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Special Issue:
Globalization, Democracy and Civil Society

Introduction: Globalization, Democracy and Civil Society

Thomas A. Hollihan, Guest Editor

Global Justice Movement Networks: New Technology and the Mobilization of Civil Society

Anne Marie Todd

New information and communication technologies have enhanced political participation, as the spread of ideas and information has created an informed and active citizenry. Social movements, notably the anti-corporate globalization movement, have emerged through the development of activist networks enhanced by technologies such as email and Internet websites. Anti-globalization groups utilize advanced technology to create new communication networks, which transform the strategy and function of social activism. This article identifies three ways global justice movements have adapted their communication strategies to the context of globalization: enabling global reach, enhancing resource mobilization, and establishing ideological alliances. These communication strategies provide new information about how social movements operate in a globalized world.

Mobilizing through the Internet

Katja Cronauer

This article uses a definition of social movements that identifies dimensions that affect, and are affected by, Internet use by social movement actors. It then uses these dimensions to explore under what circumstances Internet use can further or hinder mobilization locally and globally.

Between The Arab Street and the Arab Basement: Dimensions of Civility & Civil Society in American Public Diplomacy

Gordon Stables

This essay examines the manner in which conceptions of civil society inform representations of Islamic audiences in the post 9/11 era. Beginning with the Bush administration's communication strategies, often developed by the State Department's Public Diplomacy program, the project considers how lively debates over the potential of democratic development or the future of global cosmopolitan society are now increasingly recognized as important components of policy formulation. This essay argues that the polarized scholarly debates about the nature of civil society in the Middle East need to be contextualized against contemporary articulations of American foreign policy. Finally, these perspectives are applied as a means to interrogate the recent campaigns of American public diplomacy, that is, the specific national efforts to communicate to Islamic audiences. The conclusions drawn from this comparison provide a cautionary tale for the

prospects of similar public diplomacy campaigns to foster democracy, at least until the contours Islamic publics are more fully considered and better understood.

The U.S. Office of Global Communications: Failures of Hierarchical Communication in an Era of Globalization

Alexander V. Laskin and Catherine H. Palczewski

In July, 2002, the White House announced the formation of an Office of Global Communications meant to improve the U.S. image abroad by better conveying its policy initiatives. On January 21, 2003, President Bush signed an executive order formalizing the role of the Office of Global Communications. This essay argues that the Office was doomed to fail from the very beginning, not in spite of its intentions, but because of them. To support this argument, we describe the formative assumptions of the Office that defined the problem of the United States' poor image as a purely communicative one, that did not recognize the possibility of legitimate international or domestic disagreement with U.S. policies, and that located the problem outside of Washington, DC, in other countries where people were (apparently) simply unable to understand what America does.

Notes on Contributors