

"The Internet revolution does not negate the territorial character of revolutions throughout history. Instead, it extends it from the space of places to the space of flows."

Manuel Castells (2012),
Networks of Outrage and Hope, p. 61.

WE ARE IN UNCHARTED TERRITORY, IN A MAJORITY-URBAN WORLD RESHAPED BY NETWORKS OF COMMUNICATION THAT ACCELERATE THE PACE OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION. WE ARE IN A SPACE THAT TRANSCENDS THE BOUNDARIES OF PHYSICAL PLACE, AND RESHAPES THE SPACES AND POTENTIAL OF ACTIVISM. THE CHANNELS OF EMOTION ONCE SEGMENTED BETWEEN DIFFERENT FACETS OF CIVILIZATION HAVE BEEN OBLITERATED, FORCING THE URBAN VIEW TO BE SEEN ON A GLOBAL SCALE, WHERE ALL CITIZENS CAN MOBILIZE UNDER THE BANNER OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS. YET DESPITE THE POWER AND POTENTIAL OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, PHYSICAL SPACE IS STILL PARAMOUNT WHEN PUSHING FOR CHANGE. IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE INTERNET, WHILE IMPORTANT, ARE ONLY FACILITATORS FOR ORGANIZING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS; THEY MUST BE COUPLED WITH THE PHYSICAL PRESENCE OF PROTESTERS JOINING TOGETHER. BODIES AND FLESH PRESSED UP AGAINST EACH OTHER IN PUBLIC SPACE CAN ACCOMPLISH REAL, LASTING CHANGE. HUMAN BEINGS ARE, AFTER ALL, MADE OF MATTER AND MATERIALS; AND THE MATERIAL WORLD IS WHAT MATTERS IN THE END. PHYSICAL EXISTENCE PROVIDES THE FOUNDATION FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING UPON WHICH IDEAS FLOW AMONG PEOPLE THROUGH DIFFERENT PHYSICAL AND NON-PHYSICAL SPACES. THESE PHYSICAL AND NON-PHYSICAL SPACES ARE GEOPOLITICAL, AND PROVIDE A FOUNDATION TO OVERTHROW REPRESSIVE MACHINES; THE OFFLINE AND ONLINE NETWORKS OF OUTRAGE AND HOPE COUNTER OPPRESSIVE STRUCTURES OF POWER. THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY, PARTICULARLY THE INTERNET, APPEARS TO PLAY ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ROLES IN "BRIDGING" THESE OFFLINE AND ONLINE NETWORKS THAT TRANSCEND DISTANCE AND TIME. IN SUMMATION, THE FUTURE IMPLICATIONS OF NETWORKS OF COMMUNICATION ARE EMPOWERING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND PROGRESS.

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WE ARE IN UNCHARTED TERRITORY, IN A MAJORITY-URBAN WORLD RESHAPED BY NETWORKS OF COMMUNICATION THAT ACCELERATE THE PACE OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION. THIS IS BASED ON A FAIR AND DEPENDABLE CYBERSPACE, COMPARED WITH THE FICKLE NATURE OF PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS, INSTITUTIONS, AND EVEN INDIVIDUAL PERSONS. IF THE INTERNET IS A FORUM FOR FREE EXPRESSION AND A METHOD FOR PUBLIC ORGANIZATION, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PEOPLE WITHOUT ACCESS, OR FOR THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN REGULATING THE INTERNET? OR THE RACE FOR ACCESS TO AN EVER-FASTER NET? ISN'T THE INTERNET CONSTRAINED BY THE PHYSICAL PROPERTIES OF ITS UNDERLYING TECHNOLOGY? DO THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET HAVE THE POWER? ARE THERE CONSTRAINTS WITHIN THE INTERNET THAT DON'T EXIST ELSEWHERE? THE HOPES FOR FREEDOM WITHIN PEOPLE, AND THE FEROCITY OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT, WILL ALWAYS BE MORE POWERFUL THAN INTIMIDATION BASED ON FEAR. WILL A DAY COME WHEN FREEDOM IS A COMMODITY FOR WHICH YOU HAVE TO PAY A MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION FEE? HAS THIS DAY ALREADY ARRIVED? WILL SPACES OF FLOWS OR SPACES OF PLACES EVER RUN OUT? TO WHAT EXTENT CAN THE GOALS OF A REVOLUTIONARY, WEB-BASED NETWORK SHAPE THEIR OWN GOVERNANCE? WILL THERE ALWAYS BE A DEGREE OF COMPROMISE WHEN THE PEOPLE'S NETWORK IS SWITCHED ON WITH THE POLITICAL? CAN WE MAKE A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE NETWORKS OF THE PEOPLE, THE POLITICAL, AND THE CORPORATE WORLDS OF ADVERTISING? NO, WE CAN'T! WHAT KINDS OF NETWORKS EXIST IN VANCOUVER? THE INTERESTING THING TO CONSIDER IS WHERE THESE NETWORKS INTERSECT, AND WITH WHAT IMPACTS; CITIES LIKE VANCOUVER HAVE COUNTLESS NETWORKS WITH VARYING DEGREES OF VISIBILITY. DO WE NEED A POLITICAL NETWORK TO ESTABLISH FREEDOM? HOW CAN WE PLACE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THESE NETWORKS TO SHUT DOWN THEIR OWN SWITCH IF THEY NO LONGER FIGHT FOR FREEDOM? HAS THE INTERNET BECOME A TOOL THAT WILL UNDO THE NETWORK IT WAS CREATED TO SUSTAIN?