalisation can be understood as a marked increase in the intensity of global interconnections that transcends the state (McGrew, 1998: 300). In the words of one of the prime proponents of globalisation theory: 'the basic fact of linkage to global flows is a – perhaps *the* – central, distinguishing fact of our moment in history.' (Ohmae, 1995: 15)

Anthony Giddens characterises the concept of globalisation in terms of 'time-space distanciation'. (Giddens, 1990) He argues that global flows of trade, capital and production and new media networks diminish local autonomy to an unprecedented extent. Social relations are 'disembedded' from their localised context and reconstituted across time and space. In a globalising world of instantaneous communication and complex international infrastructure, location is increasingly less significant to the structuring of social interaction. Giddens sees this process as a consequence of modernity, and globalisation as representative of a period of intensification, whereby '...larger and larger numbers of people live in circumstances in which disembedded institutions, linking local practices with globalized social relations, organize major aspects of day-to-day life' (ibid.: 79). Giddens summarises such complex phenomena as 'action at a distance' (Giddens, 1991: 21).

Held and McGrew et al find the definition unsatisfactory and offer a more precise explication of the concept. They argue that a full appreciation of the expansive nature of globalisation is precluded without reference to spatial connections across regions and continents (Held and McGrew et al, 1999: 15). Therefore, the concept of globalisation involves a 'stretching' of social, economic and political networks across borders so that events in one region of the world can impact on the lives of those in a geographically distant region. These causes and effects do not occur randomly, but rather are regularised, so that there is an identifiable 'intensification' of these patterns of interaction (ibid.). Global systems of transport and communication promote the flow of capital, people and ideas, which also suggests the 'speeding up' of global interactions (ibid.). Further, these characteristics of enmeshment are associated with disproportionate 'impact' so that remote events are magnified whilst local events may have global implications. The definition of globalisation below attempts to capture these four 'spatio-temporal' dimensions:

> a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact – generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interactions, and the exercise of power (ibid.: 16).

The reference above to 'flows' refers to the movements of 'physical artefacts, people, symbols, tokens and information across space and time', whilst the term 'networks' refers to 'regularized or patterned interactions between independent agents, nodes of activity, or sites of power.' (ibid.) The advantage that this definition has over others is that it differentiates globalisation from other processes such as 'localisation', 'nationalisation', 'regionalisation' and 'internationalisation', which Giddens's simplistic definition of 'action at a distance' cannot distinguish between. However, this is not to say that globalisation can be understood only in isolation from these differing processes, rather that it has a complex and dynamic relationship with them. Processes such as regionalisation can either contribute to globalising tendencies (for example, the economic regionalisation of the European Union), or pose challenges to it. The effects will vary in different domains and can only be determined by empirical evidence.

Globalisation is therefore a complicated concept since one could argue that there is hardly an aspect of life that it could not encompass. Diversity is an integral aspect of its nature. Perhaps its very label is a misnomer: one could say that there is not a single globalisation; rather there are a multitude of globalisations. There has been numerous approaches to the analysis of globalisation, which reflects its multi-dimensionality (ibid.: 2-9). What could tentatively be called a 'unifying theme' amongst these differing approaches is the notion of the decreasing significance of territoriality. In fact, it could be argued that the most important contribution of the globalisation literature is the challenge it has posed to the 'dominant conceptions of *political space* in International Relations.' (Krause and Renwick, 1996: xii) It has problematised concepts that comprise the very foundations of the discipline.

Sovereignty is of course one of the central concepts in the theory and practice of international relations, and although like all concepts, its 'meaning' and utility have been periodically contested over time, it has come under consistent and repeated attack in recent years by globalisation theorists (Williams, 1996: 109). Sovereignty can be defined as the political authority within a community that has the acknowledged right to govern and determine the framework of rules and policies within a given territory (Held, 1995: 100). Sovereignty can also be understood as having two different dimensions: an 'internal' aspect (where the sovereign enjoys full authority within a territory), and an 'external' aspect (where there is no higher authority than the state). It should be noted that state sovereignty should be distinguished from state autonomy, which refers to 'the capacity of state managers or agencies to articulate and pursue their policy preferences either in accordance with the combined pressures of domestic and international forces or on occasion in opposition to these combined forces.' (McGrew, 1998: 315) Whereas the concept

of sovereignty involves the question of *entitlement* to rule, the concept of autonomy involves the actual *ability* of the state to independently achieve its policy goals. Whilst distinct, these concepts are nonetheless interrelated.

However, it is important to emphasise that the concept of sovereignty represents an ideal, and that few states have enjoyed the exercise of complete sovereignty within their realm (Hotton, 1998: 86-7). Indeed, many developing states have operated under severe limitations to sovereignty following decolonisation (Hoogvelt, 1997). Developed states are also subject to a multitude of problems that transcend state boundaries: such as pollution, AIDS, terrorism and transnational crime. Historically, sovereignty in practice has been defined according to the realities of the time (Murphy, 1996).

It is possible to assert that contemporary political, economic and social transformations are combining to reconstitute the power and authority of national governments in ways that challenge our fundamental notions of what 'sovereignty' represents (e.g. Held, 1991; Ashley, 1988; Walker, 1991, 1993; Campbell, 1993; Camilleri and Falk, 1992; Weber, 1992). In a globalising era, the internal/external distinction that is crucial to the definition of sovereignty is becoming increasingly blurred. If this distinction cannot be maintained – if globalisation has sufficiently transformed the conditions of national decision-making, complicated the hierarchy of responsibility, altered the legal framework and administrative practices of states and revolutionised the institutional and organisational basis of national politics – then the doctrine of state sovereignty should be reconsidered (Held, 1993: 238). In this sense, globalisation has implications above and beyond the erosion of state autonomy. Rather, it relates to a more fundamental change in the political landscape, where the traditional internal/external distinction fails to capture the reality of the enmeshment of domestic and foreign policy. Below (section 5.2.1., p. 113), I illustrate that sovereignty can be understood less as a claim to supreme authority than as 'a resource with which to bargain in the context of complex multilateral networks of governance' (Keohane, 1995: 177). Increased cross-border interactions in multiple domains have rendered concepts of specifically national economies, polities and cultures ever more redundant.

For example, the concept of the 'national interest' – the *raison d'etre* of the state – is complicated in this context. Traditionally, it was understood that the state represented national interests and attempted to protect the security of its borders and defend citizens from external threat. However, under conditions of globalisation, it becomes harder to maintain that states always clearly promote their domestic interests against 'outsiders'. Instead, states are increasingly negotiating national and international interests and pursuing collaborative ventures with one another (Koenig-Archibugi, 2003: 47). An example is cooperation between food ministers over regulations, or agricultural ministers over a livestock epidemic, such as the BSE crisis. Environmental ministers may work closely together through the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and finance ministers can form strong channels of communication with each other and multilateral financial institutions. Sometimes states may join together in promoting a social cause: for example, Germany, Denmark and Switzerland joined Greenpeace protesters in

criticising Shell over the Brent Spar case (Tsoukas, 1999). Also many states in the South invite consultations with international foundations and NGOs when designing and implementing development policies (Woods, 2003: 28). In such cases, international cooperation can undermine the cohesion of the state.

In addition, states have often served the interests of global capital as well as – or instead of – national capital. Much state policy nowadays is related to the needs of transnational corporations, the global financial market, mass media, telecommunications, and so on (Scholte, 2000: 139). There is pressure to liberalise economies and reduce corporate tax rates to attract foreign direct investment (Tanzi, 1995). Territorial constituencies are of course still highly relevant: demonstrated by the widespread emotional attachment to nationality, the tightening of border controls in the North and trade protectionist measures in countries such as the US. However, a government's constituency is now also partly international as well as domestic, and states attempt to serve national, regional and global interests in a sophisticated balancing act (Cerny, 1999).

Yet although globalisation is posing a significant challenge to sovereignty, certain evidence would suggest that it is not merely an erosive force. As the growing assertion of nationalistic and ethnic claims to self-government demonstrates, globalisation involves integrating as well as disintegrating tendencies (Williams, 1996: 119). Certainly, the psychological and symbolic importance of sovereignty remains strong amongst many politicians, citizens, and oppositional groups around the world. Moreover, the state is not a passive actor in globalisation processes, but rather an active participant. Also, it must be stressed that states vary widely, and the effects of globalisation on each vary equally widely, with some states being strengthened rather than weakened by these processes (Giddens, 1990: 73-4).

I argue that contemporary transformations in sites of political authority brought about by globalising forces indicate a structural precondition for the emergence of transnational public spheres. Varied governance structures pose a challenge to the primacy of the state, and provide the emerging institutional framework for transnational public sphere debate. Thus, I now turn to further explore transformations in political authority, governance and national identity by examining the globalisation of politics, the growth of international law and the complex identities of citizens.

5.2. Transformations in State Autonomy, Governance and National Identity

5.2.1. The Globalisation of Politics

Political power and relations have been stretched across space and time, beyond the confines of the territorial boundaries of the nation-state (Harvey, 1989). This process can be described as the 'globalisation of politics'. Although nation-states remain powerful actors, they are now supplemented in the international system by a variety of other organisations, from supranational bodies to transnational social movements, which participate extensively in world politics (Woods, 2003: 29). These developments seriously challenge the conventional realist conception of the state and international order. As Jan Aart Scholte suggests, the state is losing

'predominance as a site of governance.' (Scholte, 2000: 133) Even noted 'sceptics' of the globalisation thesis such as Hirst and Thompson, proclaim that: 'There can be no doubt that the era in which politics can be conceived almost exclusively in terms of processes within nation-states and their external billiard ball interactions is passing. Politics is becoming more polycentric, with states as merely one level in a complex system of overlapping and often competing agencies of governance.' (Hirst and Thompson, 1996: 184)

There are a multitude of international regimes and organisations with responsibilities for numerous areas of transnational policy, and their numbers are growing all the time (Young, 1989). This is a reflection of growing interdependence, the increasing enmeshment of foreign and domestic policy, and the desire of governments to cultivate transnational governance and regulation structures to solve common policy problems. International regimes and organisations have radically altered the structure of decision-making in world politics from the traditional model of generations ago (Cohen, 2001). Multilateralism now largely characterises the global policy environment, with a style of collective decision-making that involves governments, international governmental organisations, pressure groups and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

International regimes are most famously defined in the following terms by Krasner: a set of 'implicit and explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actor's expectations converge in a given area of international relations.' (Krasner, 1982: 2) International regimes institutionalise forms of cooperation for collective problems that arise from the workings of the international system. They provide information, a legal framework, and a means to manage relations in an otherwise 'anarchic' international environment. The breadth of the subjects they cover can range from the specific concerns of a single endangered species, to the widest possible domains such as outer space. International regimes can have varying memberships, from bilateral arrangements to large numbers of member states. Some regimes can be run by an intergovernmental organisation; others are more flexible arrangements that evolve from treaties, common policy difficulties or the rise of a transnational community of interest. However, as Young observes: 'What is most striking...is the sheer number of these regimes. Far from being unusual, they are common throughout international society.' (Young, 1989: 11)

The proliferation of these regimes indicates growing institutionalisation in world politics. It is part of what has been termed 'global governance' (Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992). This model is based on 'the growing realization that the achievement of governance does not invariably require the creation of material entities or formal organizations of the sort we normally associate with the concept of government.' (Young, 1994: 14) 'Global governance' does not just describe the formal organisations and regimes that lay down the rules and norms of world order, but also the informal and non-governmental organisations (e.g. TNCs, NGOs) that form part of these regimes, or else seek to shape them through means of influence (Hewson and Sinclair, 1999). Responsibility is distributed across a range of institutions in this new model of governance, some with specific remits, some with overlapping competencies, others with corporate or NGO involvement. Therefore, it is more complex than post-war multilateralism, though it is nowhere near a 'unified

global system underpinned by global law enforcement. It is an untidy world with overlapping jurisdictions and competition between different kinds of rules and institutions.' (Cable, 1999: 54) The state has a transformed role in this governance process. It is important strategically, but is not always the predominant actor (Pierre and Peters, 2000).

There is a vast range – in Rosenau's words, 'literally millions...of control mechanisms' – and a wide spectrum of institutions in the global governance model (Rosenau, 1998: 32). For instance, agencies such as the ITU or the World Meteorological Organisation have sharply defined tasks, and provide an extension to the services of nation-states. Their interests are mainly technical, and so they tend to be uncontroversial bodies. In contrast, organisations such as the UN or NATO are highly politicised, since they have certain decision-making powers and provide a forum for conflict over regional and global policy, as well as managing the distribution of resources (Woods, 2001). Such institutionalisation has been a feature of world politics since the middle of the nineteenth century, yet most of the expansion has taken place after 1945 (Held and McGrew, 2003: 1). There is an obvious connection here with the post-war growth in communications, trade, foreign direct investment (FDI) and cultural flows. The political structure of authority and decision-making has been increasingly diffused across a range of institutions in tandem with the intensification of globalising processes. Diverse organisations of this nature form a *multi-layered* network in this new model of governance: there is the layer of the supra-state (e.g. UN, WTO), the regional (e.g. MEROSUR) the transnational (e.g. NGOs, TNCs), and the sub-state (e.g. local government, local pressure groups). (Scholte, 2000: 143-50) For example, the world economy is partly managed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with significant input from the Group of 8, the Bank of International Settlements and the WTO – in conjunction with numerous state regulatory bodies (Griffin, 2003).

A particularly striking aspect of globalisation is the growth of international NGOs: from 31, 085 in 1994 to 50, 658 in 2004 (Union of International Associations, 2004). They are practically omnipresent now in almost every area of policy formulation and implementation (Cusimano and Hensman, 2000: 258). And it is not just a Northern phenomenon – indeed the fastest growth in NGOs is in the South (Boli and Loya., 1999). Such organisations have now become a permanent feature of world politics. They have been responsible for, and been a consequence of, the explosive growth in transgovernmental interaction: a web of intricate policy networks between governments and international governmental organisations that have become increasingly active, partly due to new media (Hudson, 2001).

With the input of so many varied actors, the structure of international regimes is often highly complex. A good example is UN legislation. The legislative procedure of the UN comprises of the resolutions of the Security Council and the UN Assembly, judgements of international courts and the interpretations of a variety of legal scholars. All of these sources contribute in implementing the general rules of the UN Charter and related legislation into legal principles and binding advice. Domestic law should be in accordance with the UN Charter, which is signed by states like a treaty, but declares its validity in the names of the peoples of the United Nations, rather

than the signatory states. This enshrines the principle that the people constitute the UN, notwithstanding the fact that it is states that retain power over its legal institutions. These states each have equal sovereignty as declared in Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Charter.

However, the situation is complicated by a number of factors. First, the principle of equal sovereignty is contradicted in the Charter itself, since the amendments to the Charter depend on the consent of the five permanent members of the Security Council (Fassbender, 1998: 574). Second, in principle, there are a variety of equal subjects of international law according to the widely accepted reading of the Charter: such as intergovernmental organisations, peoples and minorities, and even individual human beings (Held, 1995). Despite this, only state governments have legislative and executive power, and participatory rights. Third, although there are some checks and balances in the UN system, the Security Council has the most significant powers, greater than UN legislative, executive and judicial bodies (Fassbender, 1998: 598). Fourth, the General Assembly and the Security Council can only pass resolutions if there is no veto from the five permanent members, which creates a hierarchical structure of hegemonic law within the UN system. Fifth, recent action taken in Iraq by the coalition forces demonstrates that if powerful member states are unable to take action under the auspices of the UN, they can operate outside of it. Therefore, the state remains one of the most significant and powerful actors in world politics, particularly the US and other Northern states. However, the increasing complexity of international regimes has an ongoing transformative effect on the role of the state, by incorporating new sources of laws and norms, and providing an arena for the input of other international actors. Although realists may argue that the Iraq invasion demonstrates the limits of international law, it is possible to counter that the intense global controversy that this action provoked indicated that the UN system is widely regarded as legitimate, and that observance of the Charter is considered as important in preserving world order.

The picture of complex and overlapping networks of governance is illustrated further when one considers the frequency of the multilateral conference in modern politics (Held and McGrew, 2003: 7). Although a rarity at the turn of the last century, today international summits or multilateral conferences number in their thousands each year: involving UN, G8, EU, and IMF meetings as well as smaller official and unofficial gatherings (Zacher, 1992). These meetings vary hugely in terms of their geographical reach, functions, power and influence; nonetheless they provide further insight into the internationalisation of the policy-making processes that were once the preserve of the nation-state.

Special consideration in this regard must be given to the European Union (EU). The EU has a greater significance than any other international organisation by virtue of its ability to pass laws that are binding on member states, and to render conflicting domestic legislation as invalid (e.g. Held, 1995: 220). Disputes about the application and interpretation of European law are ultimately taken to the European Court of Justice, which has taken an assertive role in establishing the supremacy of European law. The most powerful institution of the EU is the Council of Ministers, which has the power to issue 'regulations' and 'directives' with minimal democratic

accountability. The Council has decision-making powers on a number of issue areas through qualified majority voting, although the criterion of unanimous voting and the principle of subsidiarity provides safeguards to national law. However, policies can be implemented with the explicit opposition of national governments, representing a considerable erosion of national sovereignty and autonomy. The advent of the single European currency could delimit national sovereignty even further (although it is possible to argue that in certain cases it could also increase sovereignty: see Taylor, 1991). Increased cooperation on security policy, such as the European Rapid Reaction Force, continues this process of supranationalism (Scholte, 2000: 268-9).

The EU Court of Justice has observes that 'by creating a Community of unlimited duration, having its own institutions, its own personality...and, more particularly, real powers stemming from a limitation of sovereignty or transfer of powers from the States to the Community, the member States have limited their sovereign rights.' (Mancini, 1990: 180) This has been a free-willed surrender of sovereignty by the European states, as a means to preserve peace and stability after the Second World War, and as a form of economic survival and protectionism in the face of the economic challenges posed by the US and the Japanese. The recent expansion of the EU into Eastern Europe and the heavy lobbying by Turkey for a date for talks to begin on membership illustrates that a variety of states will readily accept compromises to national sovereignty in exchange for the political and economic benefits that the EU can bring. However, it is evident that with regard to EU states, theoretical assumptions about the indivisible and territorial aspects of national sovereignty are truly outdated (Keohane and Hoffman, 1990: 10; Wallace, 1994: 20).

The challenges posed to state sovereignty are most clearly illustrated in terms of the EU, but it is worth stressing again that sovereignty and autonomy are being transformed in all regions of the world. The structure of the international system, the mechanisms of global governance, and the ubiquity of international organisations act as constraining forces upon all states, in different degrees. In the poorest parts of the South, these factors can have particularly devastating consequences (Thomas, 2000). The heavily indebted economies of sub-Saharan Africa and the exacting requirements of structural adjustment loans significantly curtail the policy options for those governments, adversely affecting their autonomy, even though one could argue that their *entitlement* to rule remains unaltered. In turn, citizens have been left with minimal democratic control over their destinies (Jackson, 1990).

It is possible to therefore assert that although states remain key actors of the international system, political and economic trends are having a global effect on the extent of autonomy that national governments can exercise. This has implications for the concept of the state as the primary site of governance and for the notion of state sovereignty. I now turn to explore these challenges further by considering the growth of international law, which has intensified under conditions of globalisation.

5.2.2. International Law

The development of international law has placed individuals, governments and international organisations under a new system of legal protection. International law has established rights, duties, powers and constraints that transcend the sovereignty of nation-states. Although not explicitly enforced by specialist institutions, it nonetheless has broad consequences. Indeed, it could be said that the international legal order is autonomous, as illustrated by the human rights regime that for the first time in history uniquely binds states, organisations, peoples and individual human beings, even if they never have signed any international treaty (Nickel, 2002).

Historically, international law has been considered as law between nation-states: states were conceived as the subjects of the law, and citizens as objects. However, in the twentieth century, this position has been challenged and the standing of the individual in international law has been promoted (Vincent, 1992). Landmark agreements such as the UN Declaration of Universal Human Rights (1948) and the Convenants on Rights (1966) have recognised that individuals have rights and duties beyond those enshrined in their national legal framework. Perhaps this is best exemplified by the International Tribunal at Nuremberg, which lay down for the first time in history that individuals are bound to follow international rules that protect basic humanitarian values, even where these may conflict with national law. The only exception lies where there is no opportunity for 'moral choice' (Cassese, 1988: 132). Nuremberg marked a significant change in the legal direction of the modern state, since the rulings challenged national sovereignty at its most sensitive aspect: that is, the superiority of the state over the military. Subsequent international law has generally sanctioned the position assumed by the Tribunal (Howard, Andreopoulos and Shulman, 1994). Today, there is a dense network of private and international legal regimes, illustrated by various human rights regimes, European law, the jurisdiction of the European Council, the United Nations Charter, enactments of the Security Council and the General Assembly, the General Agreement on Travel and Trade (GATT) and the WTO regulatory systems and dispute settlement bodies, NGO contract networks, statutes of international courts of justice, human rights regimes, *lex mercatoria* and private-contract regimes and so on. This network becomes progressively more complex, and constantly reproduces itself through adjudication and the formation of agreements (Zacher, 1998).

State sovereignty has traditionally been upheld in the international community by the legal principles of 'immunity from jurisdiction', which prescribes that 'no state can be sued in the courts of another state for acts performed in its sovereign capacity' (Cassese, 1988: 150-1). Also, the rule of 'immunity of state agencies' instructs that 'should an individual break the law of another state while acting as an agent of his country of origin and brought before that state's courts, he is not held "guilty" because he did not act as a private individual but as the representative of the state.' (ibid.) These principles have been progressively questioned by national and international courts, and particularly by the Northern judiciary. Now national and international courts operate globally, upholding aspects of international law and penalising human rights violations: the most sensational examples of which are the attempted extradition of Pinochet and Kissinger, and the trial of

Milosevic. Usually there are intense interactions between national and international legislation and jurisdiction, as illustrated by such cases as the investigation in the killings of street children in Brazil (Serra, 1996). Brunkhorst also gives the example of the *desaparecidos* in Argentina, which involved local, regional, national and international legislation. A network of judicial inquiries and cases in different courts were also brought forward: for example, actions were brought in criminal courts in Spain, Switzerland, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and a US civil court (Brunkhorst, 2002: 683-3). This was the result of political mobilisation by social protest movements like the Argentinian *madres*, who were supported by international associations of legal academics, NGOs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, and general media publicity (Brysk, 1993: 265). Thus, overlapping networks of legal jurisdiction can act in concert to produce the foundations of international law and transnational human rights.

Moreover, it is possible to identify a capacity in international law to challenge the legitimacy of a state, even though it has a claim to public power. The nature, form and operation of state power can be scrutinised through international law. Although the law is rather ambiguous on this point, it is notable that, for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts the democracy along with other rights as a 'common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations' in Article 21 (UN, 1988: 2, 5). The European Convention on Human Rights is more specific in connecting state legitimacy with democracy; indeed, democracy and respect for human rights is a condition of EU membership (Held and McGrew et al, 1999: 69). Such statutes introduce an interesting new dimension to the concept of legitimate political power in international law.

A further challenge to state sovereignty arises from environmental international law, the foundations of which were established by two important treaties: the Convention on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (1979) and the Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982). These conventions both established the principle of the 'common heritage of mankind', and have been used as a springboard by all manner of environmental campaigners to argue for the protection of the 'global commons'. A notable success of this transnational campaign has been the adoption of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21 by the UN at the Brazilian Earth Summit in 1992 (Manoochehri, 2002). The Declaration symbolised remarkable tensions between the declared sovereign rights of states, the 'goals' outlined, and their implications (Spangenburg et al, 2002). For example, Principle 7 instructs that 'states shall cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem.' Likewise, Principle 12 demands 'environmental measures addressing transboundary or global environmental problems...[that should] as far as possible, be based on an international consensus.' (UNEP, 1993)

As this example illustrates, although the international legal order can be described as autonomous, it is not totally self-sufficient: it cannot be separated from the legal order of nation-states (Hotton, 1998: 88). The state retains its huge significance, but nonetheless its role has been transformed somewhat. It is evident that national legal order is not largely independent but rather is interwoven with an overlapping international legal order. The state forms but *one* source of

transnational legislation and jurisdiction, in addition there are many others (Rosenau, 2003: 73). However, the state does remain the main authority for law enforcement, even if it is international in origin. States can largely be understood as a community of interpreters of international law, which adjust different legal cultures together with an international professional class of legal advisers (Brunkhorst, 2002: 685). For example, even in the European Union – the most integrated international organisation in the world – European law only comes into effect once ratified by national parliaments and implemented by national courts (Alter, 1996, 1998). The state also retains the main power to enforce international law in cases of serious breaches, such as human rights abuses (Weiler, 1994). Such compromises arise as a result of the interpenetration between autonomous national and international legal orders.

It could be argued that the sense of 'internationalism' fostered by international law, particularly law that relates to fundamental human rights, has contributed to increasing complexities and contradictions in citizen's identities. This may particularly be the case when, as mentioned above, social movements form alliances in campaigns about international law, in explicit defiance of their national governments. It is an interesting potential effect of international law, and one that is not often remarked upon. In the following section, I further explore the notion of complex identities of citizens in the context of globalisation.

5.2.3. Complex Identities of Citizens

The consolidation of state sovereignty since the eighteenth century helped foster a sense of identity amongst peoples as 'citizens'. In other words, those subject to the rule of a sovereign state became aware of their membership of a community, and the rights and duties that this imposed upon them. Initially, the nature of this identity was vague, but slowly it became more sophisticated over time. The formation of citizen identity was a result of the twin processes of the struggle for membership in recognised communities, and a struggle by political elites and governments to create a social bond to legitimise the modern state (Anderson, 1991).

A crucial development in these processes was the invention of the printing press, which enabled information exchange in the spheres of politics, economics and culture amongst people spatially separated from one another. As consumption of print grew more widespread, the oral culture – the foundation of the reproductive mechanisms of traditional societies – was progressively undermined. New media has accelerated this transformation even further. New media has intensified the dissemination of information and news, and can deliver practically to the speed of real-time coverage. Combined with the technologies of television, fibre-optic cable, satellite and jet transportation, the nature of communication has been radically transformed, with the result that many are now far more aware of regional and global developments than in previous generations, and ever-growing numbers have access to resources through which they can theoretically extend their understanding of their own and of other's societies. Giddens terms this an 'expansion of horizons' (Giddens, 1990: 77).

New media enable the distribution of cultural products across a variety of geographically distant territories. Accordingly, the modern day world is one where the particularities of locality are continually mediated by transnational communication networks (Street, 2001: 173). It could be argued that these networks fuel globalisation and thus all the different processes of transformation that have been examined in this chapter. Networks are fundamental to legal, military, political, and economic developments and hence pose significant challenges to state sovereignty and the traditional state system. There are a number of important political trends that receive momentum from such networks: for example, the extension of diplomatic contacts and new networks of military cooperation, the development of international law and the continued recognition of the UN as an important and valid international forum.

On an individual level, new media networks enables one to transcend physical setting and to access a variety of social groups and cultural experiences (e.g. Ott and Rosser, 2000; Bray, 2000; Hill and Sen, 2000; Ferdinand, 2000). This represents a revolution of the 'situational geography' of political and social life, since 'more and more [the] media make us "direct" audiences to performances that happen in other places and give us access to audiences that are not physically present.' (Meyrowitz, 1985: 7) New media create new frames of meaning independently from face-to-face contact, which liberates one from the limitations imposed by time and space. Importantly, these networks operate largely outside of government control, and so are difficult to regulate (Ferdinand, 2000: 12). They offer a considerable influence on identity formation that may challenge the citizen's national sense of self (ibid.).

For example, a watershed moment in the history of contemporary news coverage was the demonstration in Tiananmen Square in China in 1989, which was watched by millions all over the world. What would have mainly been a localised controversy without the presence of the world's television cameras instead became of global significance (Calhoun, 1989). More recently, the attack on the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre on September 11th 2001 was covered in real-time by every major news network, and had the effect of bringing the world to a standstill (Thompson, 2003). Other aspects of globalisation have reinforced this radical transformation in the range of daily awareness. For example, the interpenetration of national economies, recent international environmental crises, and improvements in military technology has created a sense amongst some people of common belonging and vulnerability that transcends loyalties to the nation-state (Camilleri and Falk, 1992). This is exemplified by the rise of transnational social movements like Greenpeace or Amnesty International.

Another effect of these new media networks is that they enable a greater awareness of other peoples and cultures, and differences in values and lifestyles. This may produce either a positive effect of increasing understanding, or a negative effect of deepening antipathy and further fragmenting cultural life, as starkly illustrated by the notorious pictures of some Palestinian and Arabic peoples cheering the September 11th terrorist attacks and the ensuing US media response of anger and bewilderment (Buck-Morss, 2002: 4). People mainly interpret new media through their particular referent points of language, discourse and culture (Downey and Fenton, 2003: 195).

Thus, global awareness must struggle for survival amongst a variety of political systems, histories and beliefs – there is little global commonality from which it can thrive. New media networks then, both stimulate new forms of cultural identity as well as strengthening old forms (Mitra, 2001). These networks transcend state boundaries and enable links to be forged between different cultures, thus instigating processes of transformation. As one commentator has observed, the networks 'make possible a denser, more intense interaction between members of communities who share common cultural characteristics, notably language; and this fact enables us to understand why in recent years we have been witnessing the re-emergence of submerged ethnic communities and their nationalisms.' (Smith, 1990: 175)

This phenomenon may contribute to the weakening of the cultural hegemony of nation-states, by reinvigorating a sense of cultural and ethnic identity amongst groups of citizens. Thus, nation-states may face challenges from below as well as from above, as the potential increases for pressure to be applied for regional or local autonomy (A. D. Smith, 1995). However, the outcome of the global mix of culture is far from determined; there may be a general retreat into parochial identity or a movement towards a greater cosmopolitanism (Featherstone, 1990). What is for sure is that nation-states have limited control over the forces that are redefining cultural identity (Jameson, 1991: 322).

In addition, disproportionate access and ownership to new media mean that marginalized sections of the global population have extremely limited control over these cultural flows. Patterns of cultural flow described elsewhere in this thesis can be characterised as the large-scale export of a particular culture, or to put in more precisely, 'the images, artefacts and identities of Western modernity, produced by the cultural industries of "Western" societies (including Japan), which dominate the global networks.' (Hall, 1992: 305) There has been widespread concern that such dominance of the cultural industries could have negative erosive consequences for local culture; however, the resurgence of ethnic identities witnessed in recent years is evidence of the ambiguous outcomes of these flows (Tehranian, 1999).

Whether the challenges to national identity then, come from above or below, what is evident is that a globalising era has brought increasing pressures to bear on the concept of the primacy of a national form of identity to citizens. This could be seen as the most subtle and insidious threat to the concept of state sovereignty that has been discussed so far.

In summary, the globalisation of politics and the growth of international law have had profound effects on the extent of state autonomy (and therefore the notion of state sovereignty) and the concept of the state as the primary site of governance. In conjunction with these developments, the effect of globalisation on citizen identity produces transformations not only in state competencies but also in public perceptions. It is worth stressing again that this is not to suggest that the state is irrelevant or marginalized in contemporary world politics – indeed, it remains one of the most important actors on the world stage and in people's lives. However, the role and very identity of the nation-state has been transformed.

In *Structural Transformation*, Habermas's concept of the public sphere rested on an implicit presupposition of the primacy of the state, which was portrayed as the addressee of public deliberation. This assumption is problematised by mutations in state identity. Conventionally, it also has been assumed that the international system is anarchic. However, globalising forces and the development of multi-layered global governance has produced transformations in sites of political authority. It is possible to identify a transordinate structure of international authority, which renders the concept of international anarchy less relevant to an understanding of world politics. I explore these ideas further below.

5.3. Re-conceptualising Political Authority

Taking into account contemporary transformations in state autonomy, governance and national identity, it is appropriate to reconsider conventional notions of authority in International Relations. Orthodox theorists have defined the international arena in opposition to the domestic realm, where a hierarchical structure of government usually exists. Since there is nothing analogous to a state government on a global level, it has been argued that we live in a state of international anarchy. However, if we accept that global governance institutions such as the UN and the WTO are regarded as legitimate by their members, this calls into question the traditional realist notion of the international system as anarchic (Hurd, 1999: 383). Indeed, it is possible to argue that we can identify a transordinate structure of international authority produced by multi-layered global governance (Ruggie, 1998: 61). These transformations in sites of political authority could provide a structural precondition for the emergence of transnational public spheres.

Authority is an endlessly debated concept in the social sciences. Max Weber's study of authority is particularly well known. In *Economy and Society* (1978), he defined authority as the condition where power is seen as legitimate, where obedience is the norm and transgressions are occasional. In International Relations, Ruggie adopts a similar line of argument when he defines political authority as representative of 'a fusion of power with legitimate social purpose.' (Ruggie, 1982: 198) Peter Blau also is influenced by Weber in his understanding of the relationship between authority, legitimacy and coercion: 'Resort to either positive incentives or coercive measures by a person in order to influence others is *prima facie* evidence that he does not have authority over them...We speak of authority, therefore, if the willing unconditional compliance of a group of people rest upon their shared beliefs that it is legitimate for the superior...to impose his will upon them and that it is illegitimate for them to refuse obedience.' (Blau, 1963: 307) Barnard expresses a similar idea thus: 'Authority is another name for the willingness and capacity of individuals to submit to the necessities of cooperative systems.' (Barnard, 1938: 184)

International anarchy has generally been defined as the lack of a structure of authority. For example, Milner argues that: 'Government is based on more than coercion; it rests on institutionalised practices and well-accepted norms...[and] lack of legitimacy seems in the end to be what many IR scholars have in mind when they talk about anarchy.' (Milner, 1991: 68)

However, Hurd suggests that institutions such as the EU are largely regarded as 'legitimate' and therefore represent an alternative site of authority to the nation-state. Hurd uses the term 'legitimacy' to refer to the 'normative belief by an actor that a rule or an institution ought to be obeyed.' (Hurd, 1999: 381) Hurd is interested here in the subjective feeling by an actor/s that rule is legitimate. In his words, 'an actor's belief in the legitimacy of a norm, and thus it's following of that norm, need not correlate to the actor being "law abiding" or submissive to authority.' (ibid.) Rather, an actor's *perception* that a norm is legitimate will be internalised by the actor and affect its behaviour. Hurd argues that the reason why international institutions persist is because of their legitimacy rather than because of national self-interest or the threat of coercion. To support his argument, Hurd uses Mark Suchman's definition of legitimacy: 'a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions.' (Suchman, 1995: 574) Legitimacy can be a powerful ordering tool, as Michael Hechter observes: 'the maintenance of social order depends on the existence of a set of overarching rules of the game, rules that are to some degree internalised, or considered to be legitimate, by most actors. Not only do these rules set goals, or preferences, for each member of society, but they also specify the appropriate means by which these goals could be pursued.' (Hechter, 1987: 3) Ruggie similarly argues that: '...to the extent that norms of compliance follow [a sense of joint obligation] and are incorporated into the determinants of national decisions, the institutionalisation of authority within...[a] regime has taken place.' (Ruggie, 1998: 61) Ruggie adapts Barnard's definition of authority to suggest that international authority can be understood as the willingness and capacity of states to submit to the necessities of cooperative systems. The concept of international authority in conjunction with a model of global governance describes the maintenance of global order on the basis of institutions and regimes that are widely perceived as legitimate.

Realists may counter this claim by arguing that self-interest is the prime motivating force behind state behaviour, using examples such as the recent coalition attack of Iraq – independent of the UN – as evidence. In contrast, one might venture that Hurd's notion of legitimacy is a useful way to interpret the US/UK's attempt to get a second resolution passed by the Security Council before taking action against Iraq, and their subsequent efforts to encourage UN involvement in the 'post-conflict' phase. The widespread condemnation of the action also suggests that the UN is generally regarded as a legitimate means of preserving order in the international system. In other words, it is possible to identify a perception among the relevant actors that the institution was legitimate, and this affected their behaviours.

It is also interesting to consider the doctrine of sovereignty as a governing institution in this regard. The concept of state sovereignty retains huge symbolic and political importance, despite globalisation. The institution of sovereignty tends to be quite stable, and although this can be partly explained with reference to factors of self-interest and coercion, sovereignty is also widely accepted by actors as a legitimate institution. Compliance with the international 'rule' of non-intervention may be partly explained as a result of state actors internalising this norm in defining

their interests (Liberman, 1993; Russett, 1993). Hence, many state borders in the world today remain stable despite the fact that they do not represent a divide between equally strong forces, therefore the principles of deterrence are not always relevant. An example is the stability of the US-Canada border, which represents a massive disparity between military forces on each side. Jackson and Rosberg (1982) also cite examples involving the security of some African states. Most state borders are assumed to be inviolable, and so invasion does not tend to be considered as an option; indeed, when this does happen, the intense hostile reaction from other states demonstrates how deeply internalised the norm of non-intervention is. Of course, expansionist states that act in a self-interested manner do exist, but they are widely regarded by other actors as dangerous and are outnumbered by states that respect the status quo. Therefore, the stability of most of the world's borders can be understood as a result of the legitimacy of the doctrine of sovereignty, rather than deterrence (Hurd, 1999: 399). The international system can be understood as a community, and the rules that states follow, from the principles of sovereignty to specialised international law, are evidence of the ordering powers of that community. Sovereignty is therefore a rule that forms part of global 'governance without government.' (Young, 1994; Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992) Many of the rules and regimes that exist in the international system can be also understood this way, including liberal economic institutions (Ruggie, 1982), collective security (Wendt, 1992) and international regulation (Chaynes and Chaynes, 1995).

If we accept that the international system has institutions that are considered as legitimate and authoritative, then the concept of anarchy is less relevant to an understanding of world politics. There may be unstable regions and conflict situations in the world that can be appropriately analysed with reference to the anarchy thesis. However, generally, it is useful to conceive of world politics in terms of a global governance system, composed of regimes and institutions that rely on normative influence to implement policies. As Hurd argues: 'The term *anarchy* seems inappropriate for a system of decentralized authority that actors conform to out of an internal sense of rightness.' (Hurd, 1999: 401) The concept of international authority undercuts the traditional assumptions of IR: 'To the extent that a state accepts some international rule or body as legitimate, that rule or body becomes an "authority"; and the characterization of the international system as an anarchy is unsustainable, as is the traditional distinction between domestic and international systems on the basis of the absence of international "authority".' (ibid.: 381-2) This does not mean that the distinction between international and domestic has been eroded – rather it is undergoing a process of transformation.

International authority is difficult to map, as it is composed of different and varied sources (Rosenau, 2003). It cannot be adequately theorised as super-ordinate to the state – as we have noted above, the state remains a key actor in world politics. But neither can it characterised as subordinate to the state, since the international legal order is in some respects autonomous from the state, and some international institutions retain supranational authority. In contrast, the international structure of authority is not hierarchical but decentralised. Ruggie suggests that international authority can be understood as a 'transordinate' structure. He argues that: 'International authority is

far more likely to take the form of specific clusters of obligations and norms of compliance that are incorporated within states and instituted in relations of mutual accountability among states.' (Ruggie, 1998: 61)

The concept of a transordinate structure of international authority, coupled with a multi-layered model of global governance, describes the complexities of the international system more satisfactorily than the traditional realist account. Political, economic and social trends described in this chapter are producing transformations in sites of political authority.

5.4. Global Governance and Emergent Transnational Public Spheres

The complicated effects of globalising processes on sovereignty and the state are of fundamental importance to the investigation into the possible transformation of public spheres. The public sphere that Habermas outlines in *Structural Transformation* is a historically and territorially specific structure, located in an age where state sovereignty was under less pressure than it is at present. A sovereign and autonomous nation-state lies at the heart of Habermas's analysis of the public sphere, which limits his ability to speculate about the ongoing transformation of public spheres outside of the territorial circuits of political power (Habermas, 1989: 74). However, in the current era of globalisation it is almost impossible to ignore the international dimension when theorising about public spheres.

Habermas recognises the importance of these global transformations in recent writings. He considers that the nation-state once represented 'a cogent response to the historical challenge of finding a functional equivalent for the early modern form of social integration that was in the process of disintegrating. Today we are confronting an analogous challenge.' (Habermas, 1998b: 398) Responding to critiques of *Structural Transformation*, Habermas has since revised his notion of a bourgeois public, conceiving instead of a globalised 'postnational' realm of multiple publics less restricted by the constraints of material inequality and nationalism (Habermas, 1998a; Habermas, 2000). Habermas argues that the growth of supraterritorial spaces and the consolidation of capitalism as the dominant structure of production is 'simply the continuation of a process of which the function of integration performed by the nation-state provided the first major example.' (Habermas, 1998b: 399) Although globalisation represents an 'unprecedented increase in abstraction we can take our orientation on the precarious path toward postnational societies from the very historical model we are on the point of superceding.' (ibid.) New media can contribute to the destabilising of particularistic identities held by citizens of nation-states. The growth of international law also means that: 'State citizenship and world citizenship form a continuum whose contours, at least, are already becoming visible.' (Habermas, 1996: 514) Habermas provides an intriguing analysis of modern pressures on state authority.

Likewise, I argue that we can identify transformations in sites of political authority in world politics that has implications for public spheres. The state provided the institutional context for the bourgeois public sphere in *Structural Transformation*, acting as the addressee of public

dialogue. Multi-layered structures of global governance, which include states as well as other actors, provide an alternative institutional context and subject for transnational public dialogue. Therefore, global governance structures provide the institutional precondition for the emergence of transnational public spheres.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter has described aspects of recent world order transformation. The process has been popularly termed 'globalisation' – a label also been adopted here. Globalisation processes pose challenges to the concept of state sovereignty, and delimit the exercise of state autonomy. Although the state is still a highly significant actor in world politics, forces of globalisation exert pressure on the state's claim as the prime site of political authority. I have referred to numerous instances that suggest a transformative trend in the architecture of political authority. I have argued that the concept of international anarchy of limited relevance to the analysis of contemporary world politics, since it is possible to identify multi-layered global governance and a transordinate structure of international authority.

These developments are particularly significant to this thesis because it indicates that traditional definition of 'public sphere' must be adjusted, to take into account modern political realities. In *Structural Transformation*, Habermas frames the public sphere within the contained democratic community of the nation-state. This assumption is obviously problematical in light of the recent transformations in the role of state. Here I have focused on the globalisation of politics, the growth of international law, and the complexities and contradictions in citizen identity. The continuing development of public spheres cannot be fully understood if the effects of globalisation on governance processes are not taken into account.

Therefore, I argue that transformations in the sites of political authority provide a structural precondition for the emergence of transnational public spheres. Multi-layered global governance structures can serve as the addressees of public dialogue, and so provide an institutional context for emergent transnational public spheres. In the following chapter, the concept of 'transnational communities of recognition' shall be considered as an additional structural precondition.

6. Emerging Transnational Communities of Recognition

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of transnational social movements that have coalesced to promote issues of common concern (della Porta et al, 1999: 206). Political mobilisation across state borders is not novel, but under conditions of globalisation, it has become a more prominent feature of world politics (Castells, 1997: chs 2 and 3). Habermas makes a tacit assumption in *Structural Transformation* that public sphere participants inhabit a shared locality or political territory (Habermas, 1989: 82). However, today there are a huge variety of social movements that habitually network across state borders to exchange information, to debate political concerns, to develop strategies and policies, and to solicit and share transnational support (Cohen and Rai, 2000). It is impossible to ignore the growth of scope and intensity of such cross-border activity when theorising about public spheres. Transnational social movements may represent emergent communities of recognition, which I have identified as a structural precondition for the emergence of transnational public spheres.

In this chapter, I consider how to conceptualise cross-border discursive activity and discuss examples of the use of new media by transnational social movements. First, I examine the distinction between the concepts of public sphere and civil society. Second, I consider how to theorise transnational mediated dialogue and I define the concept of 'communities of recognition'. I propose that communities of recognition can be identified when participants have a sense of collective identity as a 'public' and commonly endorse the norms of publicity. I also suggest that dialogue within these communities may have a transformative influence on hegemonic discourse and the international institutional framework. Third, I review the literature regarding the politics of recognition and consider whether it is possible for participants that lack common citizenship to establish an alternative basis for collective identity as a 'public'. Fourth, I review the literature regarding virtual communities and consider if a sense of collective identity as a public can emerge despite the anonymous forms of communication that characterise interaction through new media. I then analyse three case studies that provide a broad overview of diverse social movements: the international women's movement, the Zapatista movement, and Greenpeace and the international environmental movement. I examine the activities of each respectively, analyse the crucial role that new media has played in facilitating communication and mobilisation, and consider indications that dialogue within these movements has had a transformative influence on the international institutional framework. Each social movement has been chosen as a case study because it exemplifies a different basis from which the participants claim a common interest or identity, thus providing a comprehensive test of the concept of communities of recognition. I conclude by arguing that it is possible to identify emergent communities of recognition across state borders.

6.1. Global Civil Society Theory

The three social movements that I have selected for case studies are vibrant features of civil society. Habermas hails the resurgence of civil society in *Between Facts and Norms* and speculates whether a public sphere could be revived in this promising climate (Habermas, 1996: 330). The intersection between the concepts of civil society and public sphere is crucial: 'the former standing for structures and the latter for shared meanings emerging through these structures.' (Sassi, 2001: 100) The distinct difference in nuance between the terms must be emphasised. They both have very similar meanings, but are not interchangeable. I have considered the relationship between civil society and the public sphere elsewhere (section 3.2., p. 47). However it is worth further restating the distinction. I also want to elaborate on reasons why the concept of a public sphere is a more appropriate theoretical framework for the purposes of this inquiry than is the concept of civil society.

Anheier, Glasius and Kaldor define 'global civil society' as 'a supranational sphere of social and political participation', distinct from the practices of governance and economy, but existing 'above and beyond national, regional and local societies' (Anheier et al., 2001: 4). Likewise, Scholte suggests that: 'we can take "civil society" to refer to those activities by voluntary associations to shape policies, norms and/or deeper social structures. Civil society is therefore distinct from both official and commercial circles' (Scholte, 2000: 277). Evidently, themes have resonance here with public sphere theory: both approaches focus on groups that mediate between society and the state. However, the concept of civil society tends to be used as a descriptive term, whereas the concept of a public sphere acts as a *means of normative critique*. Public sphere theory invites inquiry into effective forms of social organisation within civil society for political discourse. Reasoned argument will predominate over the social status of actors in an ideal public sphere. Thus, public sphere theory contains a clear basis for societal critique of factors that curtail or obstruct effective critical deliberation. Civil society theory is not as well constructed for the purposes of normative critique because it does not similarly rest on a notion of inclusion or participation.

Further, public sphere theory focuses on methods of participation and so is suitably designed to incorporate analysis of communication technologies. It is well placed for an inquiry into the socio-political effects of new media, and the potential for new deliberative spaces to emerge across state borders. As a descriptive term, 'civil society' presumes communication between actors but is not based on a theoretical ideal of communication that provides for normative critique. Instead, civil society theory tends to focus on the impact on decision-makers. In the words of Anheier et al, the key task for an agent of global civil society is 'about increasing the responsiveness of political institutions...the need to influence and put pressure on global institutions in order to reclaim control over local political space.' (Anheier et al., 2001: 11; also see Falk, 1998) In comparison, public sphere theory incorporates an interest in the forms of social organisation that will promote public dialogue on the formulation and expression of political aims.

This is not to suggest that this will not also be of interest to global civil society theorists – rather to restate that this theme is integral and inherent to public sphere theory.

Public sphere theory can provide a useful contribution to the civil society literature. This is because if civil society theorists do not sufficiently attend to conditions of communication between actors, this can result in a tacit assumption that consensus exists and that discursively entrenched power relations are unproblematic. This is demonstrated by a tendency in the global civil society literature to represent social movements as a source of emancipatory empowerment despite significant variations in the internal organisation of movements and their differing political aims (e.g. Warkentin, 2001; Colás, 2002). As Amoore and Langley observe, 'implicit in much of the academic advocacy of [global civil society] is the belief that by acting as a progressive force for "good", [global civil society] provides the key to resistance in the contemporary world order.' (Amoore and Langley, 2004: 98) Drainville (1998) terms this the 'fetishism' of global civil society, whereby voluntary organisations are advocated as a force for emancipation against the repressions of government and the market. In some cases, the concept has been appropriated by neo-Marxists who believe that 'the politics of civil society, articulated primarily through new social movements, has superseded the politics of class.' (Lafferty, 2000: 19) According to a Gramscian perspective, these movements are interpreted as enacting a counter-hegemonic 'war of position' (Cox, 1999: 16).

There is a danger here that 'civil society' is being conflated with ethical 'purism': unambiguously portrayed as representative of human rights, plurality and autonomy (Keane, 2001: 57). Legitimising the activities of civil society in this way may have the associated effect of delegitimising the concerns of others who are excluded or marginalized by this form of politics. As Pasha and Blaney argue, the 'notions of civility that are increasingly attached to civil society, while enabling a certain form of civil life, also contribute to a narrowing of the political agenda and the exclusion of certain actors and voices.' (Pasha and Blaney, 2001: 423) The representation of global civil society as a force for 'good' assumes consensus among social movements that may not reflect realities of their internal organisations. Aziz Choudry argues that 'global civil society' is a Northern construct that legitimates a false 'consensus politics' around 'global problems' (Choudry, 2002). Marginalized voices of dissent are either excluded from dialogue, or else are co-opted into hegemonic discourses and thus lose authenticity. Civil society is constituted by the politics of power as well as the politics of emancipation and resistance. This is exemplified by the civil society organisations that achieve mainstream legitimacy, which tend to be 'established after the image of the civilised (European) male individual' (Keane, 1998: 21).

Cox acknowledges that a lack of consensus may leave an opening for the 'dark forces' of the extreme right, terrorists, organised crime and the intelligence services to further exercise 'covert power' (Cox, 1999: 15). Indeed, there are many social movements using new media that are extremely repressive and reactionary. Examples include neo-Nazis and the Taliban (Chroust, 2000). Civil society organisations have the potential to be sites of empowerment and emancipation, but are also sites of exclusion and control. The identification of collective groups as a source of

transformative agency can mask the realities of power relations. The political aims of social movements can fail to reflect the concerns of all participants in the absence of a process of effective critical deliberation orientated towards consensus (MacLean, 1999). For example, Roland Bleiker's discussion of civil society activity leading to the East German revolution illustrates these tensions well:

> Despite their unusually active participation in the protest movement, East German women suffered disproportionately from the subsequent process of unification. For them the democratic dawn ushered in drastic setbacks in such realms as reproductive rights, access to day care or employment opportunities. A revived civil society, which identifies men with the public and women with the private sphere, further increased the masculinist character of post-Wall German politics (Bleiker, 2000: 34).

Thus, rather than being an unambiguous source for good, civil society organisations can pursue goals of empowerment through the disempowerment of others. The assumption of global civil society as a cohesive agent 'masks the contradictions of people's feelings of shared experience, personal wellbeing and perceptions of risk and reward.' (Amoore and Langley, 2004: 106) The concept of civil society does not rest on a theory of communication or participation, and so normative analysis of relations of domination and inequality – whilst not precluded – can be problematical. This is not to suggest that 'civil society' is of limited use as a concept – rather that it centres on different issues from those that are key to this thesis. For the purposes of this inquiry, civil society theory does not adequately extend into an investigation of the conditions of communication between civil society actors. Instead, it focuses on decision-making and governance issues. In comparison, public sphere theory is centrally concerned with the relationship between communication/technology and politics, the conditions for effective political deliberation, and is oriented by an explicit interest in emancipation. Hence, it provides an ideal framework for a normative analysis of the socio-political effects of new media.

6.2. Defining Communities of Recognition

I have suggested that emergent transnational communities of recognition provide a structural precondition for transnational public spheres. 'Communities of recognition' refer to actors that recognise one another as legitimate participants in dialogue. This means that participants have a collective sense of identity as a 'public' and commonly endorse the norms of publicity. If transnational public spheres are emergent, the public dialogue within transnational communities of recognition should have political effects. Therefore, it may be possible to distinguish a transformative influence on the international institutional framework as a result of transnational public dialogue. In this section, I elaborate on these ideas.

Some scholars have undertaken case study analysis of communication through new media and analysed the quality of dialogue according to Habermas's theory of communicative rationality

(e.g. Dahlberg, 2001a, 2001b; O'Donnell, 2001). This research presupposes that transnational public spheres are actually existing institutions, yet does not fully examine the structural preconditions for emergence. The ideal qualities of public sphere dialogue are that political action is publicly accountable, that debate is orientated towards consensus, that all affected actors are included and treated as legitimate speakers, and that direct appeals to power are inadmissible. In his later work, Habermas has outlined further quasi-transcendental grounds for critique that do not concern me here. My focus is on the structural preconditions that provide transnational deliberative *spaces* containing the *potential* for rational-critical dialogue. Along with developing communicative capacity and transformations in sites of political authority, nascent communities of recognition would provide a further structural precondition for transnational public spheres to emerge. Communities of recognition provide the social context and the norms of publicity that are essential to a public sphere.

I have adopted a broad definition of a public sphere as an arena of free and open public dialogue. This allows for historical and cultural generalisability. A problem central to transnational public spheres theory is how publicity can be conceived in the context of cultural heterogeneity. Bohman has considered this at length and suggested that social acts are 'public' only if they meet the following basic requirements: 'They not only must be directed to an indefinite audience, but also offered with some expectation of a response, especially with regard to their intelligibility and justifiability to others.' (Bohman, 1998: 207) Further, 'public actions constitute a common and open "space" for interaction with indefinite others...which can be broader or narrower in comparison with others in terms of topics, available social roles, forms of expression, and so on.' (ibid.) This is similar to Habermas's notion of publicity in its widest sense as being 'the social space generated by communicative action.' (Habermas, 1996: 360)

Public sphere theory encompasses issues of participation. At the highest level of abstraction, all participants should ideally be of equal status as deliberative actors. Rarely does this actually happen since factors such as educational background and social inequality impact on the ability of many to participate on equal terms. The public space engendered by dialogue is not necessarily egalitarian. For example, the bourgeois public that Habermas describes in *Structural Transformation* rested on a number of exclusions. However, we should expect debate in a public sphere to be framed from a point of view that reflects the diverse and plural concerns of all those affected by the issues under discussion. Although the ideal notion of a public sphere demands universal access, actual publics will assume specific forms: for example, Habermas was interested in the bourgeois public of the eighteenth century (Habermas, 1989: 83).

The public itself can be thought of as a potentially unrestricted audience of successful communication (Bohman, 1997: 183). This contrasts with private communication directed at a specific and restricted audience. As O'Nora O'Neill observes: 'A communication that presupposes some authority other than that of reason may fail to communicate with those who are not subject to that authority; they can interpret it, if at all, only on the hypothesis of some claim that they would reject.' (O'Neill, 1989: 34) The public use of reason enables one to address the 'world' and to

account for one's opinions in an intelligible manner to an audience that do not share assumptions about who is authorised to make claims. Note that this means that public sphere theory is equipped to criticise arbitrary claims about who should be included and excluded from debate. Therefore, reactionary, bigoted and prejudiced discourse can be effectively critiqued within the public sphere model.

Participants should be prepared to be accountable in public debate: in other words, their reasons must be accessible and answerable to others, especially to those who do not agree with those reasons. This is necessary if debate is to be orientated towards consensus – differing reasons and judgements will be evaluated against one another. Debate should also be as free as possible so that speaker and audience can communicate with one another and explore the reasoning process by exchanging views and opinions. I have conceived of a multiple spheres model of transnational publics, this can incorporate a variety of potential manifestations of specific forms of publics. However, if debate in these spheres is not arbitrarily restricted to an exclusive audience, it can be considered as 'public' in a much broader sense.

However, traditionally, public spheres have been framed in the context of the nation-state. How then, can we conceive of transnational deliberation without the common context of a shared geographical territory, or shared citizenship? A transnational public would incorporate a highly complex, diverse and pluralistic body of people. It would be infinitely more differentiated than an intra-state public sphere. This is not to suggest that intra-state public spheres are homogenous – indeed, in an age of globalisation and increased migration, they may also be increasingly culturally diverse. Nonetheless, the greater pluralism that is likely to be experienced at the transnational level will make sophisticated demands on the public. This will affect the means by which they enter a social space: for example, they will have to have a multicultural awareness, and an ability to use communication technologies. The public use of reason in these circumstances can be understood as 'a form of publicity that capaciously allows for multiple forms of publicity within the contours of its multilayered and differentiated social space.' (Bohman, 1998: 210)

In Bohman's view, these problems render transnational audiences as little more than aggregate publics. However, inspired by Habermas's original definition, I want to consider whether these audiences represent 'private persons come together as a public' (Habermas, 1989: 27). I suggest that two questions are relevant here. Firstly – notwithstanding complex internal differentiation – is it possible to identify a sense among participants that they are conscious of themselves as a 'public'? This is the criterion of *collective identification*. It requires participants to find a basis from which to identify with one another despite lack of geographical proximity/shared citizenship. Secondly, are participants concerned with forming public opinion and the public use of reason? This refers to the *norms of publicity* underpinning critical deliberation. Participants should be prepared to endorse norms of publicity by making their opinions intelligible and publicly accountable, and by engaging in reasoned debate with one another.

These conditions can be summarised thus: do participants *recognise one another as legitimate participants in debate*? In other words, is it possible to identify the formation of

communities of recognition? This means that participants collectively identify themselves as a public, are prepared to make their opinions publicly accountable, and are interested in open and free deliberation. I am concerned with these general indications of emergent transnational public spheres, rather than with evaluating the specific content of dialogue.

Calhoun is sceptical that communities of recognition can develop transnationally given the remote and anonymous methods of communication that characterises mediated dialogue (Calhoun, 2002: 16-17). The ability of participants to cultivate a sense of community in a delocalised context – and thus form a sense of collective identification as a 'public' – will depend on a basis for recognition other than shared citizenship. This basis may depend most broadly on a common sense of humanity. More specifically, social class, gender or cultural identity may provide a basis for recognition.

The three transnational social movements examined in this chapter as examples of emergent communities of recognition have been chosen because they illustrate a different basis from which the participants claim a common interest or identity. This provides a rigorous test of the notion of transnational public spheres. The women's movement obviously appeals to a shared experience of gendered oppression. The Zapatista rebellion was a localised dispute that has garnered international support due to broad appeals to exploited classes worldwide through anti-neoliberal rhetoric. Greenpeace and the international environmental movement appeals in the widest sense to common humanity affected by ecological degradation.

Each case study is also of interest in other regards. First, the women's movement has a tradition of cultivating cross-border solidarities, and has been a site of radical and transformative discourse that challenges the masculinist division between the public and private spheres (Landes, 1998; Ryan, 1992). Women have fought to bring issues that have traditionally been defined as 'private' into public debate: for example, concerning intimate relations, marriage, the family and the household (Landes, 1988). Historical examples of women's counter publics have been briefly described in section 3.1.2 (p. 38). The development of the international women's movement in the context of new media is examined here as a means of continuing this narrative. Second, the Zapatista rebellion has become a 'primary reference point' for the study of networking by transnational social movements, because 'the most striking thing about the sequence of events set in motion on January 1, 1994 has been the speed with which news of the struggle circulated and the rapidity of the mobilisation of support which resulted.' (Cleaver, 1999: 2) The Zapatistas displayed considerable ingenuity in using new media to build international solidarities with other activists and grassroots organisations, and became a 'prototype' for other transnational movements (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 1996: 73). Finally, the international environmental movement is growing fast and is increasingly active, and has attracted much attention in the literature (e.g. Steel, 1996; Mancusi-Materi, 1999; Wapner, 2002; Lubell, 2002; Agyeman, 2002; Pickerill, 2003). Greenpeace is one of the most well known environmental organisations, and maintains one of the most extensive and well-maintained NGO websites in the world. Greenpeace has made imaginative and pioneering use of new media to facilitate dialogue between its activists through its 'Cyberactivist Centre'. There

have been interesting discussions here concerning the benefits and drawbacks of online networking.

How successful these social movements are in engendering a sense of community despite the 'anonymous' forms of communication that Calhoun draws attention to can only be gauged by examining the characteristics of social movement activity. In each of these case studies I will consider if the evidence suggests that a sense of collective identification as a public is emerging. Conversely, these movements may merely represent aggregates of participants. It is also important to note that since social movements can overlap, communities of recognition may not be discrete but rather multi-layered. For example, one could theoretically be a supporter of the Zapatista movement, a feminist, and an environmental activist. The model of transnational public spheres that I have proposed is multiple and overlapping, and so it can accommodate such complex identities.

Further, public sphere theory is concerned with the import of public sphere dialogue. A public sphere is not purely a realm of criticism but also of transformation. In Bohman's words, public spheres can 'also be dynamic enough to reshape the framework of existing political institutions to require acknowledgement of the rights of members of the universal community outside the boundaries of its territory and its membership.' (Bohman, 1997: 187) A public sphere can influence change in an institution – or even the creation of new institutions – once concerns aired in dialogue are addressed. When new publics emerge, the relationship of citizens to governing institutions changes. This may eventually lead to a transformation of the institutional framework. For example, the emergence of feminist counter publics in the domestic context eventually led to universal suffrage in many countries.

Therefore, one should expect indications in emergent transnational public spheres that dialogue can affect international institutions or global governance regimes. This can be identified by transformations in the international institutional framework that can be partly attributed to public dialogue (Stewart, 2001: 231). For example, transformations may occur in the hegemonic discourse of political authority, manifested by greater levels of publicity for a counter-hegemonic discourse, by the successful conclusion of a public campaign, or by consultation of NGOs by decision-makers (Warf and Grimes, 1997). A public sphere is not simply a location for critique but also, if sufficiently dynamic, a source of 'agenda-setting' power. Therefore, I am also interested in the potential transformative influence of the three social movements outlined above.

To summarise, communities of recognition are established when participants recognise each other as legitimate participants in dialogue, owing to collective identification as a public and a common endorsement of the norms of publicity. The discourses within each of these movements may also have a transformative influence on the international institutional framework. However, the formation of transnational communities of recognition is complicated by a lack of shared citizenship, and by the remote and anonymous forms of communication that characterise the use of new media. I now turn to consider if it is possible to foster a basis for collective identification as a public despite these difficulties.

6.3. Recognition and Collective Identity

There has been a major change in the nature of much political struggle since the end of the Cold War. Social conflicts are now increasingly framed in the context of cultural recognition, whereas for much of the twentieth century, conflicts tended to centre on socio-economic reform. Emergent transnational communities of recognition are not defined by a shared territory or common citizenship; therefore they depend on an alternative factor to provide the basis for a sense of collective identity as a public. Struggles for recognition could provide a basis for collective identity, whether relating to gender identity, sexual orientation, racial identity, ethnic group identity, and so on. I explore this idea further in this section by providing a brief overview of the literature on identity-based conflicts and the 'politics of recognition'.

The concept of recognition encompasses issues such as personal identity, multicultural policy, political citizenship, ethical questions raised by cultural diversity, ethnic and national self-determination and international justice regarding inter-cultural conflict. Fraser has argued that these issues represent a 'paradigm shift' whereby 'group identity supplants class interest as the chief medium of political mobilization' (Fraser, 1995: 167). The 'recognition debate', as it has come to be known, centres on the nature, scope and legitimacy of the claims and struggles for cultural recognition that shape the contemporary political landscape. A number of well-known theorists have contributed to the debate (e.g. Young, 1990; Taylor, 1994; Fraser, 1995; Honneth, 1995; Feldman, 2002; Benhabib, 2002). Habermas also largely conceives of new social movements in terms of identity politics, as opposed to redistributive politics. He describes the mobilisation of groups around issues of equal rights, participation or individual self-realisation as distinct from the previous predominance of forms of collective action, which centred on distributive issues such as social justice and systemic inequalities (Habermas, 1987: 392). However, this position can be criticised for failing to recognise the presence of other forms of conflict that demand redistributive measures as well as cultural recognition. Nancy Fraser's theory of recognition attempts to incorporate both forms of struggle, as does Honneth's critique of Fraser's approach. The debate between Fraser and Honneth has thus proved particularly influential in discussions about contemporary identity-based conflict.

Fraser makes an analytic distinction between 'economic injustice' and 'cultural denigration', and constructs a spectrum consisting of ideal types. The spectrum ranges from 'exploited classes' suffering economic injustice and demanding redistributive measures, to 'despised sexualities' experiencing cultural denigration and demanding symbolic recognition (Fraser, 1995: 167). In the middle of the spectrum are groups such as women's movements and racial minorities, which suffer both economic injustice and cultural denigration. Fraser suggests that the demands of such groups will include claims for redistribution as well as cultural recognition. Fraser has more recently developed a 'bifocal' analysis that is simultaneously attentive to those injustices rooted in class structures and those rooted in institutionally anchored status hierarchies (Fraser and Honneth, 2003: 31). She argues that all oppressions are complex, and that

economic class and social status are not two analytically distinct forms of justice, but rather are intertwined. The remedy will be some combination of recognition *and* redistribution. Fraser also applies the norm of 'participatory parity' – which refers to the material and cultural conditions necessary for every individual to exercise their autonomy as a social equal – to assess the relative merits of claims for recognition where they conflict with demands for redistribution, and vice versa (ibid.: 36). This concept has resonance with public sphere theory, involving conditions that 'permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers' (ibid.).

In critique, Honneth makes some pertinent points regarding the limitations of Fraser's 'bifocal' theory, arguing that it does not encompass issues of political identity and legal injustices – for Honneth, the central conflict dynamic of modern society. His alternative is to incorporate social justice and moral philosophy in the same language of 'recognition': 'the conceptual framework of recognition is of central importance today not because it expresses the objectives of a new type of social movement, but because it has proven to be the appropriate tool for categorically unlocking social experiences of injustice as a whole' (ibid.: 133). Honneth argues there is a unified root of demands for economic justice, claims for cultural recognition, and legal equality, political representation, and so on. The moral sources of the experience of discontent are based in the forms of misrecognition: whether relating to the violation of the body, or to the denial of respect and denigration of forms of life. The experience of social suffering has a normative core in that the experience of injustice happens when an institutional rule regulating asymmetrical recognition cannot be rationally justified (ibid.: 131).

Although Honneth is correct to draw attention to Fraser's neglect of issues concerning political and legal forms of exclusion, his 'monofocal' approach is reductive. Fraser's position remains more compelling on social theoretical grounds, especially if it is expanded as a 'trivalent' theory to incorporate analysis of the forms of exclusion that Honneth highlights, which has been attempted by some theorists (Feldman, 2002). Fraser offers a useful framework to theorise about the basis from which people can identify with each other in a common struggle for cultural recognition – and thus, *recognise* each other as legitimate participants in public dialogue. Such struggle is not limited to territorial borders. Indeed, the politics of recognition are often framed as a challenge to the state: for example, by either ethnic claims to self-determination (e.g. the Basques in Spain), or by cross-border identity formation as a commonly oppressed group (e.g. the international women's movement). Fraser's spectrum of conflict can also incorporate the 'exploited' groups that demand recognition and redistributive measures to correct even broader political-economic injustices, such as issues of human rights and the environment. As Buechler observes, these issues 'inherently transcend national boundaries and borders' (Buechler, 2000: 77).

Nonetheless, Fraser does not devote sustained attention to the relationship between new media and recognition politics. However, Lash and Featherstone believe that the transnational politics of recognition are centrally concerned with the use of new media, since most communication and mobilisation of these movements rely almost wholly on such networking. They argue that: 'The point is that global communications are coming increasingly to inhabit the

real...Recognition becomes making sense of the information and communitational flows.' (Lash and Featherstone, 2001: 17) Likewise, Routledge argues that: 'the ability to generate information quickly and deploy it effectively...has become a central component of collective identities of the activists involved, networking forming part of their common repertoire.' (Routledge, 2001: 28) I now turn to consider if dialogic participants are able to form a sense of collective identification as a public, despite the potentially problematical characteristics of computer-mediated communication.

6.4. Virtual Communities

Virnoche and Marx (1997) distinguish between three different types of online networking: community networks (that reinforce already existing ties), virtual extensions (that provide greater opportunities for interaction among already existing communities), and virtual communities (geographically dispersed actors that are primarily or solely linked by virtual interaction). Each form of interaction is relevant to the concept of 'communities of recognition'. However, here I want to focus on the characteristics of virtual communities, which provide the strongest challenge to the notion of transnational publics, since they are not based on shared location/citizenship, or physical interaction.

Virtual communities have been described by one enthusiast as 'incontrovertibly social spaces in which people still meet face-to-face, but under new definitions of both 'meet' and 'face'...[V]irtual communities [are] passage points for collections of common beliefs and practices that unite people who are physically separated' (Stone, 1991: 85). These communities are abstracted from physical location and are based on knowledge and information, on common beliefs and practices. The significance of virtual communities has been hotly debated in recent social science literature. There has been debate as to whether this type of networking, especially when conducted anonymously with no supplementary 'face-to-face' interaction, can be understood as a new type of meaningful 'community', or whether it merely represents ad hoc networking (e.g. Jones, 1995; Negroponte, 1995; Miller, 1996; Shields, 1996; Graham and Aurigi, 1997). 'Communities of recognition' across state borders depend on a sense of collective identity as a 'public', which some argue cannot emerge when communication between participants is largely or wholly computer-mediated. What follows is an overview of the debate in the literature regarding the significance of 'virtual communities'.

The notion of community has traditionally been the subject of intense debate amongst sociologists and anthropologists. In a seminal work, Tonnies (1957) uses two typologies to describe the transition from pre-industrial to industrial society. 'Gemeinschaft' describes the feelings of kinship and solidarity amongst people in earlier times that shared a physical location. 'Gesselschaft' refers to the rise of rationality and calculability leading to impersonal relationships that characterised the development of industrial society. Tonnies used this progression to illustrate the loss of community that he associated with industrialisation. It has become a highly influential depiction of the ideal and subsequent degradation of community. It can be understood as similar to

Habermas's distinction between 'system' and 'lifeworld' (see section 3.1., p. 32). Consequently, there has conventionally been an emphasis on location as the essential component of a 'thick' community identity (in the sense of 'gemeinschaft'). In comparison, online networking has often been portrayed as an example of 'thin' community identity ('gesellschaft').

It has been questioned whether text based discussion on a delocalised website can ever be substantial enough as to form the basis of a community. Peck (1987) and Beniger (1987) termed such impersonal associations and indirect group associations (involving the decentring of place that is typical of computer-mediated communication) as 'pseudo-community'. Their criticisms hinge on the difficulties in judging the sincerity of communication in a 'pseudo-community' (Nguyen and Alexander, 1996: 104, 106). This is an important critique since there are genuine problems in ascertaining authenticity in electronic text. Does this sufficiently undermine computer-mediated communication to such an extent that it is impossible to foster a sense of collective identity as a public? Wilbur believes so, and makes the following criticism of idealistic notions of the value of virtual community:

> Virtual community is the illusion of community where there are no real people and no real communication. It is a term used by idealistic technophiles who fail to understand that authentic cannot be engendered through technological means. Virtual community flies in the face of 'human nature' that is, essentially, it seems depraved (Wilbur, 1997: 14).

Likewise, Foster (1997) questions whether mere communication, without face-to-face contact, can be considered as sufficient in building community. He examines Tonnies's notion of 'gemeinschaft' and 'gesellschaft', and identifies the difference between the two as a sense of collective identity formed by a regular flow of 'we-relevant' information, which he argues is present only in the former. Foster then goes on to examine the relationship between the individual and society, and the role this plays in the establishment and maintenance of a community. He suggests that self-identity and group identity are in a reflexive relationship with one another. Without a conception of the self, the community cannot be realised, and similarly, the community has considerable influence on the development of the self. Therefore, Foster is sceptical about the formation of virtual community, since he observes that internet users tend to be interested in communicating details about themselves, rather than contributing to the flow of 'we-relevant' information that forms part of the collective effort of sustaining a community (and hence collective identification as a public). (also see Melucci, 1996)

Likewise, Johnston and Laxter (2003) argue that actors who establish connections through new media cannot reproduce or even emulate 'thick' forms of community. Sidney Tarrow also expresses scepticism that virtual networks can deliver the same 'crystallization of mutual trust and collective identity' that characterise the interpersonal ties of localised social movements (Tarrow, 1998: 14). Axford describes this line of argument as indicative of an unease that demonstrates 'the continued power of the territorial narrative and the appeal of "real" places.' (Axford, 2001: 18) In

other words, the suspicion is that online networking is not 'meaningful' enough to build a sense of communal identity across state borders. Critics maintain that a virtual network of geographically dispersed individuals is a poor substitute for 'face-to-face-social movement connections' (Johnson and Laxer, 2003: 73). The experience of being at home alone with the internet is portrayed as 'asocial, instrumental and narcissistic.' (Axford, 2001: 18) 'Thick' communities are depicted as more 'authentic', the relationships within as more genuine, and loyalties as more solid than anything that can be created or sustained online. The subtext is that 'thick' forms of community provide the only legitimate basis for political activity.

It is important to acknowledge that identities associated with social networks and cultural scripts can be strongly 'embedded' and so may present an obstacle to the creation of alternative identities that can transverse state borders (Melucci, 1996; McAdam et al, 2000). Nonetheless, contemporary social transformations suggest that people are often more important than location in forming community. As society has become increasingly networked, technology has changed perceptions of work, leisure and the self (Levy, 1998). The activities of some virtual communities may indicate that common identity and shared experience can be more important than location in fostering a spirit of community.

In fact, the emergence of community beyond the ties of shared location has been widely discussed in academia well before the spread of the internet. Calhoun argued that 'we need to develop a conceptualisation of community which allows us to penetrate beneath simple categories ...to see a variable of social relations. The relationship between community as a complex of social relationships and community as a complex of ideas and sentiments has been little explored' (Calhoun, 1980: 107). Likewise, in his seminal study of communities and social change in the States, Bender critiqued analysis that concentrates too much on locality and shared territory at the expense of culture:

> The identification of community with locality and communal experiences with rather casual associations has quietly redefined community in a way that puts it at odds with its historical and popular meaning...drain[ing] the concept of the very qualities that give the notion of community its cultural, as opposed to merely organizational, significance (Bender, 1978: 10).

Bender's recasting of communities as social networks is useful when considering virtual communities since it focuses on interactions rather than location as the basis for social bonding. The most important element that binds virtual communities together is the habitual sharing of information, which in a parallel way, recalls the type of communities that Carey identifies as emerging from the growth of cities in the late 19th and early 20th century, that were:

> ....formed by imaginative diaspora – cosmopolitans and the new professionals who lived in the imaginative worlds of politics, art, fashion, medicine, law and so forth. These diasporic groups were twisted and knotted into one another within urban life. They were given form

> by the symbolic interactions of the city and the ecology of media, who reported on and defined these groups to one another, fostered and intensified anatagonisms among them, and sought forms of mutual accommodation (Carey, 1993: 178).

The role of media in constructing community is captured by Anderson's term of 'imagined communities', since the members may never physically meet, but nonetheless consider themselves united by common interests (Anderson, 1991). Yet how is one to conceive of imagined communities that are not united by a common territorial space? Scherer (1972) suggested a way forward in an early work, when he proposed that social structure, and therefore the very nature and definition of community, is partly shaped by increased mobility. These new communities are formed by common interest, rather than by shared location. A community bounded by interests rather than common space fundamentally challenges our conventional understandings of sociability, temporality and spatiality. How do we understand the online actor – as mass-mediating, as being mass-mediated, or as a public or a private figure in his/her interactions? Soja considers the complex relationship between space and social interaction:

> The spatio-temporal structuring of social life defines how social action and relationships (including class relations) are materially constituted, made concrete. The constitution/concretisation process is problematic, filled with contradiction and struggle (amidst much that is recursive and routinized). Contradictions arise primarily from the duality of produced space as both outcome/embodiment/product and medium/presupposition/producer of social activity (Soja, 1989: 129).

No matter how hard (or indeed impossible) it is to define the 'space' that new media produces, it undoubtedly affects the space we inhabit as social beings. In an influential work, David Harvey (1989) has coined the term 'time-space compression' to refer to modern processes that have revolutionised the qualities of time and space to such an extent that it forces us to radically re-evaluate our personal representations of the world. Examples of such re-evaluation include the now widespread notion of the world as 'Spaceship Earth' or as a 'global village'. These concepts may influence how we perceive our connections to fellow human beings. Perhaps the notion of delocalised community may be more readily accepted in conjunction with such concepts.

In an early prophetic study, Licklider and Taylor also considered how electronic communication would radicalise our understanding of space:

> What will online interactive communities be like? In most fields they will consist of geographically separated members, sometimes grouped in small clusters and sometimes working individually. They will be communities not of common location, but of *common interest*. In each geographical sector, the total number of users...will be large enough to support extensive general-purpose information processing and storage facilities...life will be happier for the online individual because the people with whom one interacts most

> strongly will be selected more by commonality of interests and goals than by accident of proximity (Licklider and Taylor, 1968: 30-1).

Similarly, Harasim (1993) finds through her research that social communication is a chief component in computer-mediated communication, and claims that humans appear to seek community by any means available. Therefore, as some experience a sense of community dissipating in their physical living spaces, so they may seek community in new virtual spaces. Examples abound in today's society, where there are a multitude of virtual communities based on a common identities or interests, ranging from fan clubs to human rights groups to the gay community. In particular, Herek and Greene (1995) have argued that a sense of community are largely felt by gay men through their sense of membership and shared experience with others, as well as the community's ability to meet their individual needs. Appadurai suggests that there is evidence that new media can foster community by enabling diasporic public spheres (Appadurai, 1996; see also Rex, 1998). Axford notes that new media can 'sustain the activities of a tranche of INGOs (International Non-Governmental Organizations) and social movements...and provide a degree of information and support for a host of people ill served by the public services in the "real" civic spaces where they live out their lives.' (Axford, 2001: 18) These developments appear to suggest that common interest can provide a stable basis for a sense of community.

However, some critics charge that text-based interaction tends to be characterised by anonymity, and so is inferior to face-to-face interaction, which is more 'authentic' by comparison. For example, Poster argues that identity is defined by the physical body and by contact. The internet allows one to change identity at will and so: 'Without embodied copresence, the charisma and status of individuals have no force...The technology of the Internet shouldn't be viewed as a new form of public sphere.' (Poster, 1995) Likewise, Frau-Meigs argues that:

> Virtual communities...operate in strict anonymity, practice intimate-yet-distanced-contact with foreigners, with frequent substitution of one partner for another... [R]esponsibility towards the other...cannot be perpetuated, remaining contingent, subject to the arbitrariness of the encounter (Frau-Meigs, 2000: 236).

In contrast, Watson (1997) argues that the communication of virtual communities is not necessarily inauthentic. First, he acknowledges that certain groups of people who communicate using the internet do so because they share similar interests. Second, he notes peculiar cultural features of internet interaction, such as so-called 'emoticons', which denote emotional responses and reactions via depictive text icons. Watson suggests these indicate an evolving community, since methods of mutual understanding are being established. Importantly, it suggests that participants are interested in increasing the authenticity and sincerity of anonymous interaction. Hence, the virtual community can be said to be as 'real' an experience to its members as the physical community is. Virtual interaction has radically different qualities from face-to-face interaction, but is not necessarily an inferior form of communication.

Regardless of all these disputes about the significance of virtual communities, there appears to be a growing consensus at least they can be said to exist (Jones, 1995; Baym, 1998). Virtual communities are becoming a more established and accepted feature of modern political life. Sassi observes that 'current social and organizational ties seem to be weak in their form and stability, whereas the sphere of mediated communication, especially through the Net, appears to be widening and strengthening.' (Sassi, 2001: 100)

Above, I have referred to the development of new transnational social movements that are coalescing around identity-based struggles for recognition and redistribution. I have argued that these could provide the basis for the emergence of transnational communities of recognition. If we accept that it is possible to engender a meaningful sense of community through new media, then a lack of shared citizenship and a lack of or minimal face-to-face interaction should not theoretically prevent the emergence of transnational communities of recognition. Therefore, if a transnational group with common identities and interests communicate through new media, there is a good potential that a sense of collective identity as a 'public' could develop.

I now turn to pursue this further by examining three case studies of transnational social movements and their use of new media. Each of these case studies represent a different basis from which the participants claim a common interest or identity. Evaluating the evidence of the activities of these movements will illustrate what theory alone cannot. To return to my definition of communities of recognition (section 6.2., p. 131), my research questions will be threefold. First, is it possible to identify a sense of collective identity as a public? Second, is it possible to identify a common endorsement of the norms of publicity? Third, is it possible to identify a transformative influence on the international institutional framework as a result of public dialogue? I return to consider if each of these criteria have been met in the concluding section (6.8., p. 171).

6.5. The International Women's Movement

The women's movement has historically challenged the masculinist conception of politics. Women have struggled, and continue to struggle, to bring issues that have been traditionally defined as 'private' into the public sphere of debate, such as marital rape and domestic violence (McLaughlin, 1993). International networking by women is not an entirely new phenomenon. There have been historical precursors before the advent of new media. The transnational campaign for women's suffrage from the late nineteenth century onwards is an excellent example (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 51-58). However, networking has adapted with evolving technology and has been greatly facilitated by the capacities of new media, and also by the benefits of a media-saturated society in general (Ferree and Hess, 2000). As Youngs observes: 'One of the major successes of women's global networking in the Internet age has in fact been to connect effectively the different kinds of communication technology available at different times and in different places so that the influence of the Internet reaches far beyond the limits of its actual connectivity.' (Youngs, 2002: 26)

This section provides a broad overview of how women's groups are making inventive use of the internet and other new media as tools of empowerment: to break down barriers, exclusions and silences. Youngs argues that to 'the extent to which the virtual realm of the Internet has offered opportunities for some disruption of the masculine domination of international political space(s), it is both actually and potentially revolutionary for women and the larger political scene' (ibid.: 25). New media enables new forms of collective politics by providing an infrastructure for transnational networking where this did not previously exist, or where it only existed in much more limited way with communication technologies that were inferior in terms of speed, scope and interactivity (Hawthorne and Klein, 1999). In this sense, virtual politics are not separate from 'real' place-based politics, but are often closely related, as the multiple case studies below will demonstrate.

The following section is split into three parts. First, I examine networking efforts by the international women's movement to improve female internet access and the efficacy of women's internet use. Second, I describe the influence of the UN Beijing conference in establishing internet usage throughout the women's movement. Third, I consider examples of mobilisation and campaigning online, particularly focusing on Southern-based women's groups. These processes have helped to foster a sense of collective identification as a public, demonstrated by common endorsement of the norms of publicity. These activities have also had a transformative influence on the international institutional framework.

6.5.1. Networking to Improve Women's Internet Access

An initial feminist aim was to improve women's internet access, since it was originally a male-dominated medium (Pollock and Sutton, 2003). In 1995, only 15 per cent of internet users were women, yet by 2000, this had increased to 50 per cent (Richards and Schnall, 2003). At first, there were relatively few women's sites, the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the Feminist Majority Foundation representing seminal early examples (National Organization for Women, 2004; Feminist Majority Foundation, 2004). Feminist.com played a significant part in encouraging the proliferation of women's sites by offering a free web presence to women's groups that were not yet online. Its primary goal was to facilitate networking for women, or in the words of the online mission statement, to 'become a place where women can meet, exchange ideas, get information, build a business, become active, participate in government and empower themselves and the world around them – a woman's cyber community if you will.' (Feminist.com, 2004) It has evolved into a major internet resource.

Another notable actor in efforts to improve women's internet access is the Women on the Net (WoN) project that was set up in conjunction with several women's groups, the Society for International Development, and UNESCO. Their aims are fourfold: to encourage and empower women in the South and marginal groups in the North to use the internet as a political tool; to contribute to a new internet culture from a gender perspective; to bring together women and men working from different institutional bases to explore a transnational women's movement agenda in shaping telecommunication policies; and to create a community and support base for women to

enable more effective internet use (WoN, 1997). WoN is an illustration of the sense of solidarity that many women feel that the internet assists and inspires. Harcourt is a leading member of the project and has reported a developing culture being created that creates 'an intimacy which the solitary act of typing into a keyboard in front of a screen belies but which the ethos of WoN embraces.' (Harcourt, 2000a: 54)

WoN have been recently holding small training workshops in various locations in the South, meeting with local women and introducing them to the internet, most of whom had never seen a computer before (WoN, 2002). Issues such as domestic violence and sex education are explored in the workshops, often in the midst of cultures where such themes are normally considered either publicly irrelevant or taboo. Small-scale programmes like this can have the potential to instigate processes that are felt widely in the whole local community (Knouse and Webb, 2001). As Peggy Antrobus, leader of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) and contributor to WoN observes: the 'Internet most of all...has empowered us, by giving us the information, the analysis, the sense of solidarity, the experience of shared achievements, the encouragement and moral support that comes from being part of a network, a movement with common goals and visions.' (quoted in Harcourt, 1999: 13)

The internet can be invaluable in conquering geographical barriers, and some activists have been working to link up women who would otherwise have grave difficulty in communicating with one another due to their locations (Gajjala and Mamidipudi, 1999). A potent example of this is the efforts of Kebula Bray Crawford to link up indigenous women of the Pacific Islands through new media. Geographically isolated, these women are being introduced to 'cyberculture' by Crawford and finding new ways to communicate not only with other Pacific Islanders, but also with the wider world. Harcourt quotes Crawford as follows: 'including technology in our agenda is imperative...to stand face to face, shoulder to shoulder, back to back with our sisters...we can join hands in peace, virtual space can allow us to do it.' (Harcourt, 2000a: 53)

The campaign to increase female internet access has also brought publicity to other issues that feminism needs to address. For example, Richards and Schnall have reflected on how responses to Feminist.com has revealed that there is a need for US women's groups to create alternative job discrimination watchdogs to pressurise employers to meet their legal responsibilities. Complaints had been flooding in from women complaining that federal legislation did not apply to companies with less than 50 employees – in fact, it did. It appeared as if many of these women had experienced their situation in isolation, and not realised how widespread such discrimination is. Sharing injustices online corrects these misconceptions. Richards and Schnall believe that it also has other indirect benefits:

> People searching for "custody" or "unequal pay" or even "female roadsters" can be virtually introduced to feminist resources without having realized that feminism is what they needed, after all. They get the chance to grasp their connection to feminism without

> first having to confront it and overcome their biases against it. The process itself demystifies feminism (Richards and Schnall, 2003, authors' emphasis).

However, women need to be aware of how to use media effectively if they are to benefit from such sources – mere access is not sufficient. Virtual Sisterhood is an example of a number of organisations that aim to increase the efficacy of female internet use. Virtual Sisterhood is a global women's electronic support network that is dedicated to improving women's access and usage of new media (Virtual Sisterhood, 2000). It has a website, which supports an extensive network of women around the world, enabling them to frequently share information, advice and experiences with fellow activists. Resources on the site include a mailing list, archive information store and a consulting service for women on electronic information strategies and technical assistance for developing electronic information resources. A directory and resource guide is currently under development, as well as a comprehensive list of women and organisations involved in electronic communications and publishing, including service providers, trainers, information resource developers and activist groups. Organisers report that over a hundred different interest groups participate in international online discussions of women's internet strategies (ibid.). In addition, Virtual Sisterhood works with a transnational network of women's groups to develop 'Electronic Information Strategies' tailored to the specific needs of each organisation. In these efforts, founder Barbara O'Leary reports recently engaging 'with networks of women in Senegal, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Tunisia, West Bank and Gaza, USA, Canada and the Former Soviet Block amongst others...' (GeekGirl, 2003). Asked in an online interview by feminist e-zine 'GeekGirl' what the main issues were that women were discussing in the Virtual Sisterhood forum, O'Leary described how participants were actively supporting one another in refining their communication strategies:

> Women active in the vs-online-strat [Virtual Sisterhood online forum] discussions have been sharing information about their online work, exchanging information about the process – both the obstacles and the excitement – of getting their organizations online, thinking about what it means to have your own cyberspace and many other topics...(ibid.)

Cybergrrl is another example of a feminist site that attempts to help women activists use the internet more effectively (Sherman, 1998). Since it connects many like-minded women worldwide, it also has the additional benefit of promoting information exchange and encouraging transnational networking. It was established in January 1995, as a non-interactive site, comprising mainly of a list of resources for women. Since then, a number of features have been added, including a webpage called 'Girl Power' for teenage users to share experiences of adolescence, a 'Town Hall' forum whereby members can participate using bulletin board systems and real time chat, and a search engine that links to other complementary e-zines and sites (Cybergrrl, 2004). Members use the site for lively and thought-provoking discussion, for meeting and making

connections with others, for alerting others to job opportunities, or for promoting a book or other publication.

In a cyber-ethnographic study of feminist online communities, Ward (1999) asked the participants of Cybergrrl about their experiences using the site. The responses are worth reproducing here:

> The Village is really a place for us all to share thoughts and ideas, meet people and really connect.
>
> I find the Cybergrrl site to be a very positive place for women to explore the internet and participate in the creation of a community.
>
> I love the way we can all meet up here and there are so many people from such different backgrounds...it's so cool!
>
> Its so weird it's like we're all just sitting at our computers and we have created this world. It's almost spiritual.
>
> I feel like it's a community, sort of. I know some people by name and suspect they know me, too, although I've never directly talked to them...I know that some people read what I write and that gives me immense satisfaction. There are people around to help if there are problems. There are also black sheep around, and that's what rounds the picture. I find it difficult to keep closer relationships going in cybergrrl, but I have that problem in RL [real life] too. What else does a community need? (Ward, 1999: 9)

These extracts illustrate that despite the anonymous methods of communication that characterise use of new media, people can experience a sense of community online. It also demonstrates that diversity and broad participation are qualities appreciated by the community, rather than obstacles to communal feeling (Kennedy, 2000). The participants do not express a wish to pursue a more enclosed community, rather they value the fact that a range of people from 'different backgrounds' are members of the site. The feeling of community is not prevented by the delocalised nature of interaction, as vividly demonstrated by the fourth quote. In fact, the ability to communicate across vast distances seems to add to the vibrancy and dynamism of the community. The final quote is interesting in that it draws direct analogies between physical and virtual communities, suggesting that problems experienced online can also be replicated through face-to-face interaction. Thus, the difficulties and benefits of being a member of a physical or virtual community may have broad similarities (Spender, 1995; Nip, 2004).

However, virtual communities such as Cybergrrl tend to be more transient than physical communities. Participants tend to become involved with such virtual communities when they are experiencing problems and are seeking advice or support, and so much participation tends to be ad hoc. However, the personal testimonials above pay tribute to the great benefit that participants

derive from the resources and support of fellow members. It appears that members of Cybergrrl can experience a sense of unity from a shared goal of mutual support. Therefore, the notion of community holds, even though we are witnessing an ephemeral audience and a lack of long-term participation. This general principle can be said to be true of many similar virtual communities (Smith and Kollock, 1999).

Although it could be said that such an attitude contradicts the traditional 'public minded' spirit of community, it is important not to 'over-idealise' the experience of physical communities at the expense of virtual ones (Watson, 1997). In the modern 'real' world, it is increasingly common for people to be simultaneous members of a number of different communities, choosing to vary their level of participation according to their needs. This trend may be reflected in the virtual world as well (Green and Adam, 2001). Indeed, the participants of Cybergrrl and other similar sites seem to regard variable participation by fellow users as quite acceptable. As Ward observes: 'It seems that people enjoy the diversity they experience within their online communities and they overtly admit that they are being thoroughly instrumental in their choice of community.' (Ward, 1999: 12)

I now turn to consider some of the most notable virtual communities of the international women's movement by examining networking efforts related to the UN Beijing conference.

6.5.2. UN Beijing Conference

The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995, has been one of the most important catalysts for the use of new media by the international women's movement (Dickenson, 1997). Indeed, UN conferences from the Decade for Women (1976-85) onwards have been important stimuli for the emergence of transnational networks. Such international conferences have played an important part in legitimising women's issues and bringing together women's activists from around the world (Stewart, 2001: 227). In a study of women's participation in major UN conferences since the 1970s, Keck and Sikkink observe that these encounters 'generate the trust, information sharing, and discovery of common concerns that gives impetus to network formation' (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 169). Hsiung and Wong also stress the importance of this contact in their analysis of Chinese women's activism surrounding Beijing: '...the chance to enter the international arena provided individual women with an opportunity to forge new perceptions about themselves, renegotiate their marital relationships, and/or challenge those societal norms and practices that once governed their everyday lives' (Hsiung and Wong, 1998: 476). These personal transformations provided the inspiration for many women to become further involved in transnational activism.

More than any other previous conference, Beijing heralded the arrival of the internet era for women's methods of international networking (Dickenson, 1997: 109). Harcourt quotes Alice Gittler thus: 'Electronic communication allowed women to bypass mainstream media and still reach thousands...women who met online found an immediate network...One hundred thousand visits were made to the APC website on the Conference...When the International Women's Health Tribune Global FaxNet was posted on the web, over 80, 000 hits were recorded in the week before

the Beijing meetings.' (Harcourt, 2000a: 54) Thus, significant strides towards building a transnational network were made before the conference even began. Especially noteworthy in this regard was the Beijing95-L, a widely subscribed listserv discussion forum that included topics such as pre-conference events; NGO information; formal and informal reports on the current status of women; and job, volunteer, and organisational opportunities related to the conference (Beijing95-L, 1995). Another popular listserv was Beijing-Conf, which was supported by the UNDP and had subscribers from 55 countries, including 28 developing countries – as a result, Southern concerns and Southern perspectives on conference issues tended to be very prominent on this list (Beijing-Conf, 1995). There was also a dedicated UN Women's Conference website, and alternative sites such as NGO Forum Daily, the US National Organisation for Women, WomensWeb Canada and Virtual Sisterhood. Particularly active were the discussion forums that were established on the UNDP website, that attracted thousands of postings from hundreds of delegates and other interested parties across the globe (Womenwatch, 1999).

The online conversations were not just related to conference-specific issues, but also encompassed wider debates about the future direction of feminism and feminist campaigning. Moreover, communication between activists continued long after the conference. Numerous posts subsequent to the conference expressed genuine excitement about the potential of the internet to enable effective cross-border mobilisation, such as this extract from a post on the UNDP Women-Rights list:

> We can organize across national boundaries and really have an impact. The Internet offers a way to communicate with one another and coordinate our efforts. Surely if tens of thousands can go to Seattle to demonstrate against WTO, then hundreds of thousands of us can use the Internet – and our buying power – to make our views felt in corporate headquarters of companies exploiting women (Women-Rights List Archive, 1999).

Part of the reason for this enthusiasm for the internet was it provided a flexible alternative to old media – aspects of which have been widely criticised by feminists as oppressive and sexist (e.g. van Zoonen, 1991, 1994; Valdivia, 1995; Douglas, 1995). In the extract below from a post on the UNDP Women-Media list, a delegate who is a specialist on NGO networks summarises her research on the empowerment of women through communication, information exchange and networking:

> Women are using whatever media are most useful and appropriate to communicate and exchange information at any given time or place: songs, e-mail, posters, the web, poems, video, plays, magazines, radio, drawings...However, the so-called "traditional" media, which in many places are really the "mainstream" media...are often used to misinform, distort and disempower women...Over the years I have also seen many women's groups successfully use new technologies for information sharing and communication (Women-Media List Archive, 1999a).

The creative use of alternative media channels by women activists described above will be illustrated further below (section 6.5., p. 143). The co-founder of ISIS International, a NGO that aims to help contribute and promote the empowerment of women through new media, urged all those on-list to continue with such efforts, proposing the following manifesto:

> We women must create alternatives in different media and use them to inform and empower women, to get women out of their isolation. We must make ourselves more visible and audible so that our concerns do not remain unarticulated and unattended. Not only must we evolve alternative messages but alternative methods of working together; methods which are more democratic and participatory and which break the divide between 'media makers and media takers' (Women-Media List Archive, 1999b).

The above is an example of many similar postings that proposed a media-centric strategy to the broad goal of women's empowerment, in which new media, and especially the internet, were identified as vital resources. In the above extract, there is also an appeal for grassroots to assert their influence over media flow and product, which was echoed elsewhere in the conversation thread. Intriguing and detailed discussions developed on actual strategies to implement such goals (Women-Media Archive, 2003). An example comes from one delegate who was a frequent poster: Doe Mayer, a Project Director of 'Women Connect', an initiative of the Pacific Institute for Women's Health in California. 'Women Connect' aims to strengthen the communication and advocacy skills of women's rights organisations, particularly emphasising the value of transnational networking online (PIWH, 2003). Mayer explains the goals of 'Women Connect' further, whilst first acknowledging the limitations of mere access to new media without an ongoing support strategy:

> Clearly, wiring groups to the Internet is not sufficient to enhance communication capability or an organization's broader mission. Rather, we take the view that it is only by strengthening an organization's entire range of communication capacities that it will be able to clearly define its own mission and become truly sustainable. Thus we offer a two-pronged approach to communications. One component is to strengthen communication strategy skills by working with groups to define their messages, audience and media choices (from low-end posters and brochures to television and radio) and their organizational capability to reevaluate and sustain these efforts. The other component provides technical assistance in how to utilize email and the Internet to strengthen partnerships, find sources of funding, stay linked internationally, and learn from sister organizations. Our strategy is to work with umbrella organizations and networks that represent and collaborate with grassroots women's groups (Women-Media List Archive, 1999c).

Such projects demonstrate the sophisticated methods that the women's movement have adopted to deal with the challenge of adapting to a new media environment. Information exchange through the UNDP website about these projects have enabled women's groups to adapt their own working methods, or to forge links with others for assistance. Hence, debates that initially began online with specific regard to the Beijing conference have contributed to highly productive networking that has extended well beyond the duration of the conference (Steans, 2003: 89).

There is also a strong sense of community amongst the posters on the UNDP listservs, as exemplified by the sentiments expressed and language used in the extracts above. The emphasis has been on female solidarity, on building and strengthening linkages between fellow activists, and on mastering new media to help serve the goals of the wider women's movement. What is evident from all the extracts above is a common determination to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by new media to bolster the transnational community of women activists.

Moreover, this has proved successful because the extra publicity that women were able to generate about Beijing using new media meant that conference news was better able to reach women who had previously been isolated from UN events. To illustrate, Hsiung and Wong quote one Chinese woman participant thus:

> Although the first World Conference on Women had been held in Mexico City in 1975, and the UN had accepted a proposal by the Conference that 1976-1985 be declared the 'UN Decade for Women', my colleagues and I on the staff on the journal *Women of China* did not even have this basic information. We used to think anything related to foreign countries should be the responsibility of the Foreign Affairs Department...[and] nothing to do with us or our work (Hsiung and Wong, 1998: 477).

Luo Xiaolu, another participant, also told of how the conference increased her awareness of the transnational nature of women's issues, and strengthened her resolve to engage in cross-border communication with other women activists:

> ...I realised that many aspects of women's issues transcend national boundaries and other differences. Women throughout the world face many common problems. However, we have little opportunity to communicate, especially between China and foreign countries. In China we talk about 'women-work' [*funu gongzuo*], while women elsewhere speak of the 'women's movement' or 'feminism'. This difference is caused by lack of communication. So, I feel the first thing we need to do is communicate, among ourselves and with women abroad. Even though people many have different ways of doing and thinking things, or may even have different starting points, our goal and objectives are the same (ibid.: 483).

Since Beijing, there has been continued growth of women's transnational networking, particularly with regard to the recent Beijing+5 Review Conference. The International Women's Tribune Centre (IWTC) have capitalised on the gains made at Beijing by setting up a website for

the five year review, and organising a sixteen member coalition via a global network of websites to share information and track progress with cooperation with WomenWatch, the UN women's internet resource (Womenwatch, 2003a). The listservs mentioned above are still highly active in discussing the implementation of the Women's Conference and Social Summit agreements, and post-regional and post-conference follow ups. There have also been new websites established such as WomenAction, that act as a 'global information, communication and media network that enables NGOs to actively engage in the Beijing+5 review process with the long term goal of women's empowerment', accessible in English, French and Spanish (WomenAction, 2004). Access to such internet resources now seems to be widely regarded as a *necessity* for conference participants: in WomenWatch's words, 'as a tool for women's empowerment' (WomenWatch, 2003b).

I now turn to consider specific examples of new media being used for purposes of empowerment, by examining the political activities and campaigns of women's groups worldwide.

6.5.3. Campaigning and Mobilisation Through New Media

Small women's groups across the world have been able to network and connect with one another using new media, transcending cultural, political, racial and ethnic barriers (Weise, 1996). Such networking enables information to be exchanged, experiences to be shared, and solidarities to be forged (Marcella, 2002). Transnational networking can be traced back decades before the advent of new media, when women's movements began to organise around issues 'that placed their existence and their physical bodies on the agenda at the international level in such a manner so as to sever the cord between the public and the private arena of women's lives.' (Harcourt, Rabinovitch and Alloo, 2002: 43) However, media such as the internet have enhanced these networking abilities radically (Harcourt, 2000b).

Harcourt, Rabinovitch and Alloo believe that women's movements have a distinctive identity of their own owing to shared gendered experiences. They recognise the obvious cultural and geographical differences in conflicts of the body and the home, but still argue that it is increasingly possible to identify a 'common purpose' amongst women's groups engaged in place-based politics around home and body:

> A common language has emerged from long years of local, national and international struggles that renders their goals more legitimate and transparent, and adds to the strength of their appeals. From the local experience of place-based politics and the exchange and mutual support that occurs in networking, strategies for their struggles are crafted and activated (Harcourt, Rabinovitch and Alloo, 2002: 44).

There is increasing appreciation of the importance of balancing cultural sensitivities with the pursuit of international solidarities when formulating such strategies. An example of this is BaBe, a Croatian women's human rights organisation (BaBe, 2004). Most of BaBe's research and lobbying happens within Croatia, however it pursues international links in several ways. For

instance, its website is in English as well as Croatian, workshops are headed and run by the organisation in several other countries, and it cooperates to a large degree with other NGOs outside the country. There are also numerous examples of transnational networks that provide forums for the interaction of grassroots women's groups. For instance, Health Empowerment Rights and Accountability (HERA) is a transnational network of researchers and women's organisations, coordinated by the International Women's Health Coalition, which advocates a gender and reproductive health and rights approach. It aims to raise awareness of the importance of women's rights at the international level by a number of methods such as online updates, briefing cards, consultations and workshops (HERA, 2002). Another transnational network that promotes reproductive rights is the International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group (IRRRAG), which collaborates with Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) and a number of other well-known groups such as the Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Coalition and the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights. They have been active in cooperative efforts to put reproductive rights on the global agenda, and have advised on the direction of policy in seven countries where they have a presence: the USA, the Philippines, Brazil, Egypt, Malaysia, Mexico and Nigeria (IRRAG, 2001). Women Living Under Muslim Law (WLUML) is a network that connects women's groups operating in strict Islamic laws and customs with feminist and progressive groups elsewhere in the world (WLUML, 2004). It aims to empower Muslim women by building solidarity within and outside the Muslim world. Whilst the organisation is concerned with helping women live their lives in specific Islamic locations, it is simultaneously involved in exchange and mobilisation at an international level.

Such binary methods of operation are evident in countless other women's organisations. A range of examples follows to indicate the wide diversity of these movements. FEMNET is an online network that connects African women's rights NGOs, and facilitates communication and information dissemination amongst these groups and government and UN agencies (FEMNET, 2002). Abantu is a London-based African organisation that campaigns on sustainable development and gender issues (Tripp, 2003). The afore-mentioned DAWN is a Southern-based human rights group that cooperates with the Northern-based Network Women in Development Europe (WIDE) for regular strategy meetings (Rivera, 1995). The International Women's Health Coalition operates with partner NGOs in developing countries in four continents to promote women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (IWHC, 2004). WomenAction is a global information, communication and media network that provides an access point for NGOs to contribute to the Beijing+5 Review Project (WomenAction, 2004). The Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women is a network that that works closely with grassroots migrant organisations and promotes the human rights of trafficked women and migrant workers worldwide (GAATW, 2002). These organisations do not just operate as networks within themselves, but are also linked to one another by mutual connections, creating an even larger web of people working together to achieve ideologically similar goals.

Despite hugely disproportionate access to the internet in Africa and the rest of the South, there is encouraging evidence that women's groups in the developing world are increasingly making effective use of online resources. As some of the examples above suggest, women's groups in the South are increasingly using new media to expand and support their efforts to promote equality and social justice (Kole, 2001). The ways in which technology been applied varies considerably owing to local availability of new media. Often traditional communication methods are used in conjunction with new media. Women's groups have adopted differing strategies according to their needs and resources, often demonstrating considerable creativity and inventiveness to overcome numerous obstacles (Mbambo, 1999; Youngs, 2000).

One particular case that exemplifies this resourcefulness is that of Sakshi, an Indian women's rights NGO that lobbies for sexual harassment legislation. The group has very limited access to the internet, so in order to assist their efforts, they requested help from members of the Association of Progressive Communications (APC) Women's Networking Support Programme. Demonstrating the type of camaraderie and collaboration that is common in the international women's movement, APC women undertook internet research to help Sakshi build up their case. They also published Sakshi's work on numerous mailing lists, with the caution that anyone wishing to support the group do so in a manner considerate of their limited online capacity: 'Please be aware that the SAKSHI organisation is hanging on the end of a very high-cost email linkup that is *not* Internet. While they welcome your constructive input and queries, please do not begin sending lengthy documents to them without first making sure with them that they are willing to receive what you send.' (APC, 2003) As a result of online efforts supporting Sakshi's campaign the Supreme Court of India passed landmark legislation in 1997 on a writ filed by the NGO, which, as Sakshi reported proudly, '...laid down guidelines to obviate such harassment at places of work and at other institutions...Most significant, the Supreme Court has brought sexual harassment within the purview of human rights violations.' (ibid.)

There are numerous instances of Southern women's groups using the internet to mobilise international support for a local campaign that takes place at a local level, demonstrating a dual configuration of space. For example, Bal Rashmi is a NGO based in Rajasthan, India – one of the poorest areas of the subcontinent. It has brought attention to women's experiences of rape, torture and dowry death through advocacy work. When the Indian government arrested the leaders of Bal Rashmi and filed bogus criminal cases against them, other members used the internet to contact women's networks and human rights organisation in India, South Asia, Europe and the USA. A transnational appeal was then coordinated, which within a few weeks, had faxes and letters pouring into the National Human Rights Commission, and the national and the Rajasthan state governments. The pressure this generated led to an investigation being set up and the eventual quashing of all the cases (Amnesty International, 2000).

A similar case is that of Shirkat Gah, one of the very few women's groups in Pakistan that have resources to access the internet. They have used websites such as the GREAT network in East Anglia to publicise their campaign for the prosecution of honour killings. The contacts they made

through the internet were used to mobilise support for Shirkat Gah when it was threatened with closure after Punjab police and state authorities claimed in the press that they had illegally received millions of dollars from the World Bank (Shirkat Gah, 2003).

Some women who link up to these sites are able to express themselves in ways that would be impossible – even dangerous – to do so locally or nationally. For instance, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, an obviously outlawed organisation during the years of the Taliban, used the internet to share their stories of suffering with a global audience by setting up their own website in 1997 (RAWA, 1997). The internet provided a crucial resource for the courageous women of RAWA to counteract their otherwise total isolation from the world. It served as a gateway for a variety of other concerned pressure groups to make contact that would have been simply impossible otherwise. Indeed, since the Taliban did not allow journalists in Afghanistan, the RAWA site was often the only unauthorised source of information on conditions there. The website continues to operate as a means to solicit aid and to encourage sister organisations to invite RAWA representatives to speak at their events. One example of RAWA's past appeals has been a request posted on the site for small cameras that could be easily concealed under veils, in order to capture images of public executions and whippings by the Taliban. Hundreds were sent in from all over the world (Lynch, 2001).

As well as the Zapatista movement, Mexico is home to other advocacy groups that have made innovative and remarkably successful use of the internet. One of the most well known is ModemMujer (Modern Woman). This section will conclude with an extended look at their work. ModemMujer was created in 1995 as a joint initiative of five women's organisations in Mexico City in order to facilitate and improve communication and information exchange between urban and rural areas (ModemMujer, 2004). During the Beijing conference, a three-woman team behind ModemMujer sent regular information and updates to women's NGOs and individual activists with email facilities, in turn these supporters sent out the information via fax, radio, press, and other means. Through this route, the conference team also received information from around Mexico that enabled them to refine their positions, direct their lobbying efforts in the right places, and pass details to the official Mexico delegation NGO representatives. They were so successful in this regard that in the delegation NGO post-conference report, ModemMujer were endorsed as the official communicators for the follow-up conference (ibid.). ModemMujer demonstrate how well the use of new media can enhance a wider, more traditional communications strategy.

Since then, ModemMujer have continued to expand their operations, including the coordination of an APC conference, pursuing cooperation with other women's movements, and the creation of a website and an active electronic mailing list (APC, 2003). A number of campaigns have been carried out that have been resolved successfully due to effective use of these resources. Two in particular illustrate the breadth of ModenMujer's political activity: one regarding an individual case of an imprisoned woman, the other an international collaborative effort on behalf of women's reproductive health.

The first case is that of Claudia Rodriguez, who spent over a year in prison for the killing of her would-be rapist. She was awaiting trial and faced the possibility of a further 15 years in jail. There was an outcry over her sentence amongst women's activists all over Mexico, since the case was widely perceived as a miscarriage of justice, and it set a worrying precedent for women in similar circumstances. A protest movement formed, with the common slogan of 'As long as Claudia is a prisoner, we are all prisoners.' (Smith, 2000) ModemMujer sent out information on Claudia's situation to hundreds of women and women's organisations in Mexico, Latin America and the US, with a call to write letters to the President, the Secretary of State and the Department of Justice. Letters were sent from all over Mexico, and from as far afield as Cuba, Argentina, Colombia, Bolivia, Canada and the US. In addition, groups of women organised protests at the hearing process. Eventually, Rodriguez was freed – and although the verdict review maintained that she used 'excessive force' – the judge refrained from sentencing her to a further five years in jail (Harcourt, 2000a: 51).

The second case relates to a public tribunal held in Mexico on May 28th 1999, the International Day of Action for Women's Health, where for the first time ever, individual women collectively filed suit against the Mexican state's health care apparatus. A jury of experts in human rights and reproductive health heard multiple charges of involuntary sterilisation, and grievous medical malpractice resulting in child or maternal death. Publicity for the event and the search for potential claimants were carried out by local LaNeta (the Mexican internet provider) conferences and a tribunal website. ModemMujer posted analysis and results of the process to their mailing list and to APC conferences, which was met by an enthusiastic response throughout Latin America (Smith, 2000). New working relationships have been forged between women's groups in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America, and a Spanish electronic forum to share information and activities on women's reproductive health throughout the continent is currently under construction (APC, 2003).

The activities of ModemMujer and other Southern-based women's groups demonstrate that participation in the international women's movement on the internet is more intense and wider in scope than the figures on disproportionate global internet access initially suggest. It also indicates that like the international women's movement of the past, women have found imaginative and effective ways of networking across state borders to voice concerns, express solidarity and attempt to achieve common political goals.

I now turn to examine another movement that has made empowering and creative use of new media: the Zapatista movement.

6.6. The Zapatista Movement

The indigenous Zapatista rebellion in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas has developed into a fascinating case study of how new media can be utilised to mobilise transnational support for localised politics (Holloway and Peláez, 1998). It is an example of what Routledge terms

'globalised local action', where 'the virtual geography of the internet becomes entangled with the materiality of place, local knowledge, and concrete action.' (Routledge, 2001: 31) The Zapatistas have built upon local initiatives to create transnational networks of communication, solidarity, information sharing and mutual support with activists around the world (Routledge, 1998).

The internet rapidly became a crucial tool for the Zapatista movement, which appears paradoxical since electricity and telephones are extremely scarce if available at all in the rural areas of Chiapas, much less internet access (van der Haar, 2004). Nevertheless, this unlikely setting is the origin of what has been popularly termed the world's first 'postmodern revolution' (Burbach, 1994). Pro-Zapatista mobilisation has reached across five continents and dozens of countries, generating the rapid growth of much wider activism (Olesen, 2004a). Moreover, support for the rebellion has evolved into a 'kind of electronic fabric of opposition' against neoliberalism (Cleaver, 1998a). Indeed, Cleaver argues that these networks 'are providing the nerve system of increasingly global challenges to the dominant economic policies of this period and in the process undermining the distinction between domestic and foreign policy and even the present constitution of the nation state.' (Cleaver, 1998b: 622)

Initially, the Mexican government presented the suppression of the Chiapas rebellion as a necessary measure to preserve national integrity. However, the Zapatistas were able to effectively rebut this claim by communicating to the outside world via email bulletins that the movement sought indigenous autonomy only within the state (Kampwirth, 1996). There was broad participation in these sources of information, which enabled quick verification of erroneous reports. Dubious information can be subjected to rapid rebuttal through new media far faster than through print or broadcast media. Thus, from the early stages, the internet provided an important means for the rapid dissemination of information by pro-Zapatistas (Russell, 2001a).

A significant amount of activity took place through pre-existing networks, such as the anti-NAFTA movement, or those centred on Latin American or indigenous issues (Gilbreth and Otero, 2001; Johnson and Laxter, 2003). Such groupings were mainly international and largely comprised of North American and Western European members (Couch, 2001). News reports on television and radio were accompanied by first-hand observation reports and specialist analytical commentary on the internet. Soon, a number of specialised web pages and news and discussion lists were created, specifically dedicated to tracking the situation in Chiapas. This internet activity helped to attract international attention – within days human rights organisations appealed for donations and volunteers for humanitarian observation, and had besieged the Mexican and US government with letters and emails of protest (Stahler-Sholk, 2001). Human rights caravans were sent from the US to Mexico, with cooperation with Mexican organisations (Cleaver, 1998b).

Information circulated online also had the effect of enhancing the scope of reports in traditional media. An example is the *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, a small progressive newspaper in California, whose detailed reports on Chiapas reached a national audience on the internet (Russell, 2001b). A notable instance here was a report regarding a leaked memorandum from Chase Manhattan Bank urging the Mexican government to deal decisively with the Zapatistas, which was

circulated widely online and led to protests about the government acting at the seeming behest of international capital. In a posting to an online discussion list, Harry Cleaver describes how quickly and effectively the community of international activists were able to coalesce in response to this call for action:

> The Chase Manhattan report to emerging investors, written by Riordan Roett was on the Net when Ken Silverstein called me up and told me about it. He faxed me a copy which I typed up into e-text and posted. The extremely rapid circulation of that report resulted in widespread mobilization in the US against Chase. It was one of those rare moments of frankness that just happened to fall into the hands of those for whom "investment" in Mexico means support for democracy and indigenous rights, not profit-making. We made good use of it to illustrate the forces behind the military's actions (Cleaver, 1998c).

Fax protests against Mexican consulates were supplemented by direct action, including organised demonstrations in February 1997 outside 36 consulates in the US in support of Mexican constitutional reforms (Bellinghausen, 1997). Tamara Ford describes a similarly rapid and 'overwhelming' international response to a wave of paramilitary killings of Zapatista supporters and civilians in Chiapas:

> There have been letter-writing campaigns and forms of virtual protest. Chiapas95 has distributed hundreds of reports from demonstrations in dozens of countries in recent weeks. There were various proposals for coordinated Net action, including a Net-Strike targeted at the servers of Mexican Financial Centers. Another proposal that circulated on the Net was a project to provide indigenous communities with video equipment and training to document human rights abuses. This project actually got under way in Chiapas within weeks but its director was promptly and illegally deported by the Mexican government. News of *this* development also circulated with great speed (Wired, 1998).

Following these protests, the Zapatistas and the government eventually opened negotiations with each other. Internet use by determined campaigners forced Televisa, Mexico's largely state-controlled TV network, to report the official demands of the guerrillas at crucial moments in negotiations with the Mexican government (Newswire, 1996).

As the above examples suggest, apart from some direct input from senior lieutenants, the Zapatista movement in general has had a very mediated relationship to the internet. The hyped-up image of troop leaders using 'a portable laptop computer to issue orders to other EZLN units via a modem' has no basis in actual evidence (US Army, cited in Swett, 1995). The indigenous peoples are not only poor but often cut off from electricity and telephone systems. To overcome this, EZLN materials were initially prepared as written communiqués for the mass media and passed to sympathetic reporters. Such materials were then either scanned or typed up for distribution on the internet (Russell, 2001b). Thus, EZLN presence on the internet is often not direct, but rather the

result of the efforts of supporters who are willing to relay communiqués, coordinate actions, and distribute information. Senior lieutenant Subcomandante Marcos, describes how new media shifted the balance of power from the government to the rebels:

> There are people that have put us on the Internet, and the *zapatismo* has occupied a space of which nobody had thought. The Mexican political system has gained its international prestige in the media thanks to its informational control, its control over the production of news, control over news anchors, and also thanks to its control over journalists through corruption, threats and assassinations. This is a country where journalists are assassinated with a certain frequency. The fact that this type of news has sneaked out through a channel that is uncontrollable, efficient and fast is a very tough blow. The problem that anguishes Gurria [secretary of foreign affairs] is that he has to fight an image he cannot control from Mexico, because the information is simultaneously everywhere (Froehling, 1997: 297).

The quick mobilisation of international support was partly due to the existence of electronic communities opposed to NAFTA, who regarded the Jan 1st 1994 date of the initial uprising as especially symbolic – coinciding as it did with the Mexican inauguration of NAFTA (Olesen, 2004a). The iconic figure of Subcomandante Marcos has also been an important factor behind the media success of the Zapatistas. His literary writing style, media-savvy and mysterious image have combined to make him something of a cult personality. He has been interviewed by a variety of media outlets (De Huerta and Higgins, 1999).

Another factor that has contributed to the rebel's success has been the superiority of pro-Zapatista web resources compared to that of the Mexican government. The constantly updated information, attractive designs and swift navigation of these websites contrasted well with poorly maintained government sites. In the offices of the state bodies, two different official pages were in operation and many ministries failed to update their information for more than six months at a time (Cevallos, 1998). However, the Zapatista network would prove a significant challenge for most governments – indeed, they had the honour in the late 1990s of being named by Wired magazine as the best organised and most dynamic Web presence of any political group anywhere (Wired, 1998). The Mexican government is well aware of the way the internet has been used to undermine its credibility and challenge its policies. As early as April 1995, Mexican Secretary of State, Jose Angel Guru, was publicly defining the conflict in Chiapas as a 'war of ink and Internet.' (Froehling, 1997: 304)

However, perhaps the most important factor behind the broad range of support that the Zapatistas managed to attract can be partly explained by their refusal to be defined by any traditional political ideology, which struck a chord with many progressive activists disillusioned by the fate of socialist politics in the last century. The Zapatistas present proposals to be contemplated and adapted, but they purposely omit the exact framework and details of their ideas in order to foster dialogue that is central to their main goal of political autonomy (New Internationalist, 2001). Hence, their initial list of demands was as expansive and non-specific as possible, calling for

'housing, land, health care, work, bread, education, information, culture, independence, democracy, justice, liberty and peace.' (Rosen, 1996: 2) Another notable declaration was 'A Woman's Revolutionary Law' (EZLN, 1994a). This was a list of demands for women's rights that reflected the prominence of women in the Zapatista army – one-third of the total (Routledge, 2002).

The obstacles to the realisation of Zapatista goals were described as 'economic elites' who 'pillage the wealth of our country', who have 'sold half our country to the foreign invader', who 'don't care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing' (EZLN, 1994b); 'the omnipotent power of the cattle ranchers and businessman and penetration of drug traffic' (EZLN, 1994c); and the anti-democratic political system that supports these elites. The enemy was defined as international neoliberalism, since: 'When we rose up against a national government, we found that it did not exist. In reality we were up against great financial capital, against speculation and investment, which makes all the decisions in Mexico, as well as in Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania, the Americas – everywhere.' (Starr, 2000: 104) The Zapatistas adopted the rallying cry of 'Enough!' as a slogan, to symbolise the rejection of neoliberalism and economic globalisation. Allies in the Zapatista struggle have been identified as victims of multiple oppressions from around the world: in the past the movement has expressed support for homosexuals, ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples and ecological perspectives. In expressing the spirit of Zapatismo, Subcomandante Marcos once wrote 'in San Francisco, Marcos is gay...Marcos is all of the minorities who are untolerated, oppressed, resisting, exploding, saying "Enough".' (ibid.: 105) Such declarations were circulated widely on the internet and became staples of the websites managed by the self-styled 'intercontinental cyberspace liberation fleet' behind the EZLN.

In an interview with e-zine 'Wired News', Tamara Ford, joint administrator of Accion Zapatista and ZapNet Collective, speculated some of the reasons why the Zapatista campaign won such strong international support:

> ...there is a larger Zapatista discourse – reflecting a very profound commitment from the indigenous communities willing to put their lives on the line – that most people don't get to see. It's not printed in our newspapers. That's why the Net's been so important in distributing information that allows people to go beyond any romantic limitations of the left. Moreover, most of the Zapatista supporters are engaged in their local struggles, which they see as very connected to what the EZLN is fighting for. Thus, the idea of the "other" is collapsing. We are one (Wired, 1998).

This quote makes the direct appeal to a sense of solidarity and common identity amongst Zapatista supporters worldwide that is typical of activist material relating to the Zapatistas (Stahler-Sholk, 2001). The virtual community is constituted by a shared experience of oppression under conditions of liberal economic globalisation and the ability to communicate with one another using new media (Olesen, 2004b).

The government's counter-insurgency efforts have been muddled and largely ineffective. One common suspicion has been that the government has attempted to sabotage the rebel's

computer link at certain intervals. An example occurred with the release of the Zapatista demands in 1995, when just before the declaration was due to be posted, Laneta (the Mexican internet provider) was down. The connection was quickly restored by re-routing the information (Newswire, 1996). Regardless of whether there was any substance to the conspiracy rumours, the incident illustrates the difficulties surrounding official censoring of the internet.

Indeed, far from being censored, the online activity surrounding the Zapatistas hugely proliferated. Today, there are hundreds of web pages with detailed information on the Chiapas situation and numerous news and discussion lists that circulate daily updates of information (e.g. Accion Zapatista de Austin, 2003; EZLN, 2004). Some efforts originate in Mexico such as the list Chiapas-1, which is run through the UNAM computers in Mexico City, or the FZLN-1 list, which in run by the Frente Zapatisa de Liberacion Nacional (FZLN, or the Zapatista National Liberation Front). (Chiapas-1, 2004; FZLN-1, 2004) The origins of others lie outside of Mexico: for example, the first unofficial EZLN web page was run through the Swathmore web server in Pennsylvania, USA. There are also major Zapatista sites hosted in Austin, Texas and Dublin, Ireland (Accion Zapatista de Austin, 2004; Irish Mexico Group, 2004).

The online activity relating to the Zapatistas was typically diffuse as one would expect from the medium of the internet. However, what began as an interlinked set of spontaneous actions has over time evolved into something more organised. Certain sites such as MexNews operate a cooperative division of labour where a group of subscribers take individual responsibility for uploading and posting relevant material from particular sources to other sites and lists such as Chiapas-1 and Mexico2000. Another site has been specifically set up to repost the very best material from these postings to provide an effective summary for casual observers or those pressed for time (Chiapas95, 2004). Thus, skills, resources and information are pooled in order to benefit the group of subscribers as a whole.

These sites have recently joined together in an attempt to create an Intercontinental Network of Alternative Communication, where groups that are concerned about the situation in Chiapas and related issues of global neoliberalism are able to exchange information and coordinate strategies. As such, discussion on these sites has moved from a specific event in time – the indigenous uprising – to broader issues of capitalism and the state (Gallaher and Froehling, 2002). This is a development promoted by the Zapatistas themselves and one that suggests that the electronic communities that have grown around the Zapatista movement do not represent a temporary coalition (Watson, 2002).

Also worthy of note are a number of innovative media products that have been produced by Zapatista supporters and have contributed to the evolving debate. An example is the electronic book *Zapatistas! Documents of the New Mexican Revolution* that was put together by an email coordinated team, translating material largely gathered from the discussion lists mentioned above (Autonomedia, 1994). The book has pointedly not been copyrighted, in order to assist with its widest possible dissemination. It has been made available online as well as in hard copy. There are collaborative efforts underway at present to produce an electronic English translation of the only

existing archive of material relating to the activities and thoughts of women in Chiapas since the uprising. A third example is the collective construction of a multimedia CD on the Zapatistas that collates notable text and images from the internet with relevant music and video clips to provide an overview of the uprising, its background and its effects (Cleaver, 1998a: 7). Such efforts have been supplemented with pirate video circulation for 'teach-ins', the compilation of pro-Zapatista interviews and indigenous music on audiotape, and the use of pirate radio and community-access TV to counter biased coverage in the state-controlled media (ibid.). These alternative media sources have been useful in disseminating the messages behind the Zapatista cause to those who are unable to access the internet.

The virtual community of protesters have also organised opportunities for face-to-face interaction. The first international conference in Chiapas – the Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and against Neoliberalism – was held in August 1996. This event, which had been preceded by similar encounters in Europe, America and Asia, brought together activists from all over the world in a show of protest against 'neoliberalism', in the name of 'humanity'. There were 3, 000 attendees from five continents and 42 countries (Cleaver, 1998b: 627). Since then, the conference has become an annual event, and an important fixture in the calendar of the global anti-corporate movement. The conference serves to reinforce the wider international implications of the Zapatista struggle as well as maintain political pressure domestically to meet indigenous demands (Routledge, 2001: 26). The presence of some political and celebrity figures at subsequent conferences have aroused wider media attention, such as US film director Oliver Stone, Danielle Mitterand, widow of the late French president, and celebrated French activist Jose Bove. Newspapers such as *The Guardian* that have regularly covered the conferences have marvelled on the extraordinary transformation of the Zapatistas from a small guerrilla army to 'an international cultural movement...emphasised by the remarkable mixture of supporters flocking the streets, from the capital's smartly turned out bourgeoisie to body-pierced and pink-haired punks...and dungareed Italian anti-globalisers.' (Campbell, 2001) Indeed, despite the years that have passed since the original uprising, the Zapatistas have been so successful in consolidating and maintaining their international support that no diminution of internet activity surrounding the movement can be readily envisaged in the near future.

Unlike the loose network of Zapatista supporters, Greenpeace is a movement organised in a conventional, hierarchical manner. However, it has made efforts to encourage greater input from its members through new media. I now turn to examine Greenpeace and the international environmental movement.

6.7. Greenpeace and the International Environmental Movement

The international environmental movement has also been highly active in using new media to build cross-border alliances. As with the women's movement, UN conferences (such as the UN Conference on Environment and Development – UNCED) have proved an important stimulus for

many NGOs to develop their transnational contacts. Caroline Thomas has suggested that increased interconnections are best conceptualised as 'the process whereby power is located in global social formations and expressed through global networks rather than through territorially-based states.' (Thomas, 1997: 6) In his account of emerging global environmental governance, Lipschutz cites a number of examples of networks that have proved influential in environmental politics, such as the Climate Action Network (CAN), the Global Rivers Environmental Educational Network (GREEN) and the River Watch Network (Lipschutz, 1997: 88), as well as individual campaigns such as over the Mattole watershed in northern California (ibid.: 93), the Amazon rainforest (ibid.: 93-4), Love Canal (ibid.: 94) and the residents of Owens Valley in Eastern California against Los Angeles (ibid.: 95). Keck and Sikkink's review of notable environmental transnational advocacy networks details the multilateral development bank campaign (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 135-147) and the campaign against deforestation in Sarawak (ibid.: 150-160). There is a vast literature about the activities of the international environmental movement that describes the importance of new media in achieving their campaign goals (e.g. Steel, 1996; Mancusi-Materi, 1999; Wapner, 2002; Lubell, 2002; Agyeman, 2002; Pickerill, 2003). These examples illustrate how global networking can create numerous possibilities for widespread resistance to environmental degradation, even where the damage may be localised. Increasingly, governments and TNCs have to account for the possibility of such resistance in their political or business strategies. As Paul Preston, President of McDonald's UK, has mused (alluding to the infamous 'McLibel' case): 'one downside of globalisation may be that local incidents soon become international crises' (quoted to Paterson, 2001: 149).

It is important to note that some environmental groups perceive computer technology to be environmentally damaging, lest the impression is given that there is a consensus within the environmental movement that the internet is an intrinsic good. Glosserman outlines some of the environmental consequences of computer production:

> Production of a single PC requires 33, 000 liters of water, generates 290 kg of waste and consumes 5, 000 kwh of energy. Average use during one year sucks up 85 kwh, although being attentive and careful can cut that figure to about 40 kwh...Take the entire production process, including the mining of the rare metals and the manufacturing of chips, and you've got a lot of petrochemicals and silicon in that box on your desk. (Glosserman, 1996)

Perhaps this may partially explain why Zelwietro (1998), in a survey of the use of the internet in environmental organisations in ten countries, found that awareness of the internet's capabilities for environmental organising was significantly greater than incidents of use. However, there has been a steady growth of environmental groups online over the last decade, with evidence that the majority perceive the internet to be a more environmentally inert medium than paper (White, 2000). For example, Barry Weeber of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society has

been quoted in the *New Zealand Herald* as saying that he hopes that companies who produce mass mail-outs will switch to the internet for a replacement (Wells, 1998).

The remainder of this section shall concentrate on the networking activities of one of the most well-known and successful global environmental organisations: Greenpeace. Greenpeace has developed into a significant transnational political force, and over the last decade has made pioneering use of the internet as a tool in its environmental campaigns. Indeed, to many environmental organisations, Greenpeace has become something of an exemplar in effective use of new media to achieve campaign goals (Dolmage et al, 1999).

Greenpeace's first basic webpage was set up on August 30th, 1994. Progress was quick. Within less than a month a major ozone campaign site had been set up, and within a year, it had publicised a secret nuclear shipment route from France to Japan and listed the fax number of the French Embassy and newspaper Le Monde where letters of protest could be sent (Greenpeace, 2002a). Reportedly, the French government received enough faxes to demand that Greenpeace remove the fax number from its page.

Five years later, Greenpeace were using more sophisticated technology to attract attention to their campaigns. In June 2000, activists installed a webcam at the end of an underwater radioactive discharge pipe operated by the French nuclear agency Cogema, in la Hague, France, to provide live documentation of nuclear waste discharges. These images were broadcast by Greenpeace onto the internet and onto a screen at the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) in Copenhagen, where delegates were discussing the future of nuclear reprocessing (Greenpeace, 2002b). Nearly 2, 500 visitors to the Greenpeace website were also able send messages to OSPAR delegates, by posting mails that were then broadcast on the screen. The situation took on a surreal dimension, when Cogema sent down divers with a banner to display before the webcam, claiming that the discharges had 'Zero Impact'. Nevertheless, the North-East Atlantic countries called on France and the UK to end their nuclear reprocessing (Brown, 2000; Parmentier, 1999).

Today, Greenpeace has perhaps one of the most extensive and well-maintained NGO websites in the world (Greenpeace, 2004). To capitalise on this technical prowess, Greenpeace have recently set up a dedicated multimedia internet resource called the 'Cyberactivist Centre' as an extension of its conventional campaign work (Cybercentre, 2004). It has been in operation for three years, and the coordinator estimates that during that time, they have reached around 100 thousand registered cyberactivists from 216 countries (in addition to about 200 thousand cyberactivists registered by their national offices). It has a current membership of over 20, 000, and is growing by over 100 people a day (Greenpeace, 2002b). This organic growth of virtual community illustrates the decentralised nature of interaction that is characteristic of the internet. The activists have participated in 400 thousand action alerts that sent at least 800 thousand emails and faxes to corporate and government decision makers. Around 180 thousand e-cards promoting Greenpeace have also been sent by activists to friends and colleagues, and the recently established discussion list has received 22 thousand postings, ranging from short comments to lengthy articles.

The Cyberactivist Community considers that their actions as contributed to a number of campaign successes, including: pressuring for a referendum against loading plutonium into a Japanese nuclear reactor; hailing destructive logging in Canada's Great Bear Rainforest; ending a major source of genetically engineered corn in Mexico and placing significant restrictions on GM foods in Brazil, Europe, China, and elsewhere; and stopping logging on Dene land in the Amazon and permanently extending a moratorium on mahogany logging. Developer of the Centre, Keith Jardine, further explains the Centre's contribution to Greenpeace's activism:

> The centre provides a cyberactivist community where people representing over 170 countries and territories can share ideas and participate in environmental actions such as the recent Corporate 100 actions against global warming [an ongoing campaign that pressurises the 100 largest US companies into supporting the Kyoto protocol]. With a simple mouse click, cyberactivists can learn which US companies oppose the Kyoto Protocol and can take that information into the real world to use their buying powers accordingly (Greenpeace, 2002b).

The Corporate 100 campaign uses a number of imaginative methods to promote support and engender publicity for its cause: such as interactive games and humorous flash-animated postcards that activists can email their friends. There is also an Action Kit available, which includes a black and white poster, leaflets and suggested ideas for newspaper articles – all designed to encourage activists to run their own local public campaigns. The kit has been downloaded by over 4, 000 activists (ibid.).

These campaigns and their participants tend to originate from the developed world, but Greenpeace have also made efforts to bring 'cyberactivism' to the South. In 1999, Greenpeace employed its first 'worldwide media campaigner', Hemant Babu, in India (Nandy, 2001). Babu's first action was to establish an internet cafe in front of the abandoned Union Carbide factory, scene of the notorious 1984 Bhopal disaster. Thousands of Bhopal residents visited the cafe to send emails to the Indian government, Union Carbide and Dow Chemicals, to demand that action be taken over the leaching of toxic chemicals into local groundwater. Union Carbide has still taken no action, but the campaign has attracted mass media attention, and activists continue to exert pressure, as evidenced by the company's decision to screen out Greenpeace-sourced email (ibid.). Babu considers efforts to bring new media to underdeveloped countries to be an essential element of Greenpeace's work:

> This form of cyberactivism empowers people with modern information technology to fight their battles against environmental criminals. Given their socio-economic conditions it is too much to expect that they will come to technology. So our job is to take technology to them...By doing this we ensure that information technology does not remain an elitist concept but reaches the most oppressed strata of society, which is also often the worst affected by environmental degradation (Greenpeace, 2002b).

The Cyberactivist Centre maintains a discussion forum that is extremely well subscribed (Cybercentre, 2004). Greenpeace often asks for feedback on its activities on the forum. One year into the establishment of the website, Radagast, the main coordinator, reflected on how the development of the site had compared with initial expectations:

> When we launched the site a year ago, it was very much an experiment...I really had no idea what would happen. I had two fears, however. One was that the site would be ignored – we would get no participation and no discussion. That certainly has not happened. We've been averaging some 40-50 postings a day, and more importantly, many hundreds of people a day participate in some action – faxing a letter, sending an e-card, downloading an action kit, amongst many other options...My second fear was that the site would be quickly dominated by flamers, lamers and trolls, the bane of any discussion centre. I worried that people would be posting insulting comments, foolish comments and irrelevant material and the site would fail to achieve its main purpose – to help us win campaigns. This has also not happened. Although there are occasionally heated discussions and rude comments, by and large the postings have been interesting, insightful, and occasionally even profound. A lot of good campaign ideas have been generated, friendships made and even some lives changed by the discussion that has taken place here in the last year (Cybercentre List Archives, 2001).

Such claims may be sound like the hyperbole one might expect from a coordinator of a website eager to put the most positive spin on the charity's projects, but in fact, it is backed up by numerous messages of support posted from cyberactivists all over the world. The extracts below are taken from direct replies on the listserv to Radagast's original post above, where a conversation developed on the unique and significant benefits that the cyberactivists feel that the Cybercentre provides:

> Congratulations Radagast and all others at the Cybercentre for an excellent and productive year. It was about this time last year that I found this community. It was indeed, a life-changing experience...

> A year ago, I honestly didn't know what I was getting into...But now, a day doesn't go by where I don't check the boards and roam other sites. I have been writing much less than before because I've been so busy planning and actually executing those plans! Just like this site, I too have evolved.

> I...would just like to thank Greenpeace for the initiative of "Cyberactivism". A big problem with environmental work is that many people feel that they don't really have the time to act, but with this great webforum many, including myself, can help to protect and save the environment. Thank you all!

> All these victories [campaign victories relating to the Cybercentre – see above] were on the back of years of campaign work in the public and political worlds, but the core message we keep sending is clear: the cyberactivist world is watching.

> I do see a place for sites like this in getting activists involved as a first step...but I see it as a spring board to learn from...and once your levels of comprehension of the issues are clear individuals are able to then launch themselves into real activism, on the streets, not only in stuff like marches and rallies, but in "local issues" group forming, growing and facilitating...(ibid.)

All these extracts indicate how much the Cybercentre is valued by its members; indeed, the authors of the first and second extract explicitly attribute involvement with cyberactivism with a sense of personal growth. The third extract is typical of many others in the ensuing dialogue in that it identifies convenience in the context of a busy lifestyle as the most appealing aspect of cyberactivism (ibid.). However, the fourth and fifth extract makes the particular point that the efficacy of cyberactivism relies on complementary campaign activity offline. The virtual network is not divorced from the 'real world' network of Greenpeace activism; rather it is an indistinguishable and inseparable part of it. The translation from online to offline activity is one that particularly interests Greenpeace organisers and committed activists, and this has been the subject of repeated debate in the Cybercentre forum. There have been some posts from members that signal dissatisfaction with the limits that online activity imposes, for example:

> For me cyberactivism is the only way that I can be involved. I think that it is a great idea and I have tried (since I discovered this) to involved [sic] much as I could. Of course I want to be involved physically in Greenpeace campaigns and also I want to be informed when the Greenpeace activists act in my country. I was verry [sic] sad when I saw on tv Greenpeace action in my town and I didn't know about it. I like to know these things from you, not from tv...

> To a small extent, I do feel as though I am making a difference by sending e-letters to different corporations; however, I would like to be more actively involved. If you could suggest ways on how we could do something other than emailing letters, I would get more involved in your campaigns. (ibid.)

Both posts are indicative of a wider appetite for activism that some members feel that the Cybercentre is unable to satisfy. The first extract is also notable in that the author speaks of a preference for direct communication from Greenpeace via new media, rather than third party reportage of its actions through broadcast media. The first extract also suggests that the Cybercentre could improve upon targeted mailings to its activists, and echoes the author of the second extract in a plea for information on how to become further involved. Radagast has

responded to such posts with a keen critical assessment of the website's achievements and potential. He conceded that improvements could be made and appealed to members for ideas and feedback in developing the site:

> One of the main reasons Greenpeace originally set up the Cybercentre was to get some desperately needed ideas and volunteer activists for our on-going campaigns. This has worked beautifully in terms of letter writing and ecards...but has not worked well in generating new ideas and real-world actions that we've actually been able to put into practice to help us with our campaigns. I know that many of you want to get more involved in Greenpeace campaigns, both online and in the real world, so something is going wrong somewhere (Cybercentre List Archives, 2003).

The pressure for further involvement in cyberactivism clearly has come from grassroots members, to which Greenpeace has responded by opening the debate as to how to extend this involvement to the cyberactivist community at large. The discussion that has followed has been fascinating, since cyberactivists have described the ways in which they perceive that the community serves their interests:

> I have a really busy job, but thanks to the cyberactivist newsletter I manage to send about 4-5 communications a week to people engaged in environmentally and socially questionable practices. I never wrote letters. I also change my purchasing habits based on your campaign information and put up posters in my workplace, and communicate your info to all my interested friends and colleagues, so I don't think that you should see the lack of community conversation as a failing.
>
> As a personal anecdote, I have gone through phases of being an organiser and an activist in my community versus times when personal matters had higher precedence and immediacy. During the latter times it is all I can do to write letters and keep current with what is happening on this thankfully fast-paced site. So those of us who move between roles this site provides a mechanism for us to help mentally active, informed and involved, while allowing us to hone our letterwriting, composition and debating skills.
>
> I live in a town in Scotland, and I know NO ONE who knows anything about environmentalism, they do not realise what a desperate state the world is in, they think it's just a lost cause 'hippys' think about... (ibid.)

These three contributions reveal the differing extent of member's involvement, and the significance that they attach to the community. The first extract illustrates how the member is able to maintain an involvement with environmental activism in the context of a busy lifestyle through the Cybercentre, even though her contribution may not extend to regular community conversation. She explains the appeal of cyberactivism for her: it allows her tailor the scope of her involvement

according to other demands placed on her time elsewhere. A similar sentiment is expressed in the second extract, the author here also describing an improvement in his articulation skills as an additional benefit of cyberactivism. Again, the theme of personal growth is echoed here. The third extract is typical of many contributions to this debate in that the author describes one of the main benefits of cyberactivism is that it helps to remedy a sense of geographical isolation. For many members, the limited extent of their participation in cyberactivism thus serves their interests in differing ways, and they do not feel the need to extend their involvement any further.

Thus, the thread of this discussion developed from the complaints of those who felt frustrated by the limited participation that cyberactivism allowed for, to posts from those who expressed their satisfaction with the cyberactivism initiative precisely because it made such modest demands on their time. This led to perhaps the most interesting exchanges on the Greenpeace website, whereby the subscribers analysed the patterns of discourse that tend to occur on-list. Radagast has proposed that there are three different kinds of cyberactivists: the 'ziners', the 'organisers' and the 'discussers' (Cybercentre List Archives, 2001). Radagast argues that the ziners are the most common type – they read the monthly e-zine and occasional updates and send letters and e-cards through the Cybercentre, however, they do not tend not to read the discussion postings and never make their own comments. Hence, despite their input, they are the least active members. The organisers tend to be very active within their local community and use the cyberactivist community mainly to raise international awareness of campaigns that they are involved in. They post articles to the forum nearly every day and often post their own action alerts when commenting on articles. Organisers therefore largely use the Cybercentre insofar as it will publicise their own causes, rather than as a discussion forum in itself. It is the discussers who use the site most frequently to engage in often detailed and long-running debates about Greenpeace itself, its campaigns and the Cybercentre. As a result of this analysis, Radagast and the other Cybercentre administrators are attempting to develop the site to cater more efficiently for each of the groups that they have identified. The sign-up process has been streamlined for the ziners and there is an optional HTML version of the e-zine that is being experimented with that is being designed to be more informative and user-friendly. The community forum that the organisers use is being improved and there is more of an effort being made to support local action groups. There are also discussion features being added to all parts of the Greenpeace site so that any article that has been published can be discussed.

The categories of different users proposed by Radagast have been widely accepted as accurate judging by the responses his post engendered, but there has also been some disagreement. One anonymous poster wrote:

> Being a discusser, I guess, I'd like to know if there's really that much distinction between the actors, "ziners", "organizers", "discussers"? I think often it may be the same people in different roles or state of minds. Certainly I know that when I am typing something here "as a discusser", which I was convinced to do without a name, by the excellent arguments

> re. anoynimity [sic], I feel different than when my name is on something I organised. Which I do very often...Accordingly, I might, as a "ziner", just send a mail required without thinking too much about it. (ibid.)

The above extract illustrates that whilst such distinctions between different types of cyberactivists provide useful generalisations, the ambiguities surrounding the adoption of different 'roles' is an important caveat to bear in mind whilst using such terms. One person is capable of inhabiting a number of different roles over a course of time depending on other commitments, or the issue area concerned. This reiterates the theme of convenience. Evidently, what is valuable about cyberactivism to many is the ability to tailor one's level of participation – from the mere clicking of a button to forward an email, to the more time-consuming option of becoming fully involved in web debates on the nature of campaigning.

An intriguing example of this type of debate occurred in a more recent discussion, whereby a poster proposed that future debates on the website should be governed by commonly agreed rules of discourse. This is evidence of a web community tentatively forming its own rules regarding dialogue oriented towards consensus. There is an obvious significance here when considering the possible emergence of transnational public spheres:

> Pairing up for dialogue is the way humans actually resolve disputes and come to recognise the limits of their own cognition. When two people (or even two bots [sic] posting propaganda) start a dialogue, we as a community should RESOLVE to provide supporting evidence or allay third party concerns or whatever we can do to ENSURE THAT THE DIALOGUE CONTINUES, especially if the two parties are overtly hostile. In other words, RESPECT DIALOGUE AS THE MOST BASIC FORM OF COMMUNICATION, not monologue. There are too many monologues here. Let's find specific ways to encourage pairs to debate visibly, e.g. threads are perhaps closed to all but two parties (each of which might have more than one poster) like a formal debate or which have two moderators, each with a overtly hostile view to the other. Let's focus on what we strongly disagree on. And get it worked out in detail if we can. Let's not allow arbitrary third parties to always pull the thread off track or make it hard to reach a conclusion. Let's find ways to support dialogue on this Greenpeace.org CAC board (Cybercentre List Archives, 2003: author's emphasis).

This extract formed part of a long and detailed post, which offered similar advice regarding web debate, and also proposed widening participation by making attempts to attract more women to the forum, and also to explore the forging of links between websites of similar organisations such as Friends of the Earth. Although the responses to this post were enthusiastic, the debate has appeared to have since waned, and there have been no rules of discourse adopted as a result of it – as of yet.

However, the development of the Greenpeace Cyberactivist Community has been remarkable in the short space of time that it has been operative, and judging by the keen interest

shown by many participants to extend their involvement further, this evolution will continue apace. A large number of members still continue to post anonymously or under a pseudonym. Some sceptics of virtual communities claim anonymity prevents the formation of meaningful community, since it has the effect of making the sincerity of discourse difficult to gauge (e.g. Poster, 1995). However, I would argue that the use of pseudonyms has become a widely accepted form of 'netiquette', and does not necessarily hinder meaningful debate (Meikle, 2001). The extracts above demonstrate that numerous cyberactivists are actively exploring creative ways to strengthen their campaigning methods and their collective identification as a campaigning community, both online on the web forum, and offline in the 'real world'. The internet has evidently proved an invaluable medium for enabling political mobilisation across state borders. It has provided the communicative infrastructure for the development of a delocalised community. The participants are physically dispersed, but are nonetheless united by common interests and goals, and efforts to build mutual understanding.

6.8. Conclusion

The vignettes of transnational activism discussed in this chapter present a fascinating picture of transnational networking. It is representative of the vast array and huge diversity of social movements operating through new media. As Castells notes: 'it is in the realm of symbolic politics, and in the development of issue-oriented mobilizations by groups and individuals outside the mainstream political system that new electronic communication may have the most dramatic effects' (Castells 1997: 352). New media can sustain counter-hegemonic discourse by enabling entrenched power relations to be challenged, and political claims by the powerless and marginalized to be publicised and legitimised. Increasingly easy access to the internet allows marginalized and disenfranchised groups to communicate with those that feel a common sense of identity. It also enables causes to be publicised that are otherwise ignored by mainstream media outlets, and perspectives to be expressed that are stifled by the corporate print and broadcast media (Hill and Hughes, 1998).

Progressive politics are well represented on the internet. Nevertheless, as Warf and Grimes caution: 'Counterhegemonic uses are not an electronic monopoly of the political left.' (Warf and Grimes, 1997: 269) Bigotry, prejudice and hatred can equally find expression online. However, as I noted above (section 6.1., p. 129 and section 6.2., p. 131), a benefit of public sphere theory is that reactionary movements can be effectively critiqued if dialogue is premised on arbitrary claims regarding the inclusion or exclusion of others – this is contrary to the norms of publicity.

I outlined three criteria to establish if it is possible to identify the emergence of transnational communities of recognition. I wish to consider each in turn with reference to the three case studies outlined above.

First, is it possible to *identify a sense of collective identity as a 'public'*? These case studies demonstrate quite clearly that despite a lack of shared territory/common citizenship, and despite a

lack of/minimal 'face-to-face' interaction, it is possible to identify a sense of collective identity amongst these virtual communities. A sense of common identity can arise instead as a result of shared identities and interests, especially when framed as part of a political struggle for cultural recognition and/or redistribution. The international women's movement has demonstrated a strong degree of solidarity for fellow women by campaigning to increase internet access and exploring new methods of transnational networking. The Zapatista movement has fostered a broad-based transnational community of recognition based on claims for redistribution and cultural recognition. The claims do not just relate to the Mexican government but to a wider protest about the inequities of neoliberalism in general. This has enabled the Zapatista movement to expand to encompass activists and grassroots organisations from a variety of locations, in a broad transnational coalition that has proved surprisingly stable – lasting for ten years. Participants in forums such as Greenpeace's Cyberactivist Centre also demonstrate a strong sense of community despite the anonymous and remote forms of communication that characterise new media, as evidenced by the sincerity of the many testimonies detailed above.

Second, is it possible to identify a common endorsement of the *norms of publicity*? In each case study, there is evidence that participants engage in reasoned debate and endeavour to make their opinions intelligible and accountable. The motivation behind each of these movements is to contact, incorporate, engage and converse with others. Participants are also prepared to consider ways to improve effective communication throughout the community. This is demonstrated by the campaign to increase women's access and use of new media, and by the diversity and proliferation of sources publicising the Zapatista movement. The Greenpeace case study indicates that participants also recognise that online networking has problematic implications in terms of effective organisation. What is encouraging is that participants engage in meaningful debate with one another about how to overcome these difficulties, thereby demonstrating a strong commitment to the virtual community and to transnational political participation. This signifies a sense of collective identity as a 'public' as well as a common endorsement of the norms of publicity, thereby indicating that members of virtual communities can *recognise one another as legitimate participants in debate.*

Third, is it possible to *identify a transformative influence on hegemonic discourse and the international institutional framework as a result of public dialogue*? Each of these case studies has demonstrated that dialogue that takes place within virtual communities can be dynamic enough to have wider political effects. Counter-hegemonic discourse within these movements often has transformative effects on the international institutional framework by demanding wider recognition of the opinions and concerns of those otherwise marginalized. The women's movement can claim many campaign successes and has used forums such as Beijing to bring publicity to their concerns at the highest level. The international environmental movement has also had a transformative influence on the international institutional framework, as evidenced by the incorporation of their concerns on the mainstream political agenda. Moreover, the activism that has arisen around the Zapatista rebellion has acted as stimuli to the growth of other sites of counter-hegemonic discourse.

Cleaver describes this as the 'Zapatista Effect', which has resonated through social movements around the world, through the 'impetus given to the active rejection of current policies, to the rethinking of the institutions and functioning of democracy and to the alternatives of the status quo.' (Cleaver, 1998b: 622) Deliberation in transnational communities of recognition can transform participants' perceptions of hegemonic discourse, and thus their relationship to governing institutions. For instance, the Zapatista rebellion has not only fostered counter-hegemonic discourse about the legitimacy and authority of the Mexican state, but also of capitalism and world order (Morton, 2002).

In conclusion, it is possible to identify emergent transnational communities of recognition as a result of the above criteria being met. However, it is evident that there are substantial differences between these case studies in terms of the internal structure of social movements, and their relationships with the international institutional framework. With regard to the former, the loose coalition that makes up the Zapatista movement contrasts with the formal hierarchical internal structure of Greenpeace. With regard to the latter, the Zapatista movement has limited contact with formal institutions of political authority (through sporadic and often hostile negotiations with the Mexican government), whereas aspects of the international women's movement have built a well-established and largely constructive relationship with institutions such as the UN (through such conferences as Beijing). It would be useful if future research theorised about the implications of these differences between emergent transnational publics. This is a topic to which I shall return and explore in more detail (section 7.3., p. 180).

7. Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to answer the following research question: do the structural preconditions exist in the present for the emergence of transnational public spheres? It fills a significant gap in the existing literatures. There are few analyses of developments in communications technologies within an International Relations framework. There have been a number of attempts in other disciplines to develop the concept of the public sphere beyond the nation-state (e.g. Bohman, 1998; Calhoun, 2002; Dahlberg, 2001a, 2001b; Sassi, 2001). Yet few theorists systematically investigate the conditions of possibility for the emergence of transnational public spheres – most simply conceptualise transnational public spheres as actually existing institutions. In contrast, I have attempted to problematise the possible expansion of public spheres across state borders. I have reconstructed Habermasian public sphere theory to explore the emancipatory possibilities of the new media environment. Three structural preconditions for the emergence of transnational public spheres have been identified: developing communicative capacity across state borders, transformations in sites of political authority and emerging transnational communities of recognition. These criteria have provided the framework for a systematic examination of the evidence relating to the emergence or otherwise of transnational public spheres. The conclusion of this thesis is structured as follows: first, I recap the main theoretical argument and reflect on the evidence amassed that relates to each structural precondition; second, I summarise the unique contribution this thesis has made to the literature, and third, I offer some suggestions for future research.

7.1. Summary of Research

My inquiry began with an appraisal of the most influential work on public sphere theory: Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989). Habermas's account of the 18th century bourgeois public sphere and its subsequent decline was oriented by a normative interest in whether public opinion could inform the organisation of social life and the operation of political institutions. In other words, rather than submitting to hierarchical rule, are people able to negotiate their lives together by using their capacities for reason and debate? In *Structural Transformation*, Habermas finds that this was once possible in the context of the nation-state. However, the same broader issues that directed his inquiry are also relevant with regard to this inquiry into the possible emergence of transnational public spheres – but here the normative interest is in the potential for public opinion to inform the operation of international institutions and global governance structures.

Public sphere theory has always relied implicitly on the nation-state as a location, and in *Structural Transformation* this is also the case. Habermas's version of the public sphere existed in a certain historical time-period within a sovereign territorial state. There are a number of tacit assumptions that underpin this account that may prove problematic in an age of 'globalisation': for

example, that the state is able to exercise sovereign power over its territory and its citizens, and that national infrastructures of communication exist, including a media that addresses a relatively homogenous national community. These assumptions were typical of contemporaneous political theory, but they are increasingly being challenged by transnational phenomena (Held and McGrew el al., 1999). In particular, increased flows of transnational communication and the rise of multi-layered global governance suggests that state authority becoming increasingly compromised (Ashley, 1988; Walker, 1991, 1993; Campbell, 1993; Camilleri and Falk, 1992; Weber, 1992). The Habermasian concept of the public sphere does not incorporate these challenges. Rather, it is an ideal model associated with the project of democratisation of the (Northern) nation-state. It provides a method whereby the democratic deficiencies of the state can be identified and critiqued. Thus, public sphere debate has traditionally been framed in the context of the state. Even scholars who have attacked Habermas on a variety of fundamental points have failed to question the state-centricity of public sphere theory. For example, a common criticism is that Habermas prioritised the bourgeois public whilst ignoring the contributions of other 'subaltern counterpublics': such as those composed of women, the working classes, racial minorities, and so on (e.g. Fraser, 1992; Warner, 1992, 2002a, 2002b; Negt and Kluge, 1993). Feminist theorists have highlighted how the bourgeois division between the public and private spheres acts to oppress women by excluding a raft of gender-specific issues from debate (Pateman, 1987; Sylvester, 1994). It has been argued elsewhere that the exclusion of 'private interests' and the 'private sphere' also has adverse effects on the working classes by precluding economic discussion, and on non-heterosexuals by avoiding debate on prejudice encountered as a result of sexual preference (Eley, 1992; Norton, 1992). Such critiques were radical, and some were recognised and later accepted by Habermas himself (e.g. Habermas, 1992a). The model of the bourgeois public was widely accepted as deficient with regard to access and participation, and it was argued that widening the scope of public sphere theory to incorporate marginalized groups could rectify this. Although these critiques are important contributions to public sphere theory, they fail to re-examine the validity of a state-centric perspective.

I reconstructed public sphere theory by identifying the basic elements and shortcomings of Habermas's conception of the bourgeois public. As a result, I adopted a functional definition of a public sphere. I defined a transnational public sphere as a deliberative arena in which non-state actors reach understandings through public dialogue about issues of common interest. This model allows for the existence of multiple spheres, and enables greater generalisability across different cultural contexts. The normative ideal of a public sphere requires that political action will be justified in public according to the norms of publicity, that all affected actors will be included in deliberation, that all those included will be treated as legitimate participants, and that direct appeals to power are inadmissible. Further, I problematised the state-centricity of conventional public sphere theory. Some recent literature investigates expanded public spheres beyond the state, but much of this is based on an unfounded assumption that transnational public spheres are actually

existing institutions. In contrast, I argued that the structural preconditions for the emergence of transnational public spheres required further research.

On the basis of a critique of *Structural Transformation* and the expanded public spheres literature, I identified three structural preconditions for the emergence of transnational public spheres: developing communicative capacity across state borders, transformation in sites in political authority and emerging transnational communities of recognition. I argued that if each structural precondition coalesced, this would produce an environment suitable for the emergence of transnational public spheres. Below, I summarise my findings relating to each structural precondition respectively.

7.1.1. Developing Communicative Capacity Across State Borders

Habermas's account of the bourgeois public was presupposed on a national communicative infrastructure, which was coherent and politically focused enough to result in generalised 'public opinion' (e.g. Habermas, 1989: 73). National media were portrayed as focused on the exercise of state power. However, recent years have witnessed an explosion of different media channels that enable communication over vast distances, and that cater for a kaleidoscope of interests and concerns. Huge transnational media corporations have also developed and media ownership has become increasingly concentrated. These trends are indicative of a relative denationalisation of communicative infrastructure. In contrast to the concept of limited media in a distinct territory, we now confront the phenomena of deterritorialised cyberspace and a media-saturated world.

However, there are huge disparities to ownership and access to new media worldwide. In particular, the inequalities of access between North and South (but also within these regions) pose a considerable obstacle to further expansion of international dialogue (Tehranian, 1999). This problem is compounded by parallel inequalities in education and income, which tend to reflect ethnic, sexual and social discriminations (Main, 2001). Moreover, debate through new media has been restricted due to government and corporate influence. In the case of the former, state policies such as censorship have curtailed open discussion in many parts of the world; in the case of the latter, monopolistic media interests have the potential to considerably distort public debate (for example, through rating and filtering technologies).

Despite these pressures, the internet provides significant potentialities for political agency. In recent years, it has been possible to detect a steady growth in access to new media across the world. Although much of this growth has been concentrated amongst the North and global elites, the diffusion of communication technologies continues to spread unabated. This evidence suggests that it is possible to identify a trajectory towards wider use and access to new media. It would however be unwise to discount the substantial obstacles to the realisation of transnational public spheres in terms of communicative capacity, but overall it can be argued that new media have opened up discursive spaces to a potentially broad audience, and that this trend looks set to continue.

7.1.2. Transformations in Sites of Political Authority

Conventional public sphere theory is based on the assumption that the state is the addressee of public dialogue (e.g. Habermas, 1989: 81). Yet today there are numerous examples that authority is being dispersed and assigned to a variety of different agencies that operate at several levels: local, regional and international. This trend is characterised in the literature as the development of multi-layered 'global governance' (e.g. Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992).

The globalisation of politics and the growth of international law have contributed to the diffusion of political authority beyond the nation-state. The continuing sophistication and diffusion of new media has also undercut a government's ability to control the distribution of information within its territory. New media are routinely used to publicise such problems such as human rights abuses or environmental degradation, which promotes transnational activism. Hence, globalisation has implications for state autonomy, governance and national identity (Cerny, 1996; Williams, 1996).

These developments suggest that it is unwise to locate undivided authority in the nation-state. There are now a variety of transnational institutions that combine with the powers of the state to form a transordinate structure of international authority (Ruggie, 1998). It is possible to argue that state sovereignty is a concept that has never been realised in practice, but nonetheless remains analytically useful. However, theorising about public spheres in the framework of a sovereign and autonomous nation-state limits the ability to inquire about future transformations. It is practically impossible to ignore the international dimension in contemporary public sphere theory, since there is highly persuasive evidence that processes of governance are being transformed.

The potential relationship between participants of emergent transnational public spheres and the addressee/s of transnational public dialogue is hugely complicated in comparison to its domestic counterparts. This has some negative implications. The international institutional framework is a multi-level and fluid combination of public and private powers that cannot be easily identified or made accountable. However, it is encouraging to note that in some of the case studies examined in this thesis, activists appear to have quite a sophisticated understanding of which institutions impact upon their lives, and so structure their debate and pitch their protests accordingly.

7.1.3. Emerging Transnational Communities of Recognition

Theorists have made the assumption that there is a national citizenry within the domestic public sphere, who recognise one another as legitimate participants in debate (e.g. Habermas, 1989: 83). Common membership of a state translates into a common political community. However, today there is wider awareness of the complex identities of many citizens that may not correspond with their home states. Also, transnational social movements are an increasingly prominent feature of world politics. Intense activity amongst a number of these movements indicates that it is an over-simplification at least to conceptualise communities of recognition as exclusively coinciding with state borders.

Numerous examples in this thesis attest to the existence of vibrant virtual communities that use new media to enable deliberation, to achieve consensus, to problem solve, and to articulate common interests and identities. Virtual communities can achieve coherency due to mutual empathy, common interests and shared experience (Jones, 1995). For example, the international women's movement has demonstrated solidarity in campaigns for improvements in access and use of the internet for fellow women. The Zapatista movement has expanded to incorporate a broad-based transnational coalition of support based on anti-neoliberal rhetoric and claims for redistribution and cultural recognition. Forums such as Greenpeace's Cyberactivist Centre provide a means whereby participants can build a strong sense of community through common interests despite the anonymous and remote forms of communication that characterise new media. Whilst there is a massive diversity in the quality of interaction in different movements, it is evidently possible to form social bonds through new media and to cultivate a sense of community in a delocalised context (Watson, 1997). This is illustrated by the wealth of undoubtedly sincere testimonials to a strong sense of communal identity that were detailed in the previous chapter, especially relating to the responses in the discussion thread on cyberactivism on the Greenpeace site. The case studies demonstrate that transnational activists can forge a sense of collective identity as a 'public' and endorse the norms of publicity, especially where political action is based on a common struggle for cultural recognition and/or redistribution. Indeed, public dialogue can often have a transformative influence on hegemonic discourse and the international institutional framework. For example, the women's movement has secured successes in a variety of campaigns, and UN conferences such as Beijing have been useful in attracting publicity to their causes. The Zapatista movement has provided inspiration for the growth of other sites of counter-hegemonic discourse. Moreover, environmental concerns have been incorporated into the mainstream political discourses, largely due to the efforts of the international environmental movement.

The structural transformations in the preconditions of public spheres that have occurred since the original publication of *Structural Transformation* have been immensely significant. The basic conditions of possibility for the state-based model of a public sphere have been supplemented by transnational counterparts. In the conventional model, the state constituted the territory and the boundaries of a public sphere. In the developing transnational model, public spheres no longer rely on shared location, since new media provide a deterritorialised cyberspace. Whereas in the state model, the national citizenry constituted a public sphere audience, in the developing transnational model, geographically dispersed actors are forming emergent transnational communities of recognition. The Habermasian public sphere was realised through channels such as coffee shops and print media; however, the modern complements are to be found in 'cyber-salons' and the vast array of new media technologies. Conventionally, the sovereign state was assumed to be the sole addressee of public dialogue, but contemporary transformations in sites of political authority produce global governance frameworks as alternative addressees of transnational deliberation.

Hence, despite certain difficulties outlined above, it is possible to conclude that a suitable environment has developed in which transnational public spheres can emerge.

7.2. Contribution to Literature

Generally, the International Relations literature has not been concerned with the history or the political import of public sphere theory. This is because the concept of the public sphere has traditionally been framed with reference to the domestic realm, and conventional IR theorists regarded the international and domestic as discrete domains. Not only this, but IR largely failed to seriously analyse communication issues; academic commentary was considered as the province of Communication Studies. Recently this omission has been rectified, as the growing significance of new media on world politics could no longer be ignored. Nonetheless, there are only a few IR scholars that focus on new media (e.g. Frederick, 1993; Mohammadi, 1997; Tehranian, 1999). In this regard, the typical approach is to shoehorn analysis of new media within a conventional theoretical (realist/liberal) framework, without considering whether the socio-political implications of new media pose a challenge to the explanatory power of that framework (e.g. Krasner, 1991; Keohane and Nye, 1998). In short, these accounts can be criticised for lacking reflexivity, which, as critical theorists have long argued, is characteristic of conventional IR theory in general (Wyn Jones, 2001).

International critical theory has provided stimulating insights into world politics, and unlike the instrumentalism of conventional IR theory, is oriented by an emancipatory interest. It offers a powerful critique of relations of power and domination, and has considerable potential as a theoretical paradigm. However, in the past international critical theorists have also largely failed to focus on analysis of new media. This omission, evident in the writings of leading neo-Gramscians such as Robert Cox, has led to an under-theorisation of processes of emancipatory change (e.g. Cox, 1981). Whilst Cox effectively describes the multiple oppressions of the present, the mechanisms whereby these oppressions can be transcended are sketched in a limited manner. Similar problems of underdevelopment exist with other neo-Gramscians and international critical theorists (Comor, 1994). The reconstruction of public sphere theory provides a promising avenue of research to rectify this problem. Indeed, the concept of the public sphere is part of the foundational discourse of Political Theory, and an increasing number of scholars across a range of social science disciplines are conceiving of 'globalised' publics (e.g. Bohman, 1997; Dryzek, 1990; Hill and Montag, 2000).

In the last few years, this debate has started to cross over into International Relations, which is most welcome (Lynch, 1999, 2000; Brunkhorst, 2002). Public sphere theory introduces a useful new vocabulary to the discipline. However, a problem can be identified with the existing IR/public sphere literature that also exists in the wider debate on the 'globalisation of the public sphere'. There is a common tendency to assume that transnational public spheres are actually existing institutions (e.g. Calhoun, 2002; Wilkin, 2001; Brunkhorst, 2002; Dryzek, 2000). Indeed,

this seems to be quite plausible on an intuitive level given the rise of the internet and new media, and concurrent growth in cross-border communication. However, international interaction has a long history, and simply because instances of it are more numerous nowadays, this does not automatically translate into the existence of transnational public spheres. There is a danger that the concept of an expanded public sphere is becoming accepted in the lexicon as an informal and commonsensical term of reference. Although the growth in cross-border communication superficially appears to confirm the existence of transnational public spheres, this study shows that the notion raises complicated theoretical problems. The concept of the public sphere was developed not simply to describe flows of communication, but to contribute to normative theory. A public sphere represents a space for free and unrestricted public dialogue, and provides a means of mobilising public opinion as a political force. It enables the empowerment of citizenry with regard to the powers of private interests and the state. Thus, a public sphere co-exists with processes of governance that act as addressees of public dialogue. Deliberation and empowerment are notions essential to the concept of the public sphere. If this normative interest is lost, the concept loses its critical force and political significance. Therefore, this thesis has sought to reconnect the concept of the public sphere with its rich theoretical lineage. My reformulation of the public sphere is oriented by an explicit interest in emancipation – it is this that connects my inquiry to the wider project of international critical theory.

Therefore, the unique contribution that this thesis has made to the literature has been threefold. First, it has analysed the implications of new media in an International Relations framework. Second, it has advanced international critical theory by taking an innovative critical-theoretical approach motivated by normative critique and the attempt to identify emancipatory possibilities in the present. Third, it has problematised and reconstructed public sphere theory in a manner that allows for systematic and rigorous examination of contemporary political trends.

7.3. Suggestions for Future Research

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to speculate further on the qualities of transnational public spheres or how they are likely to develop in future. Nonetheless, I will offer some concluding reflections and suggestions for further research on the basis on my findings. If my conclusions are accepted, the next step in transnational public sphere research is to investigate the properties of emergent transnational public spheres and the qualities of transnational deliberation. Further, the positive or adverse influence of certain factors on the deliberative potential of emergent transnational spheres should be considered. These factors can be grouped into three categories: each directly relating to the three structural preconditions outlined above. I deal with each in turn.

With regard to *developing communicative capacity across state borders*, continuing attention should be given to the exclusions imposed by the global 'digital divide', and obstacles that these represent to the realisation of more inclusive transnational public spheres. Comparative

research on the impact of differing communication technologies, in terms of how they are diffused and applied, would be useful. There should also be continuing critique of the concentration of media ownership and the restriction of free and open dialogue by governments and corporations (Mansell, 2002).

There is another important area for future research in this regard. This thesis has considered issues such as the inclusiveness and freedom of transnational public dialogue. Further questions might be asked about the *qualities* of communication, on a specific case study basis. For example, how well is reason deployed in public debate, and how responsive is public opinion to rational argument? Habermas employed his theory of communicative rationality in the state-based concept of the public sphere, which has been modified with respect to transnational dialogue by scholars such as Lincoln Dahlberg (2001a, 2001b). An obvious direction from which to build upon the findings of this thesis would be a similar ethnographic study of the communication of a virtual community around a particular issue area.

With regard to *transformations in sites of political authority*, it is imperative that international critical theory continues to attend to the growing 'democratic deficit' that accompanies transformations in state sovereignty, and to explore ways in which emergent transnational public spheres can contribute to the democratisation of processes of global governance. Emergent transnational public spheres can be identified in an international institutional context that is sufficient to engender political mobilisation and public dialogue about issues of common interest. However, the institutions that comprise this context very often seem distanced and inaccessible to the public: effectively symbolised by the spectacle of WTO and G8 meetings being sealed off from demonstrators by barricades and riot police. International institutions are often based on the negotiating interests of member states, and so tend only to be open to indirect public participation. This thesis has detailed how NGOs are overtly bypassing the state and making representations at an international level, yet there are other ways in which citizens can exert influence on global governance. Institutions such as the European Parliament operate at a separate level from nation-states, and may in future be granted increased influence to deliberate and set policy. European citizenry are mobilising around certain issues, attempting to influence EU representatives and trying to garner wider publicity amongst the electorate (Habermas, 2001; Risse, 2002a, 2002b). Future research should further examine these developments and probe the intriguing association between an international institution and an emergent public, and the effects of public dialogue on each. On a case study basis, it may be possible to gain a deeper appreciation of the ways in which emerging transnational public spheres and the institutions that act as the addressees of public dialogue are transformed by their encounters with one another, especially in terms of power relations.

With regard to *emerging transnational communities of recognition*, future research would be useful on the internal structure of communities. Some virtual communities centre on an issue area on a temporary basis. However, other communities are more established, and associated with pressure groups such as Greenpeace. How does the composition of each sort of community impact

on effective political communication? A comparative case study approach would be appropriate in considering this question. Another area in need of further research concerns the implications for public dialogue of undemocratic elements within social movements. It is important to emphasise that one must be wary of investing too much faith in the emancipatory potential of these movements, since they are often not fully democratic, inclusive, or accountable. This represents a significant obstacle to a fuller realisation of transnational public spheres. The interest of emancipation is not simply served by attempting to rectify the democratic deficit of global governance processes, but also by seeking to extend those principles to the internal structures of social movements.

Transnational public sphere theory could also be further developed by analysing the differences between public spheres as defined in this thesis, and potentially emergent public spheres that are incorporated in processes of institutionalised decision-making. I would like to suggest a possible way forward in this regard with reference to Nancy Fraser's distinction between weak and strong publics.

Habermas conceptualises the public as an association of private persons, who are separate from the state, and whose decisions do not directly influence the exercise of state power. This separation of the state and civil society allow the public sphere a measure of autonomy and legitimacy. Fraser labels such public spheres as '*weak publics*, publics whose deliberative practices consists exclusively in opinion formation and does not also encompass decision making' (Fraser, 1992: 134). Fraser distinguishes this from sovereign national parliaments, which she terms '*strong publics*' that act as a 'public sphere *within* the state' (Fraser, 1992: 134). Strong publics blur the separation between civil society and the state, since they have functions of both the formation of public opinion and of decision-making. Fraser sees this as a democratic advance, since public opinion is able to translate into authoritative action. She considers that self-managing institutions, such as workplaces or residential committees, which establish 'sites of direct or quasi-direct democracy', represent possibilities for the continued growth of strong publics (Fraser, 1992: 135). Fraser's perspective offers an intriguing approach to the analysis of emergent transnational public spheres. Habermas adapts the model in his 'two track' model of democracy in *Between Facts and Norms*, and Brunkhorst also explores the distinction between weak and strong publics in an IR context (Habermas, 1996: ch 7; Brunkhorst, 2002). For each theorist, the requirement for a strong public is some measure of influence over legislation.

In a recent article, James Bohman also uses the distinction between weak and strong publics to conceptualise transnational discursive activity. He considers that at present the influence that transnational publics can exert over decision-makers is limited to public opinion, and so they can be defined as 'weak'. However, he argues, 'they may become "strong publics" when they are able to exercise influence through institutionalized decision procedures with regularized opportunities for *ex ante* input.' (Bohman, 2004: 148) This will require transnational institutions to 'permit such access to influence distributively, across various domains and levels', since transnationally, 'strong publics may be required to seek more direct forms of deliberative influence

given the dispersal of authority and the variety of its institutional locations.' (ibid.) There is not a single location of political authority at the transnational level, so unlike the domestic public sphere, there is not a common addressee such as the state for publics to focus on. Therefore, Bohman suggests that it will be more useful to consider the emergence of strong publics in a variety of possible forms, where 'publics are capable of exerting political influence in real decision-making processes under certain institutional conditions.' (Bohman, 2004: 152) He proposes the European Union as an interesting case study in this regard.

Bohman is representative of current debate in this area, which seems to be following Habermas's lead by focusing on the dialogic potential of the EU (Habermas, 2001). Chalmers argues for reform of the EU to enable an effective deliberative approach to European governance (Chalmers, 2003). Koopmans and Erbe have examined the Europeanization of public spheres, distinguishing between types of publics that relate to different competencies of the EU. For example, they argue that strong publics have the potential to emerge concerning supranational policy-areas such as monetary politics and agriculture, whereas intergovernmental areas such as education and pensions produce weak publics (Koopmans and Erbe, 2004). It seems likely that interest in the public sphere potential of the EU will increase in the near future.

This thesis has employed a functional definition of public spheres as being composed of non-state actors, which have no formal influence over decision-making or policy: these can be understood as 'weak publics' according to Fraser's typology. My purpose has been to establish the conditions of possibility for transnational public spheres to emerge, and I have purposely avoided speculation on what forms these publics might take. However, now that a strong theoretical argument has been constructed for the emergence of transnational publics, future research into the properties of weak publics would be welcome, as would inquiry into the notion of strong transnational publics. However, such research must not presume that strong publics are actually existing institutions, but rather in the first instance, seek to establish the structural preconditions for the institutionalisation of public spheres. If established, research must then inquire into the exercise of power by strong publics, the relationship between weak and strong transnational publics, and the accountability of strong publics to weak. As Cochran acknowledges, it should also examine how transnational public spheres 'would be internally regulated and made democratically accountable in the way that states are assumed to be in modern international politics.' (Cochran, 1999: 271)

To conclude, research on transnational public spheres in International Relations is merely in its infancy, and where it has been introduced to the discipline, the concept has generally been divorced from the normative interest that once was central to it. It is hoped that in the first instance, this thesis has contributed to theoretical debate, and that in the second instance, that public sphere theory has successfully been reconnected to the critical project of identifying emancipatory possibilities in the present. Transnational public spheres could provide an answer to the legitimacy crisis of global governance, although they are presently at an embryonic stage. Policy makers and scholars face a tremendous challenge in working together to consolidate the potential of emergent transnational publics. More importantly, the participants of transnational public spheres themselves

must take up this challenge. The way forward will rely on participants to adopt the standpoint of what Bohman terms the 'generalized other', 'the relevant critical perspective that opens up a future standpoint of the whole community.' (Bohman, 2004: 153) This dynamism depends on dialogue being maintained with those who serve the role of generalized other and expose the limitations of public spheres. Once obstacles to emancipation are identified and critiqued, then hope arises that they can be overcome. Yet as Bohman acknowledges, this will be so 'only if there are agents who make it so and transnational institutions whose ideals seek to realize a transnational public sphere as the basis for a realistic utopia...in a complexly interconnected world.' (Bohman, 2004: 154)

8. Appendix

Figure 1

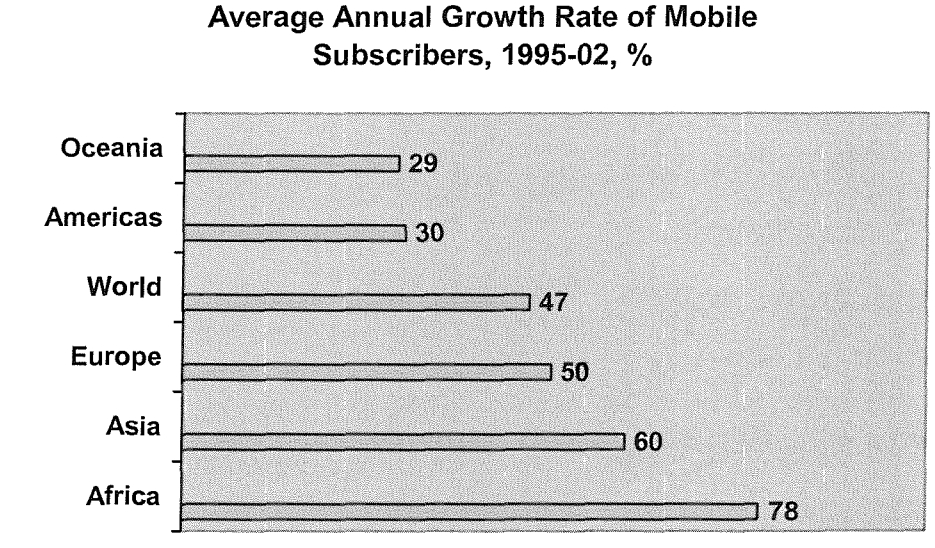
Key Indicators for the World Telecommunications Service Sector

	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003
Main telephone lines (millions)	546	604	689	792	905	1,053	1,210
Mobile cellular subscribers (millions)	16	34	91	215	490	955	1,329
International telephone traffic minutes (billions)	38	49	63	79	100	127	140
Personal computers (millions)	130	175	235	325	435	555	650
Internet users (millions)	4.4	10	40	117	277	502	665

Notes: All data in billions of current US$ converted by annual average exchange rates. Country fiscal year data aggregated to obtain calendar year estimates.

Source: ITU, 1999

Figure 2

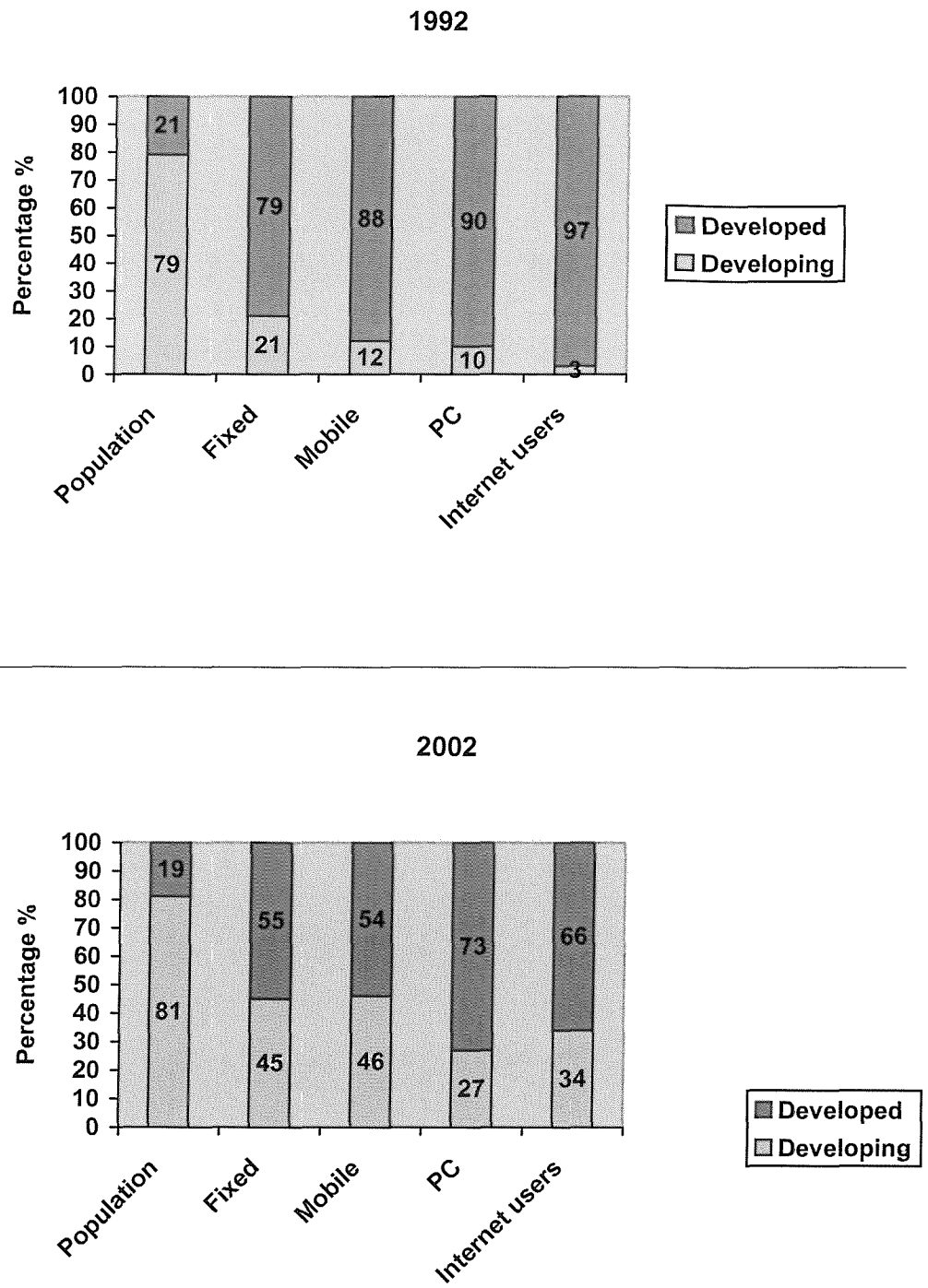


Source: ITU, 2003b

Figure 3

'How Wide the Divide?'

Distribution of Global Population, Fixed and Mobile Telephone Subscribers, Personal Computers and Internet Users per 100 Inhabitants, by Economic Grouping, 1992 and 2002.



Source: ITU, 2003b
Note: Developed includes Western Europe, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the United States. Developing refers to all other countries.

Figure 4

Global Internet Use and Penetration

Region	Population (millions) 2004	Internet use (millions) 2000	Internet use (millions) 2004	Growth 2000-2004	Penetration
World	6, 453	359	789	119%	12%
Africa	906	5	12	171%	1%
Asia	3, 655	114	244	113%	7%
Europe	729	101	218	116%	30%
Middle East	260	5	17	219%	7%
North America	327	108	228	111%	70%
Latin America Caribbean	546	18	51	183%	9%
Oceania	32	7	16	110%	50%

Figure 5

Top Ten Languages in the Web (number of users of the internet by languages)

Top ten languages in the internet	Internet users, by language	Users as % of total internet users	Total population estimate for language	Average penetration
English	288,898,982	36.6%	1,098,654,265	26.3%
Chinese	105,484,112	13.3%	1,321,669,200	8.0%
Japanese	65,933,441	8.3%	127,853,600	51.6%
Spanish	53,782,589	6.8%	386,413,200	13.9%
German	52,321,207	6.6%	95,893,300	54.6%
French	33,465,125	4.2%	375,164,185	8.9%
Korean	29,220,000	3.7%	74,730,000	39.1%
Italian	28,610,000	3.6%	57,987,100	49.3%
Portuguese	21,906,897	2.8%	224,664,100	9.8%
Dutch	13,657,170	1.7%	24,125,950	55.6%
Top Ten Languages	693,279,524	87.2%	3,787,154,900	18.3%
Rest of the languages	101,512,872	12.8%	2,602,991,969	3.9%
World Total	794,792,396	100.0%	6,390,146,869	12.4%

Source: Internet World Stats, 2004

Figure 6: **Global Internet Users per 100 Inhabitants by Income, 2002, %**

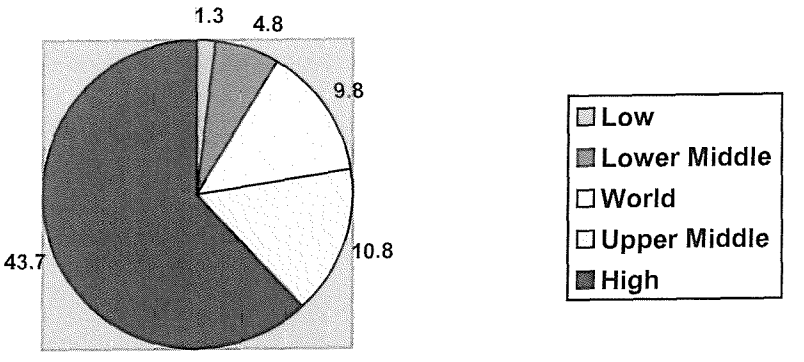
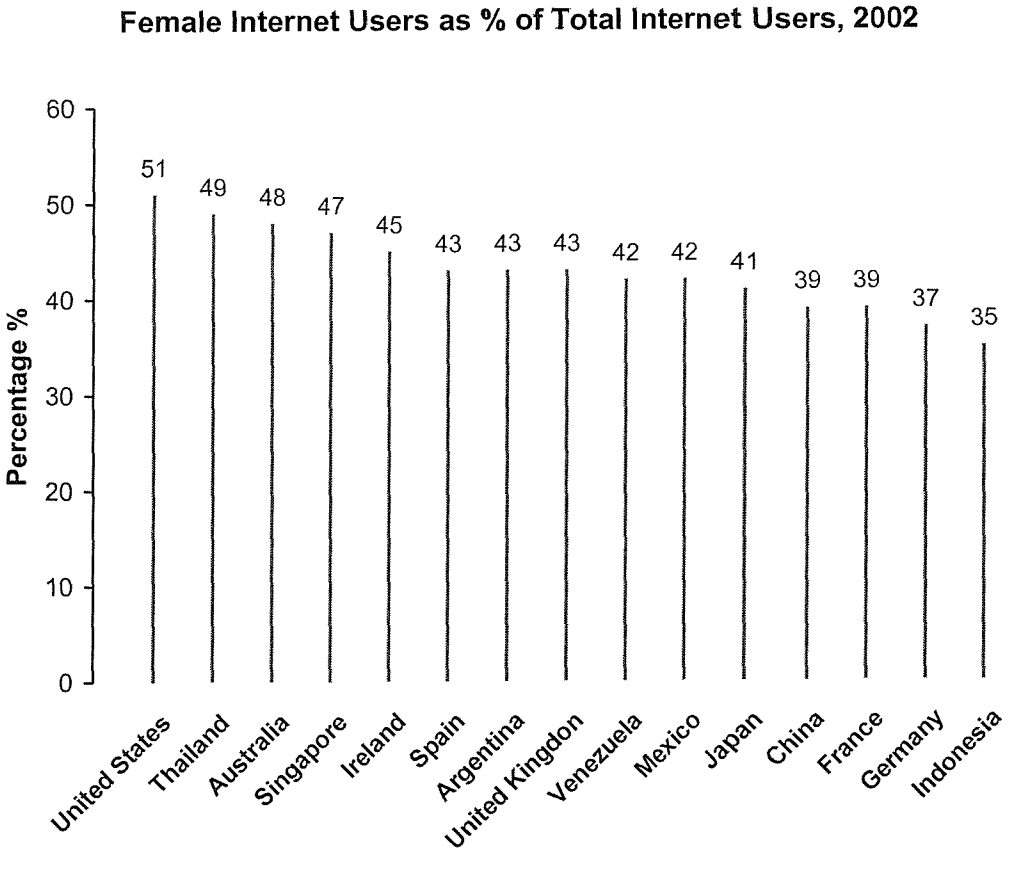


Figure 7



Source: ITU, 2003b

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