

Communication Didactics**The Potentials of New Public
Sphere for Emerging Global Civil Society**

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Abstract: New public sphere is characterized by the digital gadgets, global village, international citizenship and new global society. However, the common thread cutting through all these new concepts is the virtual soul of 'connectivity' that is riding on the 'networking-tools' which have now grown into an unprecedented giant 'network-of-networks' or simply put the 'Internet' with 'social-networking' and 'social-software' as the latest communication tools. International citizens travel on the information superhighways 24/7 and the communications across the planet never stops. It is however argued that NPS offers both challenges and prospects for the users depending on the availability of digital gadgets and digital literacy of the global citizens. This paper explores the pluses and minuses of this emerging environment for the members of global civil society by postulating a grounded model of the issue.

Keywords: New Global Society; New Public Sphere; ICTS; Social Software

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1. Introduction

Jurgen habermas defines ‘public-sphere’ as a realm of social life. It is a sphere which mediates between society and state, in which the public organizes itself into a bearer of public opinion (Habermas, 1974). The public sphere is the space of communication of ideas and projects that emerge from society and are addressed to the decision makers in the institutions of society (Castells, 2008). ‘Cyberspace’ is promoted as a ‘new public space’, which facilitates people in achieving the objectives of self-fulfillment and personal development (Papacharissi, 2002). The new global public sphere is by and large dependent upon global and local communication media system including television, radio, and the print press. Besides these a diversity of multimedia and communications systems are playing a decisive role, among which the Internet and horizontal communication networks are the most prominent (Castells, 2008).

The ‘principle of public information’ is the basic principle of the public sphere which once had to be fought for against the authoritative policies of monarchies and which since then has made possible the democratic control of state activities—the sphere of public authority (Habermas, 1974). The internet and related technologies are increasing avenues for personal expression and promoting citizen activity (Papacharissi, 2002). Since the rise of the Internet in the early 1990s, the global civil society has grown from millions into billions. At the same time, social media have become a fact of life for civil society worldwide, involving many actors like regular citizens, activists, nongovernmental organizations, firms of telecommunications, software providers, and government agencies (Shirky, 2011).

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

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

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

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

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

From their humble beginnings, virtual worlds have now taken the shape of major hubs of entertainment, education, and community (Bartle, 2006). Although the development of these virtual worlds has been driven by the game industry, by now these worlds are used for far more than play, and soon they will be widely adopted as spaces for research, education, politics, and work (Balkin & Noveck, 2006).

2. New Public Sphere

Habermas (1962/1989) traced the development of the public sphere in the 17th and 18th century and its decline in the 20th century. He saw the public sphere as a realm of our social life in which public opinion could be formed out of rational public debate. 'Ultimately, informed and logical discussion, Habermas argued, could lead to public agreement and decision making, thus representing the best of the democratic tradition' (Papacharissi, 2002). This public sphere first emerged in Great Britain at the end of the 17th Century - the Licensing Act of 1695, which allowed newspapers to print without the Queen's censorship, is regarded as a crucial enabler (Gordon, 2004).

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

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

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

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

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

communication (Bell, 2008). In the digital epoch, this includes the diversity of both the mass media and Internet and wireless communication networks (McChesney 2007).

3. Digital Technologies

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

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

It is swift, simple, cost effective, and convenient to acquiring and dispersing political communication online (Abramson et al., 1988). New technologies provide information and tools that can extend the role of the public in the social and political spheres. The emergence of online political groups and activism certainly mirrors political uses of the internet (Bowen, 1996; Browning, 1996). PC and Internet created the facilities to connect and interact with other users across the globe (Messinger et al., 2008). The current media system is multi-layered. It is local and global at the same time (Castells, 2008:90). Thus the cyberspace translates into a virtual world and specific locations with in this vast digital space become identical with eighteenth century European cafés that facilitated intellectual forum identified by Habermas as the ‘bourgeois public sphere’. Within this framework, despite the structural transformations in society, geographically

dispersed intelligence can converge in cyberspace to engage in rational and critical debate (Ubayasiri, 2006).

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

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

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

Social Software

Social software can be broadly defined as tools and environments that facilitate activities in digital social networks (Chatti et al., 2006). Digital social networks are social networks mainly realized by means of computer-mediated communication. Most social software research concentrates on the relations between social entities in digital social networks and their interaction, while community information systems contain and group social entities (Klamma et al., 2007). What makes social network sites distinctive is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. This may lead to connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently between “latent ties” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

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

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

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

online encyclopaedia which everybody can edit. Wikis support collaborative construction, development and production. (Dalsgaard, 2006).

Free and Open Sources Systems (FOSS)

The history of social software is as long as the history of computers itself, for example, it took the Web less than four years to attract 50 million users while radio needed almost 40 years to gain the same number of users (Mejias, 2006). While some research material has been available electronically from the first days of the Internet, libraries are putting more and more material on the Web and thus becoming virtual libraries. For example, the University of Texas made a move toward a bookless library system by posting 60,000 volumes online and trying to bring all their collections online (Nawaz et al., 2011).

Carey & Gleason (2006) note that open source systems are becoming culture in the society, for example, in the February 2006 survey of U.S. higher education chief information officers (CIOs), it was found that two-third of the CIOs have either adopted or seriously planning in the favor of FOSS. Robert Stephenson, (2006) defines FOSS in the language of Richard Stallman, the founder of Free Software Movement, “as a matter of liberty, not price.” Free software refers to four kinds of freedom for the users:

- a. “The freedom to run the program, for any purpose.
- b. The freedom to study how the program works, and adapt it to your needs.
- c. The freedom to redistribute copies so you can help your neighbor.
- d. The freedom to improve the program, and release your improvements to the public, so that the whole community benefits.”

4. Prospects & Challenges

Prospects of the New Public Sphere

Contemporary technologies enable the Internet to be decentralized and open, free from censorship and with the ability of anonymity. New technologies can further enhance these features of the Internet in future. Through these characteristics the Internet can, indeed, at least provide the basis for a public sphere that approximates to Habermas' vision (Gordon, 2004). Online spheres are no longer contained within

their own boundaries (if they ever were). What appear to be single online groups often turn out to be multi-modal. Group members connect with one another in multiple online spaces, using multiple media–social network sites to make their identity and social connections visible, YouTube for video sharing, Flickr for sharing pictures, blogs for instantaneous updates, web sites for amassing collective intelligence, and so on (Baym, 2009).

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

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

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

Challenges of New Public Sphere

Internet enthusiasts' rhetoric on the benefits of the internet as a public sphere is based on the fact that it provides a place for personal expression. It makes it

possible for little-known individuals and groups to reach out to citizens directly and restructure public affairs, and connects the government to citizens (Papacharissi, 2002). Most Realist scholarship perceives technology as a passive and exogenous factor, contributing to the power capabilities of states, which strive for security and welfare in an anarchic environment. Technological leadership and control of large technological systems is imperative to maintain or improve a relative power position in the international system. Technology is instrumental in achieving political goals (Fritsch, 2011).

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

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

5. Impacts on Global Society

The relationships between government and civil society and their interaction through the public sphere define the polity of society. Interaction between citizens, civil society, and the state, communicating through the public sphere ensure that the balance between stability and social change is maintained in the conduct of public affairs (Castells, 2008). Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs), grassroots activists, and social movement actors are becoming more intertwined to leverage their strengths and make an impact on local, national, and global realities. NGOs

are key players in this global network. These influence international and state policies by researching and disseminating information, launching awareness campaigns, lobbying, and organizing direct action in collaboration with other organizations and networks (Custard, 2008).

It is through the media, both mass media and horizontal networks of communication, that non-state actors influence people's thinking and foster social change. Ultimately, the transformation of consciousness does have impact on political behavior, on voting patterns, and on the decisions of governments. It is at the level of media politics where it appears that societies can be moved in a direction that diverges from the values, norms and interests institutionalized in the political system (Castells, 2008). Social media may be thought as a long-term tool that can strengthen civil society and the public sphere. In contrast to the instrumental view of Internet freedom, this can be called the "environmental" view. According to this view, positive changes in the life of a country, including pro-democratic regime change, follow, rather than precede, the development of a strong public sphere (Shirky, 2011).

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

Though ICTs have a profound impact on individual, society and state, however it is arguable to say that national public sphere has transformed into global public sphere. There are social and political prerequisites too, and it is debatable whether transnational analogues to domestic conditions exist (Crack, 2007). For example, there is not a well-defined moral or political community outside of the nation-state. Computer mediated communication across borders may represent nothing more than an 'aggregate audience' of individuals, who lack a sufficient sense of commonality to engage in normatively structured discourse (Bohman, 1998:211). Further, in an international 'anarchic' environment, there is not a sovereign authority comparable to the state that could serve as an addressee of public opinion. It is therefore questionable whether the concept of the public sphere can make the

transition from the domestic to the transnational level (Crack, 2007). On the other hand some suggest that though there is no global state at planetary level however global networks of governance are emerging and may play the role that nation state play within its territory (Castells, 2008). Anyhow, the global ICT-infrastructure continues to grow as does the use of this media to negotiate social change and justice (Custard, 2008).

Internet and wireless communication, by enacting a global, horizontal network of communication, provide both an organizing tool and a means for debate, dialogue, and collective decision making (Castells, 2008). Internet enthusiasts believe that the Internet can contribute to democracy by bonding people, regardless of territory, and by creating public spheres and new social movements (Rheingold, 1993; Schwartz, 1996). Many studies (Ott & Rosser, 2000; Hill & Sen, 2005) have shown how citizens use computers and the Internet for enhanced political and democratic initiatives. For the so-called cyber pessimists, however, the Internet is a digital replica of the real world where one observes politics as usual (Min, 2010).

6. Discussions

Advocates of cyberspace expect that online discourse will increase political participation and open vistas for democracy (Poster, 1995). They claim that the alleged decline of the public sphere lamented by academics, politicians, and several members of the public will be halted by the democratizing effects of the internet and its surrounding technologies. On the other hand, skeptics caution that technologies not universally accessible and ones that frequently provoke fragmented, nonsensical, and enraged discussion, otherwise known as 'flaming', far from guarantee a revived public sphere (Papacharissi, 2002).

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

on a 'many-to-many' model of information distribution, as opposed to the 'one-to-many' structure of mass media of 20th century (Crack, 2007).

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

The internet may really boost the public sphere, but it does so in an unmatched way that is not comparable to our past experiences of public discourse. Perhaps the internet will not become the new public sphere, but something radically different. This may enhance democracy and dialogue, but not in a way that we would expect it to, or in a way that we have experienced in the past (Papacharissi, 2002).

The network society is marked by a trend towards individualization, social fragmentation and new forms of community. The old hierarchies are replaced by strategically important connections in the network, which can cooperate and conflict with one another. Network structures have penetrated into every sphere of life, including politics, government, economy, technology, and the community as a whole.

These processes symbolize a disruption in conventional understandings of space, borders, and territory, and directly impact on the institutional foundations of public sphere (Crack, 2007; Castells, 2008).

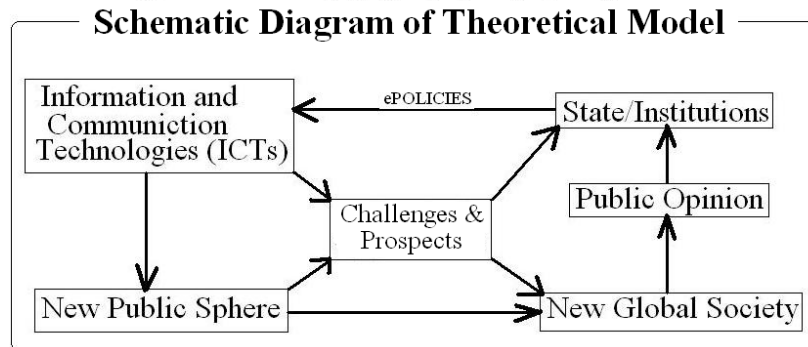


Figure 1. Theoretical Structure of New Public Sphere

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

7. Conclusions

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

It is imperative to note that new public sphere is not a blessing in itself rather it requires legal, social, political and ethical guidelines for operating in the favor of the global civil society. Thus there are both opportunities and threats from the new

public space or virtual platform for the international citizenship. Both positive and negative aspects must be identified continuously so that both the international institutions as well as the individual states can formulate their ePolicies and policies for international affairs in an effective manner thereby making the new public sphere as an opportunity of the newly emerging new global civil society.

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