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**A MULTI-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACT
ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIBERALISM**

Bachelor's Thesis

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I declare I have written the bachelor's thesis independently.

All works and major viewpoints of the other authors, data from other sources of literature and elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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ABSTRACT

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is having a great impact on International Relations (IR), both in theory and practice. This thesis investigates social media's role in how people, institutions and governments communicate with each other, and how social media is facilitating global communications and transactions. Moreover, this thesis analyses the extent to which social media is a tool of empowerment, especially in regards to promoting liberal principles like human rights and equal rights. Due to the technological revolution, public diplomacy has become another important tool for both state and nonstate actors. This article examines how the definition of public diplomacy has changed with the developments in IR and ICT, and employs Eytan Gilboa's three models of public diplomacy to illustrate how different actors can use public diplomacy to affect another country's foreign policies. Because ICT (social media) facilitates actions of individuals, cultural groups, nations, and international systems, their impact on the international arena demand a multi-level analysis. This research paper makes a qualitative analysis to investigate social media's impact on the individual, state, and system level, and if it can promote the principles of Liberalism in IR. This thesis claims that social media has the potential to enforce Liberalism in IR by promoting human rights, the liberal principles, and facilitating public diplomacy.

Keywords: social media, Liberalism in IR, human rights, equal rights, public diplomacy, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), empowerment, liberal principles

INTRODUCTION

This bachelor's thesis analyses if new perspectives on global relations (brought about by ICT and the technological revolution) facilitate the potential impact of Liberalism in International Relations (IR). Academic researchers have used the phrase Information and Communication Technology (ICT) since the 1980s (Melody 1986, Silverstone 1991). The term ICT originates from the term Information Technology (IT) but has its emphasis on “unified communications” (Murray 2011). It also includes telecommunications, computers, wireless networks or systems that process or transmits audio and video. There is no universal definition of ICT as its technology evolves rapidly and keeps on changing and therefore the definition needs constant updates. This article places its focus on digital systems which can transmit information in text or visual format, or through video or audio, via social media platforms on the internet. The aim of this research paper is to illustrate ICT’s and in particular social media’s positive impact on Liberalism. Thus, this thesis claims that ICT, with an emphasis on social media, can promote human rights and facilitate public diplomacy to enforce Liberalism in IR.

Moreover, this article argues that social media is an important product of the internet which the governments are struggling to keep up with. However, if mastered, social media (like Twitter, Facebook or YouTube) is a promising tool for spreading knowledge and raising awareness. Therefore, it can influence a country's population in a positive way if it results in knowledge generation and empowerment. Social media and ICT in general can promote and facilitate international cooperation which is one of the core principles in liberal IR theory. In this respect this article will demonstrate that social media can enforce the principles of

Liberalism so they become more effectively applied in practice. Furthermore, social media is a potential tool for promoting human rights and equal rights. Therefore, this bachelor's thesis introduces social media as a factor to highlight the role of human rights as a theoretical tool for IR and to investigate the impact of social media through a multi-level analysis. Thus, this thesis argues that by having its emphasis on human rights and empowerment it can demonstrate how social media can contribute to promoting the principles of Liberalism (including equal rights and reducing violence against women) by examining whether or not social media can be a factor that facilitates Liberalism, especially in terms of the application of its principles and/or making them more effective in practice.

Ever since ICT and the digital era began the world of ICT has had, and is having, a great impact on global communications and transactions. Since the invention of the internet and the fact that a great number of people can use a computer makes it a revolutionary human issue (that requires IR analysis). Anyone who has access to the internet can share or get knowledge through the means of computers and electronic devices. Thus, the internet becomes an empowerment tool for a very large number of people (e.g. in terms of self-determination). This thesis analyses the ways in which social media can help to promote human rights and equal rights plus if it can promote self-determination for women.

Furthermore, this article argues that public diplomacy is facilitated by ICT and social media. Thus, it becomes easier to influence a country's foreign policies due to the technological developments. Public diplomacy can be of great importance as it affects various aspects of personal and official relations. Moreover, it can become an empowerment tool for how the public engages policy-makers, especially in liberal-democratic nations. In addition, if a nation engages in and values public diplomacy, it can have an impact on the way diplomatic relations occur between states. This in turn influences state dynamics which is of great interest for IR theory and practice.

The first section of this research paper includes the theoretical framework which is based on the liberal paradigm in IR. This paper employs a literature review to build its theoretical foundation and is organised as a thematic review with two main subtopics; the first being social media and human rights, and the second being public diplomacy. The liberal assumptions (which are the basis of the methodology for this research) are that there should

be equal justice for all people regardless of gender, race or background which institutions at each level should promote. Furthermore, this research asserts that the ontological basis of Western Liberalism is that individuals enjoy freedom (natural rights). Thus, self-determination, which means to have the freedom to be who you are or become who you want to be, becomes a natural part of human rights.

As an IR theory, Liberalism focuses on institutionalism, which is a group of IR theories that all have a common focus on structures of the international system. Therefore, Liberalism as an IR theory is distinct from Liberalism as a philosophical concept as the latter has its focus on two principles—individualism and liberty (the free market). According to the philosophical concept, Liberalism sees the individual as the basic foundation and the most important component of a society (Chau 2009, 2). Thus, a good society is constructed around the individual (Ibid.). Moreover, a society is supposed to ensure the liberty of the individuals so that they can “reach their full potential if they want to” (Ibid.). The freedom that the individual has implies a free market which allows the individual to freely develop and prosper. Furthermore, it gives the opportunity to obtain the lifestyle that the individual values, thus, the individual is free to determine the measure of his or her success. This article argues that the principles of individualism and liberty are the foundation for a healthy liberal-democratic society. Therefore, it is imperative to respect and support these principles as they give birth to non-governmental actors and organisations which can shape policy choices and state preferences which are relevant and represent the citizens. This enables a state to be closer to its people and thus becomes more democratic. The first chapter analyses these principles and the ways in which ICT and social media can facilitate Liberalism in IR.

Moreover, the first chapter analyses public diplomacy as an empowerment tool and its impact on how states and nonstate actors can influence other states. Additionally, it examines the definitions of public diplomacy and analyses the three different models by Eytan Gilboa (2000, 2001) which are based on the following five variables: “major actors, initiators, goals, types of media, and means and techniques.” The models are called the Basic Cold War model, the Nonstate Transnational model and the Domestic PR model. These three models are employed to acquire knowledge about public diplomacy and for better understanding the relations between the different variables.

The second chapter uses a qualitative analysis as a method to analyse social media's impact on the individual, state and international level. The first case analyses social media's impact on human rights and women's rights by looking at how YouTube has empowered women in Afghanistan and how social media tools and the Hashtag activism have helped to raise awareness on women's issues. Moreover, it examines if social media can indeed enforce the liberal principles and empower women's rights at the individual level. The second case investigates how social media can influence the state level and examines social media's impact on voting behaviour. It also looks at the social media platform, Reddit, which represents the political preferences of young American adults who are a critical part of the country's political future. Most of the popular content originating on Reddit ends up on bigger social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, which makes Reddit act like an important melting pot for ideas that spread over social media. The third case analyses if ICT (and social media) can facilitate public diplomacy, so that it becomes an empowerment tool in terms of promoting Liberalism, by looking at how Canada's public diplomacy is working and how its image is perceived around the world. The aim of this research is to draw attention upon this phenomena called digital revolution and its impact on IR theory and practice. The impact of ICT and social media is under-analysed by IR scholars and more academic research is needed as it is having an important affect on state dynamics.

1. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Currently the international system, especially the Western countries who symbolise the defenders of freedom, democracy, liberty and human rights, are experiencing a backlash in promoting the liberal principles. The backlash is partly due to the instalment of fear in people that results from the rise of terrorism and the increasing flow of illegal immigrants and refugees in Europe and the United States. The fear fuels nationalism and favours the realist approach which poses a great challenge for Liberalism in IR. As Liberalism in IR promotes peaceful cooperation between states and strives for mutual beneficial outcomes in international relations, the recent trend in the West is alarming as it supports Realism in IR, where the focus is on hard power and military capabilities to increase a state's security and material resources, which result in less international cooperation and an increased risk of warfare and isolationism.

When looking at IR theory, academics and scholars constantly tackle the great debate between Realism and Liberalism. The Liberal school of thought is often criticized as being utopian, idealistic, reductionist and normative. Additionally, “even those social scientists who have contributed the most to our current understanding of Liberal international relations theory sometimes treat it as inherently more normative than explanatory”(Moravcsik 1992/rev.1993, 3). As an example, Robert Keohane (1990; 166, 172-173), argues that in contrast to Realism, currently, Liberal theories cannot even meet the simplest social scientific standards. Despite this, he still defends Liberal theory by saying that “liberalism is more sophisticated [regarding human motives] than many of its critics have alleged” (Keohane 1990; 166, 172-173). Although, he contends that the basic unsupported claim of “moral worth

and independence of the individual”(Moravcsik 1992/rev.1993, 3) creates “indeterminacy” when analysing society from a liberal perspective (Keohane 1990; 166, 172-173). Even though the liberal paradigm faces the above mentioned critics it is still a relevant school of thought as it can explain human motives and the reasons for peace. Moreover, Robert Keohane’s statement that “In contrast to Marxism and realism, Liberalism is not committed to ambitious and parsimonious structural theory”, but it is rather “a source of strength” and most importantly a “guide” for making normative choices (Ibid.). Thus, although the liberal principles are difficult to defend empirically and to apply in practice, their existence is important as to guide our actions and to illustrate a potential world image that is worth striving for.

Furthermore, the emerging digital revolution can be an effective tool for empowerment and for enforcing the liberal principles. Before the ICT revolution, the individual, did not have many efficient liberal tools to gain power or make an impact on the state. The individual could publish books or newspapers, but few had access to these. At best, the individual could create movements, but these processes were slow and not hard for the government to control. Thus, it was easy for the government to suppress any undesirable printings or social movements.

However, since the invention of the internet, the individual has many ways to work around and avoid government interventions when processing or transmitting information. The cyber world can be without limits and the virtual reality can help to bring about or shape a concrete reality, where new ideas and knowledge can be put into action. Moreover, it is easier for individuals to establish power and have an impact on the state and/or institutional level. Thus, ICT has become an important factor and Liberalism in IR theory needs to go back to its principles about human rights and the individual, as ICT has become a new and powerful tool that is creating social movements and changing the way states do public diplomacy and engage in international affairs. By doing a literature review this thesis establishes a theoretical framework where ICT or social media is incorporated into the methodology that is used in Liberalism.

There is not a lot of prior research on ICT's impact on International Relations (IR) and because the topic is under-analysed important questions have not been addressed e.g.: To what

extent does ICT influence IR and how should IR theory integrate this new concept? Therefore, this bachelor's thesis places ICT as a factor to examine if it can empower both state and nonstate actors plus promote liberalism in IR. The term ICT, as explained in the introduction, does not have a universal definition as it defines technology that is rapidly changing. When using the term ICT, this research paper refers to digital systems where information can be processed and transmitted in the form of audio, video, text or visual content through the internet. The main focus is on social media and the aim of the research is to establish if social media can promote liberal principles like human rights and especially equal rights. The second subsection examines how ICT can facilitate public diplomacy and work as an empowerment tool to enforce Liberalism.

1.1. Social media, human rights, and Liberalism

Before analysing social media it is important to establish its definition. Kaplan and Haenlein defines social media as “[...] a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, 61) The “Web 2.0” refers to the World Wide Web sites that are specialised in user-generated content, meaning sites that are tailored for the user so that they are easily manageable and interoperable.

The importance of social media has grown dramatically in the last two decades as a great majority of the young generation who have access to the internet use some form of social media on a daily basis. For instance, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are popular social media sites where people get to interact virtually and share information and opinions. According to a survey in 2015 by Pew Internet Research, 90% of young American adults between the age of 18 and 29 use at least one type of social media site. The increase of young users have gone from 10% to 76% since 2005 which is a remarkable increase. The social media usage of Americans who were 65 years of age or older were only 2% in 2005 and 11%

in 2010. However, the percentage has tripled since 2010 and is now 35%. Thus, the percentage of American social media usage is increasing in all age groups. Moreover, the study showed that 68% of American women (of all ages) and 62% of American men use social media. Thus, the usage rate of both women and men are similar.

Social media is an effective way for people to share information, build networks and gain knowledge. The fact that anyone who have access to social media can upload content in the form of news, blog posts or comments, give rise to questions such as 'Is the content correct?' and 'Is the author a reliable source?'. These questions are part of the social media package. That is, any user who is capable of critical thinking is able to comprehend that the people who contribute to the content are diverse. Some are professionals but the majority are amateurs. As an example, on Facebook there is the possibility to get news directly from a professional news site like The Economist, Financial Times, The New York Times, Foreign Policy, Harvard Business Review etc. Thus, the content should be more trustworthy as the source is considered reliable.

However, as private users can also upload news to Facebook it becomes the readers' responsibility to double check the information. It is common that other users give feedback which makes the range of opinions and ideas on social media very diverse but the amount of incorrect information increases as well. The incorrect information is a disadvantage but it is not a big price to pay for having the advantage of freedom of expression. Moreover, it becomes a democratic tool as it gives space for the whole spectrum of views and opinions regarding politics, economics, natural and social sciences, religion etc. The governments in liberal-democratic societies should support the existence and usage of social media to enforce the principles of freedom of speech and freedom of conscience which are part of a person's fundamental rights. As mentioned earlier, the two philosophical principles; individualism and liberty, are the foundation of a healthy liberal-democratic society. Thus, it is in the government's interest to safeguard these principles. Social media is an important product of the internet which the government needs to adapt to. It is a medium for knowledge generation and for spreading awareness. Hence, it can have a positive effect by enforcing the liberal principles and if the knowledge generation results in empowerment.

Furthermore, social media or ICT in general can facilitate and increase international

cooperation which is one of the main principles in Liberalism. ICT tools like the teleconference tool Skype makes it easier to interact with individuals in other countries and speeds up business activities and other forms of exchanges. Thus, ICT is having an impact on global communications and transactions. The fact that anyone who has access to the internet can share or get knowledge instantly through the means of electronic devices makes it a powerful tool for empowerment. Thus, a great number of people can be empowered by this phenomenon which can enforce individualism and self-determination.

This article argues that the ontological foundation of Western Liberalism are natural rights, meaning that individuals should have the right to enjoy freedom which include self-determination. This is supported by classical liberalism in political philosophy where self-determination is inherently a human right. Furthermore, the government should not suppress a citizens individual freedom and every individual has the right to its full potential. Unless an individual harms another individual, then the state has the right to interfere. It is part of the Western ontology that people ought to be free. Thus, self-determination becomes a natural part of human rights.

The 18th century German philosopher Immanuel Kant's work on moral rights has become the foundation for The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is based on the moral principle that “[...] humanity must always be treated as an end, not merely as a means. To treat a person as a mere means is to use a person to advance one's own interest. But to treat a person as an end is to respect that person's dignity by allowing each the freedom to choose for himself or herself.” (Velasquez, Andre, Shanks, S.J., and Meyer 1990) Thus, every human being is equally important and deserves to be respected. It is therefore wrong to abuse or use a human being against his or her will. Kant's principle of respecting human worth and dignity is often used to justify self-determination and the freedom of choice which are considered as fundamental moral rights.

Moreover, the principles based on Kant's work can be grouped into negative and positive rights. The right to privacy and rights which protect human freedom and liberty are called negative rights (Velasquez, Andre, Shanks, S.J., and Meyer 1990). These rights imply that a person should have “a zone of non-interference” which others should not intrude (Ibid.). Negative rights can constitute civil and political rights. These include the right to life,

freedom from slavery, freedom of speech, the right not to be killed, the right to private property, freedom from violent crime, freedom of worship (freedom of religion), habeas corpus (meaning to seek relief for unlawful imprisonment) and a fair trial. The positive rights are concerned with welfare and providing “[...] each person the positive assistance of others in fulfilling basic constituents of human well-being like health and education.” (Ibid.) The right to freedom becomes insignificant if a human cannot exert and use that freedom. Therefore, this right entails that “[...] every human being also has a fundamental right to what is necessary to secure a minimum level of well being.” (Ibid.) Positive rights “[...] are rights that provide something that people need [in order] to secure their well being.” (Ibid.) To name a few, these include a right to an education, a right to food, housing, medical and health care, employment, police protection, national security, internet access and a minimum standard of living.

The theoretical assumption of this paper is that the term positive rights implies that institutions need to actively ensure that human rights are promoted. They should be structured to ensure both cooperation and human rights. Negative rights implies that the individual has the right to freedom of speech and freedom from violent crime. However, the institutions are the ones responsible for ensuring an environment which can support negative rights. Thus, the positive rights require action and ensures the conditions for negative rights which in general require inaction.

The claim that human rights are an institutional responsibility demands a look at institutionalism in IR. Institutionalism is considered a viable theoretical basis for analysing the international arena. What makes it effective is its capability for analysing two levels of the international arena (international institutions and states). Institutionalism consists of a group of IR theories that all have a common focus on structures of the international system. As mentioned earlier, Liberalism as an IR theory is distinct from Liberalism as a (philosophical) concept as the latter has its focus on two principles—individualism and liberty (the free market). Ronald Chau (2009, 2) describes liberalism as a philosophical concept in the following way: “Firstly, liberalism places the individual at the heart of society and argues that the highest value social order is one that is built around the individual. Secondly, the purpose of society is to allow individuals to reach their full potential if they want to, and that the best

way to do this is to give the individual as much liberty as possible". This research paper supports these claims where the individual should have the possibility to exercise his/her freedom to freely develop and prosper. This implies a free market where the individual is given the opportunity to choose the lifestyle he/she wants and is free to determine the measure of his or her success.

When it comes to democratic nations it is up to the citizens to decide what ideas should be the base for their basic institutions. John Rawls is one of the great liberal thinkers who expressed similar thoughts and claimed that those who produce theories in Political Philosophy are not suppose to have more authority than any other regular citizen and that the citizens get to vote on what ideas are best suited for their government (Rawls 1993, 2). As in Liberal theory, it is the institutions who have the authority to make decisions and are in charge of promoting the principles and ideas of their citizens. Thus, social media is a liberal tool which can reflect and/or facilitate the transmission of the citizen's ideas and wishes.

Moreover, the liberal assumptions of this paper are that there should be equal justice for all people regardless of gender, race or background. That is to say that there should not be a difference between men's rights or women's rights. Furthermore, the colour of a person's skin should not determine that person's opportunities in education, employment or life in general. A person's background of being rich or poor, should also not define a person's right to opportunities or how a society treats that person. Therefore, this paper aligns itself with John Rawls (1971)'s arguments from the book "A Theory of Justice" where he argues that everyone should have the right to equal opportunities in life. All human beings should have the same worth and the same rights no matter the gender, race or background. And a person who works hard, is capable and talented, has the right to succeed and reach its full potential based on merit.

As the two philosophical principles; individualism and liberty, are the foundation for a healthy liberal-democratic society, it is imperative to respect and support these principles as they give birth to non-governmental actors and organisations which can shape policy choices and state preferences which are relevant and represents the citizens. This enables a state to be closer to its people and thus becomes more democratic. Social media embodies the principles of individualism and liberty. Moreover, it is a tool for knowledge generation (empowerment),

and can facilitate the creation of a new type of civil body and/or new global social movements as in theory, anyone who has access to social media in the world can get in contact with these formations or social movements. The planning and organising of social movements have been immensely facilitated by social media sites such as Facebook. Thus, the impact of social media is important as it can help to structure new types of civil bodies or social movements that stretches beyond one state.

An example of digital activism and how social media can facilitate political movements by publicising about them and helping them to grow, is the Arab Spring uprisings in the Middle East and the anti-austerity movement Occupy (Karatzogianni 2016). This of course, can be a disadvantage for a state as it might threaten a state's security if the social movement has violent intentions. However, a state which supports democracy would embrace that risk to honour the principles of liberty. The owners of social media, like for example Mark Zuckerberg, the owner of Facebook, do have the power to control and censor the content which is uploaded by users and can report any dangerous or threatening online activity to the government. The government can then intervene and do what it deems necessary to ensure state security. This is the case for open social networks.

However, it becomes more complicated if one looks at closed social networks. The encrypted social networks which are closed are more difficult to control and ensures a user's privacy. This can be seen as the dark side of social media as terror groups can transmit information without being stopped by any state authority. The state would need to hack these networks in order to access the content but this requires more time and resources. On the other hand, if the state is suppressing its people's freedom and liberty then the closed social networks work as a liberating tool which can speed up and make it easier for the suppressed individuals to enforce the liberal principles.

This can be seen as a quiet form of digital activism which gives access to digital networks “to avoid censorship and internet shutdowns in authoritarian regimes” (Karatzogianni 2016). For example by “bringing internet access to minority and marginalised groups and poverty-stricken rural areas” (Ibid.). A good example of this is the voluntary work in Sarantaporo, Northern Greece, where the community provides free internet to 15 villages in Elassona through an open source system (Kalessi 2014). This poverty-stricken community

is not suppressed by its government but does not receive the required state support for keeping up with the modern developments. Thus, the volunteers who commenced this project are the ones empowering the community through a private initiative.

1.2. Public diplomacy, empowerment, and Liberalism

Diplomacy in general can be seen as the foundation for foreign policy as it is the mean for state actors to negotiate and communicate with other states in order to avoid war and at best find mutual beneficial outcomes. Therefore, diplomacy is essential for states' peaceful coexistence and cooperation which is what Liberalism in IR stands for. The Liberal approach in IR supports the idea that humans do not have to live like enemies and that they can cooperate, and live peacefully side by side. This is an Idealist approach which becomes relevant when one compares the relations between liberal-democratic societies as democratic states do not seem to wage war on each other. This claim is known as the democratic peace theory where diplomacy plays a big role as its aim is to ensure good relations with other states.

Public diplomacy is another important aspect of good relations between states as its aim is to influence a foreign state's public opinion so that the domestic state is seen in a good light, and that the people in the foreign state end up pressuring their government to develop foreign policies that are favourable to the domestic state. However, public diplomacy is more inclusive than diplomacy as it also employs non-state actors to affect another state's foreign policy decisions. Scholars have used different definitions of public diplomacy since its emergence due to important developments in international relations and communications (Gilboa 2008, 57).

Earlier definitions were more limited and unspecific as they represented the technological developments at the time. For example Gifford Malone's (1985, 199) definition of public diplomacy was "direct communication with foreign peoples, with the aim of

affecting their thinking and, ultimately, that of their governments”. This definition is vague as it does not describe who controls the communication. Back in the 1980s, the government was the only actor who performed public diplomacy, thus, there was no need for specifying the actors. A later definition by Hans Tuch (1990, 3) described public diplomacy as “a government’s process of communication with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and policies.” Moreover, Howard H. Frederick (1993, 229) did not specify the actors but developed the concept about what content was affected by public diplomacy: “activities, directed abroad in the fields of information, education, and culture, whose objective is to influence a foreign government, by influencing its citizens.” With the developments in ICT, new actors emerged and created a need for a more exact definition which specified all the actors involved in public diplomacy.

Around the same time, Benno H. Signitzer and Timothy Coombs (1992) managed to formulate a more accurate definition. Hence, this research paper uses Signitzer and Coombs definition of public diplomacy. They defined it as “the way in which both government and private individuals and groups influence directly or indirectly those public attitudes and opinions which bear directly on another government’s foreign policy decisions” (Signitzer and Coombs 1992, 138). Thus, their argument is that public diplomacy and PR are alike as they use “similar tools” and have “similar objectives” (Gilboa 2008, 57). Therefore, there is no real difference between these two concepts. Moreover, this changes international relations as new actors are involved. Hence, according to Gilboa (2008, 57), Signitzer and Coombs' definition of public diplomacy “[...] redefines the landscape of international relations by adding nonstate actors and reflecting the growing interdependence among all actors.”

As underlined before, public diplomacy is a tool of empowerment and is facilitated by ICT. The possibility to advocate human rights, equal rights, self-determination and to promote Liberalism through public diplomacy, with the help of ICT, makes it an important concept and requires further IR research. Moreover, it can become an empowerment tool for how the public engages policy-makers, especially in liberal-democratic nations. Thus, public diplomacy can be of great importance as it affects various aspects of personal and official relations. In addition, it can have an impact on the way diplomatic relations occur between

states. This in turn influences state dynamics which is of great interest for IR theory and practice. The ICT factor plays an important role because when looking at state dynamics, one can clearly see that ICT has become an essential actor in public diplomacy.

Due to the ICT revolution, the world is becoming more and more digitalized, and the government institutions will need to adapt to these changes in order to keep up with the developments in the modern world. Public diplomacy has become more complex as ICT speeds up the process and makes it easier for the general public to influence the government and vice versa. The Internet and media are efficient means to spread knowledge and ideas. Therefore, they become essential tools for the government to influence and control the people of other governments. However, as the internet and media can also be a powerful mean for non-state actors to influence people, less liberal governments can feel threatened by this liberating phenomenon.

There is little research about models in public diplomacy. Models are important as they define variables and portray the relations between them which is needed in order to develop knowledge about public diplomacy (Gilboa 2008, 59). This research paper uses Eytan Gilboa's (2000, 2001) three models: the Basic Cold War model, the Nonstate Transnational model, and the Domestic PR model. These three models were developed based on five different variables: major actors, initiators, goals, types of media, and means and techniques.

Public diplomacy is a fairly new concept that emerged right at the beginning of the Cold War. The first model is therefore based on the events during the Cold War and is called the Basic Cold War model. The extreme threat and danger of nuclear weapons made it evident that “[...] information and persuasion campaigns would be the principal weapons” for the United States and the Soviet Union (USSR) to persuade and win “[...] their global ideological and strategic struggle”(Gilboa 2008, 59), with US defending the West bloc and spreading capitalism and USSR defending the East bloc and spreading communism. Initially, states used public diplomacy to influence foreign societies hoping they would adhere to their ideology in the long run (Ibid.). As Eytan Gilboa put it: “The assumption was that if public opinion in the target society is persuaded to accept a favourable image of the other side, it will exert pressure on its government to alter existing hostile attitudes and policies.” (Ibid.) As an example, both the US and USSR used international broadcasting to counter balance each other's propaganda

so a society would not only be exposed to its own government's propaganda.

However, the old model needed some revision when NGOs and noticeable interdependence among many different actors began to have an impact on international affairs. Thus, the revised model called the Nonstate Transnational model “[...] is a theoretical concept designed to investigate public diplomacy activities of groups, NGOs, and individuals using public diplomacy across national boundaries.” (Gilboa 2008, 59, 60) These new actors use global news networks, but also media events for building international support for their campaigns or missions. The Nonstate Transnational model is a good theoretical concept for explaining the pro-democracy movements in China that tried to reform the government by getting other nations to put pressure on the Chinese state. (Ibid.) In this case, actors in a state used public diplomacy for gaining global support to reform domestic policies. This paper argues that ICT in the form of global news networks, media events and social media facilitates public diplomacy and in the case of the pro-democracy movements in China it was used to empower the liberal principles by cooperating with other states.

The third model, the Domestic PR model, is different from the Basic Cold War model as it does not employ domestic resources like radio stations for doing public diplomacy. Instead it uses PR firms and lobbyists in the foreign country for its causes. There are great advantages in the third model as a PR firm in the foreign country knows the people better, are familiar with the culture and political situation and is likely to know better how to persuade its country's public opinion. Moreover, the creation “of a local support group or a movement in the target country could also strengthen the legitimacy and authenticity of the campaign.” (Gilboa 2008, 60). This model may use “strategic public diplomacy” which employs scientific data and empirical evidence through methods of public opinion research (Manheim 1994a). The Domestic PR model can be used to explain when the Kuwaiti monarchs hired a PR firm known as Hill and Knowlton in the US during the Gulf war (1990-1991) to persuade the US congress and get the American support so that the US military would free their state Kuwait from Saddam Hussein (Manheim 1994b).

Evan Potter (2002-2003), Jan Melissen (2005), and Eytan Gilboa (2006) are scholars who concentrated on the effects of the revolutionary developments in international relations and communications on public diplomacy. Evan Potter recognised the “increased importance

of public opinion, the rise of more intrusive and global media, increased global transparency, and the rise of a global culture leading to a reflexive desire to protect cultural diversity.” These changes can either be more challenging or empowering for public diplomacy depending on the type of campaign a state has. If a state's dominant culture is aligned or similar to the global culture that is emerging, then the protection of its own cultural diversity becomes unnecessary. People in existing liberal-democratic societies who use the internet seem to adopt a global culture and a global social contract when interacting with people from different countries. The internet culture is heavily influenced by Western countries. Thus, one can argue that it is not a surprise that the emerging global culture is similar to the Western culture, or American culture. The US soft power through Hollywood films, its recent role as the World’s policeman and the fact that it is the leading country in software development, have had a great influence on the internet and the internet culture.

Back in the 1970s, modernists “saw telecommunications and jet travel as creating a global village, and believed that the territorial state, which has dominated world politics since the feudal age, was being eclipsed by nonterritorial actors such as multinational corporations, transnational social movements, and international organizations.” (Keohane and Nye 1998) These claims have become more relevant today and “prophets such as Peter Drucker, Alvin and Heidi Toweirder, and Esther Dyson argue that today's information revolution is ending hierarchical bureaucracies and leading to a new electronic feudalism with overlapping communities and jurisdictions laying claim to multiple layers of citizens' identities and loyalties.” (Ibid.) This can be seen as the formation of a global social contract where an increasing number of people around the world are connected through the internet and get more and more tied with one another as they socialise through ICT and communicate cross border. These ideas are supported by Sociological Liberalism and many sociological liberals believe that the more people build transnational relations, the more likely they will form a new type of human society (Robert and Sorensen 2006, 100).

In theory, every state has a social contract which guarantees the loyalty of its citizens as long as the state can provide the citizens with the conditions for a minimum standard of living. This paper suggests that ICT enables and facilitates the global social contract because the internet can connect citizens from different states and helps the people to adapt and

understand one another at an unprecedented rate. This in turn creates a global social contract that can affect the state level, especially democratic states, as the state needs to adapt its state's policies to the changing needs of its people. If the state refuses to adapt by the demand of its people, then external pressure through the Nonstate Transnational model might be more effective if the state has important relations and economic ties with other states who respect and support the global social contract.

The significant role of non-state actors and their potential impact on the state level suggests a need for Liberalism to focus more on the individual level which is a new aspect as its main focus is on the institutional and state level. Lawyers and legal philosophy are concerned with the interest of people and the individual level but not IR philosophy. However, as the digital revolution empowers the individual which in turn can influence the institutional and state level, it demands a more inclusive liberal approach which in turn suggests a need for future research and a new theoretical model in IR theory and practice. This article focuses merely on how ICT can facilitate public diplomacy to work as an empowerment tool and to enforce Liberalism.

Jan Melissen placed the focus “on the central place public diplomacy is now occupying in foreign policy, the rise of nonstate actors, the difficulty of reconciling domestic and foreign information needs, and the two-way communication pattern of exchanging information between states.”(Gilboa 2008, 58) These characteristics are the result of the rapid developments in ICT. Public diplomacy is evolving with ICT and with the rise of nonstate actors, public diplomacy becomes an important tool not only for the state but especially for nonstate actors to influence domestic and international affairs. This in turn can be liberating and empowering for individuals.

Moreover, public diplomacy with the help of ICT could promote human rights and equal rights in a target country which in turn could lead to favourable changes in the target country's state policies. If a country respects human rights and equal rights it is more likely to become a liberal-democratic society. According to the democratic peace theory, democratic states tend not to wage war against each other but instead they tend to cooperate and seek mutual beneficial outcomes. Hence, public diplomacy could facilitate democracy and future cooperation, thus, enforcing Liberalism.

There are many other effects of revolutionary developments in international relations and communications on public diplomacy. Eytan Gilboa (2008, 58) recognised some more effects like “the interactivity between states and nonstate actors; utilization of “soft power,” two-way communication, strategic public diplomacy, media framing, information management, PR, nation branding, self-presentation, and e-image; domestication of foreign policy; and addressing both short- and long-term issues.” These are all important characteristics that are once more the products of the developments in ICT. Moreover, they change the way public diplomacy is effectuated, but if a state can manage these characteristics then public diplomacy becomes a powerful tool. This thesis places its focus on the importance of soft power and how it is beneficial for a state’s relations with other nations.

Soft power is a term that occupies a significant place in diplomacy. It comes from the notion of power, which means to fulfil your desires by controlling others’ behaviour. This can be achieved through two means. One being hard power, which consist of “coercion (sticks) and payments (carrots)”(Gilboa 2008, 61). And the second being soft power, which consists of attraction, meaning to seduce others so they act through cooperation instead of coercion. Thus, soft power becomes an important part of Liberalism as it makes it easier for states to cooperate. Joseph Nye (2004) claims that if a nation has attractive values, culture, and policies then the nation has soft power and can more easily influence a target nation. Moreover, “when policies and positions of states or nonstate actors have moral authority, or are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, their soft power is increased”(Gilboa 2008, 61). This makes it possible for both state and nonstate actors to increase a state’s soft power.

Furthermore, scholars such as Joseph Nye (2004), Jozef Bátora (2006, 54), Jan Melissen (2005) and Eytan Gilboa (2008, 61) claim that public diplomacy produces soft power. Thus, public diplomacy becomes a powerful and effective tool if mastered. However, Nye also argues that a nation should opt for “smart power”, meaning a combination of soft and hard power. Nye developed this term in 2003 to “counter the misperception that soft power alone can produce effective foreign policy”. (Nye 2009) It is important to use all the tools at a nation’s disposal to optimise its foreign policy.

The next chapter makes a qualitative analysis to test if ICT (social media) can have an impact on the following three levels; the individual, state, and international level. A multi-

level analysis is used to investigate social media's influence on the three levels and how it affects Liberalism. The realist Kenneth Waltz (1959) was the first, in his book "Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis", to classify theories in international relations into these three levels of analysis to explain the causes of war (Hollander 2000). For each level Waltz examined the strengths and weaknesses. However, this research focuses on the strengths as its aim is to highlight social media's positive impact on the developments of Liberalism.

2. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

2.1. Social media and the individual level

With access to the internet (ICT) and different social media sites, it becomes easy to collect data quickly and efficiently to gather valuable and important information to understand how women are treated and if their rights are respected. Moreover, ICT is an efficient mean to raise awareness about how women's right are handled in practice. Women's rights are heavily neglected in many countries, especially in countries that recently experienced or are experiencing war. These countries lack the state structure that could help women to fight domestic abuse or abuse in general. This qualitative analysis focuses on how social media can influence the individual level and promote human rights. To analyse this more closely, this article looks at a documentary from YouTube which portrays the abuse of women's rights in Afghanistan.

The documentary is called "To Kill A Sparrow" and observes the situation of women in Kabul, Afghanistan. It was published in 2014 by Journeyman Pictures and has been shared through different social media sites like YouTube, Facebook and websites of NGOs. The documentary was made by Zohreh Soleimani, a photojournalist, from Iran who arrived to Afghanistan in 2001 after the fall of the Taliban. At the time when the Taliban fell everyone in Afghanistan were hopeful that life would improve for the women living there.

However, little has changed. The photojournalist claims that many fear that the

women's rights are about to disappear in Afghanistan. Therefore, she decided to document the situation. Her main focus is on how women's rights are violated and looks at the case of one particular woman, Soheila, who is a woman living in Kabul. Soheila is one out of 600 women across Afghanistan who was sent to prison because of 'moral crimes' such as adultery, sex out of wedlock and running away from home. These women are put in the same prison as women who commit serious crimes such as drug dealing, robbery and murder. As the Afghani government does not put resources on ensuring and enforcing human rights, there is a network of safe houses for women in Afghanistan, which are run primarily by NGOs. However, the names and locations are kept secret to protect the women who live there. The safe houses are for women who are freed from prison as they risk getting killed by their own relatives for violating cultural traditions. Thus, the safe house is a haven for Afghan girls who try to escape the oppressive Afghan traditions.

The law in Afghanistan allows a woman to select her own husband but some tribal communities have a tradition where the father chooses the future husband for his daughter. This tribal tradition is so strong that if it is broken, the community is likely to punish those who do not follow it. The Afghani term "Baad" is a cultural tradition and means to give away a girl in exchange. However, it is neither Afghan or Shariah law and has no roots in either of the laws. Despite this, the cultural practices are maintained as actual law in certain provinces like in the case of Soheila's community, thus it does not help that Soheila is innocent according to state law. Practices like this keep a society from advancing as the welfare and stability of a nation depends on how its women are treated. As long as women are disrespected and do not have human rights, a society's peacefulness, economy and welfare are going to suffer from a lack of potential workforce and security standards.

The book called "Sex and World Peace" gathered empirical evidence which confirmed that "the larger the gender gap between the treatment of men and women in a society, the more likely a country is to be involved in intra- and interstate conflict, to be the first to resort to force in such conflicts, and to resort to higher levels of violence." Moreover, "the very best predictor of a state's peacefulness is not its level of wealth, its level of democracy, or its ethno-religious identity; the best predictor of a state's peacefulness is how well its women are treated". Additionally, "democracies with higher levels of violence against women are as

insecure and unstable as nondemocracies.” This shows the remarkable importance of women’s rights in a society. Moreover, the situation of women affects all of the following: “issues of national health, economic growth, corruption, and social welfare”, “security, stability, prosperity, bellicosity, corruption, health, regime type, and (yes) the power of the state.” (Hudson 2012) Thus, women’s equality becomes a vital part of national and international security. Therefore, it is important for Afghanistan to make women’s right a priority if it seeks prosperity and peacefulness.

Furthermore, it is difficult for the Afghan women who are in prison because of 'love crimes' to have a voice. It is expensive to hire a human rights lawyer and few have the resources to do this. The structure that is in place for helping these women lack resources. In a liberal-democratic society there are institutions that can come to the rescue when domestic abuse is reported. More importantly, it is a state matter to guarantee the safety and well-being of the victims. In the case of Afghanistan the situation is more complex as the country has experienced a 30-year war and thus women's rights are not among its priorities. As the state cannot provide the Afghan women with help and shelter it becomes the duty of the non-state actors to organise a structure with the help of NGOs and philanthropist actors from other countries. To facilitate this process, social media networks and platforms become a powerful tool for reaching out to people. Documentaries on social media spread awareness on these issues and facilitate the work to find sponsors or activists who can donate or help the human rights lawyers and NGOs with defending and protecting the women who are exposed to oppression and domestic abuse. This empowers the work of institutions as social media facilitates their work in promoting and enforcing human rights.

Thus, ICT, in this case the social media platform YouTube, can promote human rights for women by raising awareness on the issue of domestic abuse and can facilitate international cooperation for enforcing human rights in the world. Moreover, it is clear that social media platforms can work as empowerment tools for individuals world wide. The story of Soheila, who is sent to prison by her own father for disobeying the family, is powerful as it can tell the story of so many other women who suffer from domestic abuse and who cannot turn to their government for help. Her story through YouTube can be seen by anyone for free. Additionally, it is empowering as it spreads awareness and promotes the hard work of institutions that try to

help women like Soheila to lead a life of their own choosing and marrying men who they love and not being forced into marriage as a child.

Therefore, social media platforms like YouTube can be used at the individual level to influence the institutional level or even the state level if the spreading of information results in a change in policies or governmental intervention which enforces human rights. This, in turn, can result in a change at the individual level as new policies, institutions or governmental intervention can help people like Soheila to be safe and free from oppression and her family's obligations. The documentary on YouTube empowered Soheila by giving her a voice and supporting her basic human right, which is self-determination, in other words, to have the right to choose on her own who she marries and has children with.

To further illustrate the importance and potential of social media as a tool of empowerment for individuals, this research uses four examples that were identified by the Wikigender online discussion and research. These examples were also highlighted by the OECD Development Centre where they analysed how women's rights have been promoted through social media tools.

The HarassMap which was launched in Egypt in 2010 is a good example where social media tools have given a voice and helped women who suffer or suffered from violence by creating an online mapping tool where they can anonymously report on their mobile phones if they experienced any form of violence or sexual abuse. All the reports are mapped and help campaigns to spread awareness on this big issue in Egypt (Young, 2014). Moreover, as Estelle Loiseau and Keiko Nowacka (2015) claimed in the OECD Development Centre report: "social media tools have helped female victims to share their experiences of violence with other victims, creating a space to exchange knowledge and information on their rights, legal processes and welfare services." This is empowering for women as the social media tools are free and they help the women to tackle the violence and find possible solutions that can help their situation.

Moreover, the Hashtag activism has raised awareness on women's issues that did not receive enough attention on mainstream media. One example being the #BringBackOurGirls campaign in 2013 which aim was to raise global awareness of both state and nonstate actors to bring back the missing Nigerian schoolgirls (Tomchak 2014) who were kidnapped by Boko

Haram. The campaign reached more than one million tweets (Ibid.), thus the campaign was successful in raising awareness and created a need for an increased coverage of the story by the mainstream media (Dewey, 2014). Another example is the successful #HeForShe campaign by the UN Women which has engaged 1.2 billion people to raise awareness about achieving gender equality and emphasising the need for boys and men to actively take part in promoting equal rights. These are examples of how “Hashtag activism has helped to mobilise public attention on women’s rights, increasing the visibility of issues that are under-reported in mainstream media.”(Loiseau and Nowacka 2015)

Many more examples of Hashtag activism exist, one being the #DelhiGangRape hashtag campaign which was created after a young woman got gang raped in Delhi, India. The campaign mobilised people from all over the world and helped to draw the state’s attention to the issue which resulted in a change in the criminal code that improved the anti-rape provisions (Sharma 2014). A similar case where a young woman got raped and was murdered happened in Turkey. This “led to a mass Twitter protest through the hashtags #sendeanlat (tell your story) and #ozceganaslan” and a huge street mobilisation which resulted in “a discussion among political and civil society leaders about violence against women in the country” (Loiseau and Nowacka 2015). This proves that social media can have a positive impact on women’s rights by raising awareness, and in some cases, like in the India case, it can induce reform in state policies and improve the living conditions of individuals.

Moreover, as international cooperation is one of the core principles in Liberalism, these cases demonstrate that social media facilitates cooperation across borders and facilitates the organising of causes which in turn promotes Liberalism. They also demonstrate that individuals can influence institutions (IGOs like the UN and NGOs) who have the possibility to influence or pressure governments to reform a country’s policies into becoming more liberal. For example by improving the provisions for women’s rights in Delhi, India. This facilitates Liberalism as liberal policies enforce democracy and human rights which are also important principles in Liberalism.

2.2. Social media and the state level

The principles of Liberalism are great in theory but are not easily applied in practice. Still, with the help of ICT (social media) it seems that we are creating a global conscience that has the potential to enforce the Liberal principles. An interesting example is the potential impact of Facebook on voting patterns. A study in 2012, which was published in the journal *Nature*, analysed if Facebook messages could influence people's voting behaviour. The study was published as "A 61-Million-Person Experiment in Social Influence and Political Mobilization," and was done by the following researchers; Robert M. Bond, Christopher J. Fariss, Jason J. Jones, Adam D. I. Kramer, Cameron Marlow, Jaime E. Settle and James H. Fowler, from the University of California, San Diego, and Facebook.

The study researched the activity on the Election Day in 2010 for the American Congressional midterms. As many as 60,055,176 Facebook users got messages on top of their Facebook news feeds "that encouraged them to vote, pointed to nearby polling places, offered a place to click "I Voted" and displayed images of select friends who had already voted (the "social message")" (Wihbey 2012). Moreover, one group of about 600,000 people were given voting-encouragement messages but received no data about friends' behaviour. The researchers called their messages as an "informational message". Another group which consisted of the same amount of people (600,000) were not given any voting-related messages (Ibid.) To compare the result of the Facebook study the researchers analysed the voting behaviour of about 6.3 million American people by using publicly available records. The notion of "close friends were defined by the frequency of online interactions and were assumed to be more likely to have face-to-face interactions." (Wihbey 2012) Meaning that the close friends online were also defined as close friends offline in the real world.

One important finding from the study was that the data "suggest that the Facebook social message increased turnout directly by about 60,000 voters and indirectly through social contagion by another 280,000 voters, for a total of 340,000 additional votes." (Bond, Fowler, et al. 2012) This was an interesting finding as it supports the claim that social media can have an influence on voting patterns.

Another finding was that the “Close friends exerted about four times more influence on the total number of validated voters mobilized than the message itself.... Online mobilization works because it primarily spreads through strong-tie networks that probably exist offline but have an online representation.”(Bond, Fowler, et al. 2012) Thus, the influence of close friends online who were also close friends offline, was stronger than “casual online acquaintances”(Wihbey 2015). This finding suggests that social messages are more influential than informational messages on social media.

What was deduced from this study was that the “online political mobilization works. It induces political self-expression, but it also induces information gathering and real, validated voter turnout. Although previous research suggested that online messages do not work, it is possible that conventional sample sizes may not be large enough to detect the modest effect sizes shown here.” The study also showed “that social mobilization in online networks is significantly more effective than informational mobilization alone. Showing familiar faces to users can dramatically improve the effectiveness of a mobilization message.”(Bond, Fowler, et al. 2012) Thus, in these particular cases, social media is an important tool that can help to generate more votes.

The Facebook study shows that social media can have an impact on voting behaviour which in turn can influence the state level as more votes are accounted for. In addition, if more people are voting, it empowers democracy (which is an important liberal principle) as it promotes a bigger representation of the citizens. Thus, the Facebook case demonstrates that social media has an impact on the liberal principles. It could also promote Liberalism if social media influences the voting behaviour into electing a state actor who enforces a more liberal foreign policy.

An interesting case which illustrates social media’s potential impact on the state level is when the democratic candidate for the US presidential election, Bernie Sanders, was given campaign money through a social media network called Reddit: "Mr Sanders is big on Reddit. His fan base there has raised \$2.3m for him while also engaging in digitally savvy efforts to attract voters and volunteers. Supporters of Mrs Clinton have raised \$16,000." (Pollack 2016) This is a particular case where not only US citizens but also individuals outside the US can

participate and influence the American presidential election by raising money for the political campaign and/or help to advertise their favourite candidate. This shows how the global conscience is evolving and how non-state actors in America and outside America can influence the state level through social media.

The Reddit case is interesting and important, because even though Reddit's userbase is small compared to the likes of Facebook or Twitter, it acts like a melting pot for social media in general. This means that a lot of the popular postings that circulate on the big social networks originate from Reddit, thus, it plays a big role in what types of content is distributed on these platforms. It is a place where ideas are born and movements are started. The influence Reddit has on bigger networks could be compared to that which Linux users have on casual computer users. Even though Linux desktop computer users comprise of only a small fraction of the total amount of desktop users, less than 2% (Net Applications 2016), Linux users are generally more knowledgeable about technology (compared to Windows and Mac users) and given this, they have a big influence on their social circles, in relation to their numbers. This same effect is visible in the case of Reddit, where ideas are discussed and nurtured before they are expanded to the more mainstream social networks.

Bernie Sanders' rival for the Democratic nomination, Hillary Clinton, has dominated TV (Presidential Campaign 2016 ...) and Twitter which are platforms that are more easily managed and controlled. However, Sanders popularity on the social media platform Reddit, which is a forum where users can upload content such as news, images, stories, questions and opinions, is greatly increasing. This shows the potential of social media platforms that are less controlled by the state and that represent the public opinion of the younger generation. Each and every content is either “upvoted” or “downvoted” by other users. Thus, the most upvoted content is ranked on top of a huge list whereas bad or uninteresting content gets downvoted and appears on the very end of the list. Thus, it is a democratic system that highlights and ranks the majority of the voters in the top of the list.

As seen in Figure 1, Bernie Sanders is currently (March-April) outperforming the presidential rivals and Donald Trump has only approximately 50% of Sanders' net upvotes. This presents substantial evidence for Sanders' popularity on Reddit. According to the graph in Figure 1, Sanders was the only candidate with net upvotes during the months September,

October, November and December last year, and the net upvotes for the Republican candidate Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton were close to zero. Trump has had some net upvotes since the beginning of January but is still considerably far behind compared to Sanders who leads with more than 50%. This suggests that the global culture on Reddit is very liberal and does not identify itself with the republican Trump who has a very isolationist and materialistic approach to politics and foreign policy.

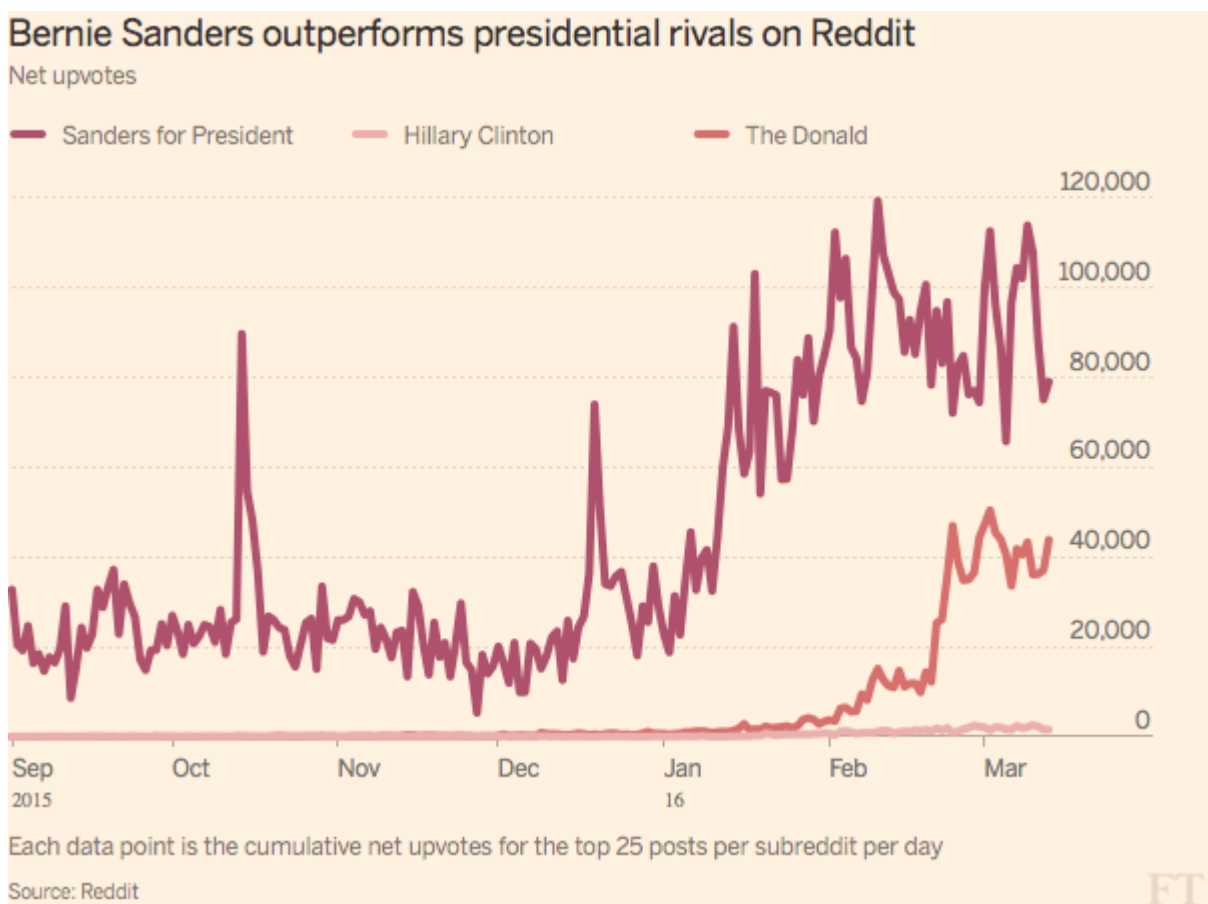


Figure 1. Bernie Sanders popularity on Reddit compared to Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump

Secondary source: (Financial Times 2016)

Primary source: (Reddit 2016)

Although Clinton has large donors like Soros Fund Management (\$7,039,800), Laborers Union (\$4,000,250), and Euclidean Capital (\$3,502,700), to name her top three contributors (Politicians&Elections ...), she is struggling to gain as much support on social media platforms as Bernie Sanders (Pollack 2016). Reddit's users are mainly young people under the age of 30. As it is the younger generation who is the most active on social media and the voter turnout is rising among the under -30s, Hillary Clinton risks to lose the support of the younger voters (Ibid.). There is a staggering difference when Sanders receives \$2.3 million through Reddit and Clinton only 0,7% (\$16,000) of that amount. It shows the empowering potential of social media and how it can represent a young generation's will to affect the outcome of a presidential election. Billions of dollars have been spent on the 2016 American presidential election (Bump 2016). Thus, vast amounts of money go into the presidential campaigns. The interesting fact about the Democratic nomination race between Clinton and Sanders is that despite Clinton's donors from outside groups, "Sanders (whose money is mostly small donors) has given Clinton an unexpected challenge, outspending her campaign and essentially tying her in total-raised-per-vote including outside groups." (Ibid.) This shows the potential of campaign funds through social media and how it can influence the future state actors.

Moreover, it shows the discontent of the existing system as the young generation is in favour of Bernie Sanders who wants a revolution of justice to change the current system which favours the very rich (1% of the American population) at the expense of the poor. He proposes that the rich 1% should pay more taxes so the distribution of wealth becomes more equal. This is attractive in the ears of the young generation who are hopeful of a real change in the existing American political system. Thus, Sanders represents equality, diversity and some of the important liberal principles like individualism and liberty. The fact that Trump has got so little support on Reddit indicates that the users of Reddit seem to be in favour of the liberal principles which is not a surprise as it was these principles that made Reddit possible in the first place.

The Reddit case represents the young generation's political preferences and the potential impact of social media on the state level. In this particular case, the political preferences were liberal and democratic, thus, Reddit becomes an empowerment tool for the

liberal principles. However, this is an isolated example and there are many factors other than social media that determine the outcome of the American presidential election. The aim of this qualitative analysis is not to foresee the election results but to illustrate the importance and potential impact of social media when it comes to understanding the public's political preferences, and how it could facilitate the sponsoring of political campaigns.

Moreover, the Reddit case is more promising for Liberalism as it demonstrates that the political preferences are not considerably in favour of Trump which allows America's foreign policy to support a more liberal agenda instead of isolating the country. Furthermore, the Reddit case suggests that Sanders has a better chance of winning the election which in turn suggests that his take on America's foreign policy will be more liberal than Trump's. Thus, in this case, Reddit facilitates Liberalism as it wants a president who is more liberal and who is more likely to lead a liberal foreign policy compared to the republican Trump. This case also demonstrates that social media can facilitate political change which includes a change in foreign policy once the political actor is elected president. As the users on Reddit supported Sanders who is a democrat with liberal principles, they automatically promoted a liberal foreign policy which in turn promotes Liberalism.

2.3. Public diplomacy and the system level

Considering the fact that there are not a lot of prior qualitative researches on the topic as it is under-analysed by IR scholars, it is important to examine how public diplomacy can work as an empowerment tool and promote Liberalism. As public diplomacy (facilitated by social media) is a tool for influencing foreign policy, which in turn can enforce Liberalism, it is important to look at recent professional views regarding social media's affect on foreign policy.

Eugene Yi, who is the manager of public policy for Asia at Twitter, is an advocate of freedom of expression and technological security. Yi represents Twitter by working with

governments in the Asia-Pacific region on Internet policy issues, aiming to protect and defend Twitter's users. He has "participated in the Scholars in the Nations Service Initiative at WWS and worked on cyber-security policy at the United States Department of Defence and Internet freedom issues in China at the United States Department of State before joining Twitter" (Wilkens 2014). Yi claims that "Social media and digital technology are taking foreign policy and moving it closer to the people". Moreover, he sees the potential of social media as he describes the process as "With a click of a button, people can share information unfiltered by traditional diplomatic channels and gatekeepers of media, instantaneously, nearly anywhere on the planet. Accessing information is becoming democratized". Thus, it is clear that social media is making the information more accessible, which in turn promotes the important principle of democracy in Liberalism.

Moreover, Yi states that "As technology evolves and allows people the ability to have their voice be heard, so does the structure and power of governments worldwide. Individuals and small institutions are becoming more empowered in traditional hierarchies that favor large institutions and nation states". He adds that "Anything that connects the governed to the governing is inherently good, and social media is a unique development of the 21st century that does just that." Furthermore, Yi says that there are at least 50 heads of state who are actively engaged on Twitter. Therefore, due to this digital age, all leaders and future leaders are forced to have "digital followers and a digital presence" if they want to survive as leaders in the modern world (Wilkens 2014).

Yi continues to say that "Today's diplomat can be better positioned to represent his or her country by engaging in these types of social networks". Yi's ideas are similar to the claims of Sociological Liberalism as Twitter connects an increasing number of state and nonstate actors around the world which creates an increasing number of ties as they socialise through ICT and communicate cross border.

There are of course downsides with digital technologies. As for example, Yi explains how "Foreign policy practitioners and leaders who utilize digital technologies weigh the advantages and disadvantages of having a digital presence". It is important for democracy and the freedom of expression that social media allows for multiple conversations between different agents. This "allows for greater exposure to a nation and their issues but increases

the chances of damaging the nation's brand. Yet, the ability of citizens to have their voice heard makes policy making a real-time exercise." (Wilkens 2014) However, Yi also states that the constant development in ICT makes it hard to predict social media's effect on foreign policy in the future (Ibid.).

The following case looks at Canada's public diplomacy. By analysing Canada's recent past and current image through qualitative data from online journals it is possible to establish how its public diplomacy is working. Moreover, by applying the three models on public diplomacy by Eytan Gilboa to the case of Canada, it is possible to illustrate which of the models have been used and if they are effective.

Canada had a more conservative stance when the former Prime Minister Stephen Harper was in office (2006-2015). Last year, CBC News made a study with the help of the International Council for Canadian Studies, where they interviewed approximately 7,000 academics outside Canada who teach courses about Canada, to get an impression of how the world sees Canada. Daniel Schwartz (2015) chose to share the views of 15 participants that were good representatives of the other 7,000. The qualitative study confirmed that other countries like Germany, Mexico, Israel and China got the impression that because of Harper, Canada's foreign policy had changed from focusing on international to national concerns.

One example of this was when Prime Minister Harper withdrew the Understanding Canada program in 2012. According to Wolfgang Klooß, who directs the Centre for Canadian Studies at Trier University in Germany and is the 2015 recipient of the Governor General's International Award for Canadian Studies, the withdrawal of the program enforced the belief that Canada was "a new conservative identity politics based on an image of Canada as a self-assured country no longer needing to be studied internationally." Danny Ben-Natan, who is the president of the Israel Association for Canadian Studies, claims that Canada is in "clear regression in the academic world" since it abolished the Understanding Canada program. Additionally, Harper cut the budget for the Mexican associations of Canadian Studies, in Mexico, which resulted in a decline in the interest of students and academics in Canadian studies.

Moreover, in 2012, it became clear that national interest was a top priority in Canada's foreign policy strategy when Harper made a second visit to China to sign numerous economic

agreements with the Chinese government, although the Canadian government had earlier criticised China's human right issues. This was disappointing for those who defend the liberal principles. Lihua Yang teaches political science at Shandong University, China, and stated that many Chinese, including her, are hoping for a different Canadian foreign policy stance where "Canada can further engage herself in defending fundamental rights, such as freedom, justice and democracy in the world." Thus, the actions of Prime Minister Harper reduced Canada's soft power which resulted in a less informed and attractive image of Canada.

However, since Canada's current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took office in November 2015, Canada's image has rapidly changed and is now seen as a more liberal society where the state and its institutions enforce the liberal principles. He is the 23rd prime minister and lives by example as he is the first prime minister in Canada to have a cabinet with 15 men and 15 women from different backgrounds to reflect Canada's diversity. It is Canada's first cabinet to have an equal number of men and women (Murphy, 2015; Al Jazeera and agencies 2015). This is revolutionary compared to the rest of the world who have less than 20% of female participation in government (Hudson 2012). To give a few example of "some of the worst countries when it comes to the representation of women in national government include democracies such as Japan (13.4 percent in the Diet) and South Korea (14.7 percent), not to mention Hungary (8.8 percent)" (Ibid.). The US is below average with 17 percent of the Congress being women (Ibid.).

Moreover, Prime Minister Trudeau is enforcing the liberal principles by welcoming Syrian refugees and providing them with good standards of living (Zerbisias 2015). The Prime Minister said the following in December last year when welcoming some refugees: "Tonight, they step off the plane as refugees. But they walk out of this terminal as permanent residents of Canada, with social insurance numbers, with health cards, and with an opportunity to become full Canadians." (Ibid.) His warm embrace of refugees is still maintained which has contributed to his global popularity.

Furthermore, Trudeau is popular in online journals and on social media when it comes to gender equality. He is portrayed as a liberal who defends equal rights and was ranked as one of the top leaders in "The 100 Most Influential People" by Time magazine this year (Michaels 2016). In addition, he has made some official announcements at the UN convention

hall where he claims that he is a feminist and defends women's rights in bold statements like the following: "It shouldn't be something that creates a reaction. It's simply saying that I believe in the equality of men and women and that we still have an awful lot of work to do to get there. That's like saying the sky is blue and the grass is green." Trudeau also expressed that he believes that the future generation will embrace feminism as a term of basic equality, as more parents raise their children to endorse the term (Panetta 2016). Thus, Trudeau's popularity in online journals and on social media has increased Canada's soft power and the prime minister has come to symbolise the liberal principles. Therefore, in this case, social media is facilitating Canada's public diplomacy as it is creating an attractive image of the nation.

This paper argues that Canada has been using all three models for its public diplomacy. The Basic Cold War model can explain how the current prime minister is actively engaging in international broadcasting to give a favourable image of Canada. His image and activities are frequently reported and represented in a good light in famous online journals like The Guardian, Al Jazeera and Time Magazine, to name a few. Thus, this model has been very effective for Canada's public diplomacy.

The Nonstate Transnational model can be seen in the case when the former prime minister Harper was in office and when non-state actors like David Schwartz (2015) and CBC news used CBC's platform to build both domestic and international support to portray Canada's foreign policy stance as being too focused on national concerns and to illustrate Canada's isolationist approach. It is unclear how well this model worked in this particular case, but Canada's general image worldwide during the years of Prime Minister Harper was less attractive than its current image. Thus, the case with CBC definitely added to the perceived need to reform Canada's foreign policy.

The third model, called the Domestic PR model, is an effective way for a country to gain support in other countries as it does not use domestic resources. By employing local PR firms in the foreign country who is already familiar with the country's culture and public opinion it becomes a lot easier to find ways to seduce the public opinion. However, it can be more difficult in practice to identify if a country uses PR firms and lobbyists in a foreign country for its causes. In the case of Canada, it is not clear, and a more thorough research is

needed to determine if Canada is using the Domestic PR model. However, Canada's current Prime Minister's actions seem good for Canada's image as he is portrayed in a favourable way in foreign PR firms. Moreover, as social media is portraying Justin Trudeau in a good light it increases Canada's soft power. Thus, foreign countries' PR firms are more likely to write about Canada in a favourable way, which in turn, diminishes Canada's need to employ local PR groups in a foreign country.

This qualitative analysis suggests that ICT and social media in particular increase Canada's soft power and facilitate its public diplomacy. Thus, in this case, ICT and social media are important factors and can work as empowerment tools to help to promote the liberal principles. This in turn, enforces Liberalism as Canada's good image is likely to facilitate its relations with other nations plus fosters better cooperation as the foreign countries are likely to be more receptive towards Canada.

The downside with Canada's current liberal stance is that less liberal countries might not want to cooperate with Canada as they resent the fact that Canada might influence their people into wanting more liberal policies. On the other hand, the people of the less liberal countries who are hoping for their government to respect the liberal principles, like democracy, human rights, liberty and freedom of speech, are empowered by Canada's stance as it can motivate them to mobilise and reform their governments. In Canada's case, social media facilitates Canada's liberal foreign policy as it portrays Canada in a good light, this ties Canada's government closer to the public which facilitates cooperation with foreign companies and other nations which in turn promotes Liberalism.

CONCLUSIONS

A multi-level analysis with ICT as a factor is needed as it is having an impact on IR theory and practice. This thesis chose to study one particular form of ICT called social media, as it is an interesting form of ICT and is under-analysed by IR scholars. There is a dilemma with Liberalism in IR, its focus is primarily on institutions (or structures) instead of the individual which is the main agent regarding human rights. Therefore, this thesis placed its focus on how social media affects the individual, state and international level, to better establish how social media can enforce Liberalism in IR by promoting the liberal principles like international cooperation, democracy, human rights and equal rights.

The qualitative analysis of the individual and state level proved that social media has the potential to empower individuals and political actors. The first case regarding the individual level analysed social media's impact on human rights and equal rights by looking at women's rights in Afghanistan. This case proved that social media can empower human rights by raising awareness and by giving women a voice. The following four examples of social media tools and Hashtag activism showed how social media can raise awareness and mobilise people to defend women's rights. Moreover, these examples proved that social media can help to put women's rights in the spotlight and boost the mainstream media to report more on important women's issues. Thus, the cases proved that social media can promote the liberal principles (human rights, equal rights and self-determination) at the individual level.

The second case investigated how social media can affect the state level, and portray political preferences, plus boost campaign funding which can result in the empowerment of liberal actors. Moreover, it examined social media's influence on voting patterns by looking at

how users are affected by political messages on Facebook. It turned out that Facebook is a tool for increasing the voter turnout. The second example looked at political preferences of young American adults on Reddit who represent a great part of America's political future. It turned out that the majority of Reddit users were in favour of Bernie Sanders who is a liberal democratic candidate who in practice wants to strengthen the liberal principles. Thus, the Reddit case shows how social media can empower liberal politics and as a result enforce Liberalism.

The third case proved that ICT (social media) can facilitate public diplomacy so that it becomes an empowerment tool in terms of promoting Liberalism. It was proved by looking at Canada's public diplomacy where the case strengthened the argument that social media is an important product of the internet, and can be a tool for increasing a country's soft power, spreading knowledge and raising awareness, which can influence another country's population in a way that favours liberal foreign policies. Moreover, in the case of Canada, social media and ICT in general can promote and facilitate international cooperation by increasing Canada's soft power. International cooperation is one of the core principles in liberal IR theory. Thus, when social media facilitates international cooperation through public diplomacy, it enforces Liberalism.

The three different models by Eytan Gilboa (2000, 2001) were employed to acquire knowledge about Canada's public diplomacy. The Basic Cold War model proved to be an effective model which Canada is currently using with its Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Nonstate actors in Canada have also used the Nonstate Transnational model, especially when the former Prime Minister Harper was in office and kept a foreign policy which the rest of the world perceived as isolating as Harper kept his focus on national instead of international concerns. The third model called the Domestic PR model was more difficult to identify in practice. However, this research can deduce that Canada's current image in the world is very positive which influences foreign PR firms to write positively about Canada. This in turn makes it less important for Canada to invest in a Domestic PR model. Future research is needed to establish which model has been the most effective in the case of Canada's public diplomacy, as it is difficult to establish this with the few given examples in this research.

The qualitative analysis confirmed that new perspectives on global relations (brought

about by ICT and the technological revolution) facilitates the potential impact of Liberalism in International Relations (IR). Thus, the aim of this research paper was achieved by illustrating social media's positive impact on Liberalism. Additionally, the cases demonstrated that social media can enforce the principles of Liberalism so they become more effectively applied in practice. However, it is difficult to generalise the qualitative results of this research as they merely represent particular cases.

Moreover, ICT consists of many different characteristics and thus, future research should focus on filling the theoretical gap by analysing Liberalism (as an IR theory) to determine where new communication patterns resulting from revolutionising ICT fit into the type of methodology that is used in Liberalism. ICT in general is having a great impact on our world and it should be more extensively analysed by IR research in terms of its potential for knowledge generation, and the way it might reflect Structuration (creating a new type of civil body and/or new global social movements).

The cases in this research proved that social media can be an effective tool for promoting the liberal principles. Moreover, it proved that in the case of Canada, public diplomacy (resources facilitated by ICT and social media) can be a tool of empowerment for those who promote Liberalism, as it facilitates international cooperation and helps to promote democracy, human rights and equal rights. One of the main aims of this research was to draw attention upon the digital revolution and upon social media's impact on liberal IR theory and practice. The former was achieved and the latter was partially achieved as this research focused merely on social media's impact on certain aspects of Liberalism.

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