Human Rights for All in the (Anti-) Globalization project @ New Media Spaces?

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1.   Positioning Human Rights unto the (Anti-)Globalization Project?

We are in an informational new world, of globalization-localization (glocalization) of advanced capitalism! But the anti-thesis of capital logics is demonstrative in and through political activism for civil and political rights and for larger freedom, particularly democracy with universal suffrage, for large freedom at large, not least in Hong Kong (late September 2014) and the Arab Spring (late December 2010)- starting from Tunisia and spreading across Egypt and the middle-East, all signify the impact of new socio-political mobilization for global norms for human rights (HR), aided by new social media, not least *Twitters*, *FireChat* and other mobile devises (Bland 2014, Harrelson-Stephens & Callaway 2014, Hoyng & Es 2014)…..

The dynamism of glocalization is a real challenge for, yet testing the limits of, nation states and international governmental organizations (IGOs, like United Nations and the World Bank), vis-à-vis, international non-governmental organizations (iNGOs) in different regimes of human rights (Held, 1998, 1999; Hick & McNutt 2000; Milanovic 2003; UN 2005; World Bank 2006). As validated by the *Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization* (WCSDG 2004) and the *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Piketty 2014)：the glocalization processes have been polarizing socio-economic differences of people and consequently affect their basic economic, social and cultural rights. More

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specific, there are two contesting views on globalization: one hails globalization as a benign and automatic force that fosters better economic benefits for all, including the poorest group; the other contrary view is espoused by the political extremes of the Left and Right. For the Left, unbridled capitalism leads to the exploitation of the weak and to socio-ecological degradation; for the Right, the malignant forces of globalization engender xenophobia and the demise of local people's jobs, culture, language and hence identity (Milanovic 2003, Lai 2005).

1.1   Differential Impacts -cum- Genesis of Anti-Globalization Movement_

Fostering globalization, the advanced global capitalism has its caveats. With the exception of China, global poverty has not improved during the globalization decades of the 1980s and 1990s (Milanovic 2003, p.679, Ravllion 2004). The number of the poor (subsisting on less than US$1 per day) has fallen in Asia, but has risen elsewhere. It is roughly doubled in Africa and the overall the figure is about one in three now! At the global level, income inequality has become the norm for many developing countries. Thus, the question is rightly raised: is the worsening of economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights at the global level not just the trend, but its permanency of a divided capitalist world?

Yet, the globalization processes are giving rise to dual/divided cities, great disparity between the rich and the poor, and wider gaps between urban and rural life (see for instance the case of mainland China). So far, global economic liberalization and globalization have not improved the daily life of people and their local welfare, with the local labor market declining due to the off-shoring strategies of firms. What has instead developed as a common trend is social dualism: widespread poverty within affluent societies/localities, with the set of deregulatory policy initiatives favoring the private sector and resulting in the commodification and privatization of social services.

The globalization discourse has been defined by the debates on the political and ideologically- driven "economic reforms", particularly in the so-called welfare states in the developed economies. Most of these reforms have not been successful as judged by their fellow citizens (Lai 2008b). On the other hand, for most of the developing economies, the globalizing forces have not helped them much either.

Individual ESC rights, e.g., labor standards, social protection and welfare entitlements, are downgraded by the call for deregulation and flexible labor market initiatives under the reform banner of economic liberalization towards globalization. Although the provision or extension of all kinds of welfare services (social security in particular) is supposedly assured to a citizen (a status conferred by the nation state), the concept of social citizenship itself is eroding under strong currents and waves of economic globalization and pro-market initiatives

(Rodrigues 2005, Roth 2004).

The globalization processes hence have put state-society at very peculiar position, as both are exposed to the challenges of 'external' forces. Capital, goods and labor (jobs) are more mobile than the previous international economic order. Social impacts are eminent! In response, the anti-globalization campaigns at various international economic institutions' (WTO, World Economic Forum and G7/G8 and G20) meetings have become more the norm, with the battle cries based on the demands for global social   justice and a sustainable future (Lai 2004a/b, 2005, 2008b, 2011).

To recapitulate the state of the (anti-)globalization project: economic productivities have improved in the developed economies and in a few developing countries, like China and India, but the aggregate human progress arising from economic liberalization has not achieved globalization's intended purpose of a better and just world (Piketty 2014; WCSDG 2004). It is against this context that the anti-globalization movement, as critical challenge against capitalism, has been articulated and been developing (Held and McGrew 2002).

1.2   Activating Glocal-Networks for Human (Social, Economic and Cultural) Rights

Since the Second World War, the promotion of human rights (HR) has historically been the mandate of HR-oriented international governmental organizations like the United Nations and its affiliated institutions, e.g., Commission on Human Rights, regional institutions like the European Union's Human Rights Principle and Policy, Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights. For more than half a century, human rights promotion and advocacies have centered on the articulation of people's civil and political rights under the banner of *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which was ratified in 1948 by the United Nations in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust; the European Convention on Human Rights (1950); the 1966 *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR); and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR). The new waves of human rights advocacies around the people's economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights are rooted in all these fundamental international conventions.

Compared with the UN framework, the European one is more progressive for human rights protection. In Europe, the human rights framework model of rights has been tailored to the continent. On 4.November 1950, members of the Council of Europe signed the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The Convention came into force 3rd September 1953 and three major subsequent

institutions were entrusted with safeguarding its workings: The European Commission of Human Rights (1954), The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR 1959), and The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The creation of these bodies (the court being based in Strasbourg) allowed individuals with a grievance against the state to challenge their treatment at an international level. Compared with regions, the European human rights regime hence is more progressive, as well as conducive for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as individuals making their case to be heard by the ECtHR (*BBC News*, 29.September 2000,15:19GMT; Moravcsik 2000).

Nevertheless, the 65 year-old plus *UN Human Right Declaration* forms the basic foundation for all the legal and quasi-legal HR frameworks. But not until the 21st Century, human rights issues have been recently taken up by international financial institutions (IFIs) like the World Bank (and IMF) in the scrutiny of fund application and dispatch. But the intervention of IGO's and/or IFIs at the international level for the protection of human rights (the minimal task in promoting human rights) is far from satisfactory, resulting mainly in the paper documentation of HR debates and articulation of 'sanitized' HR policy declarations and principles. Thus, one observer noted:

> *The World Bank claims that the advancement of broadly defined human rights is not possible without development. Development, of course, is the Bank's business. Yet large amounts of money continue to flow to governments that systematically abuse human rights and have shown little commitment to alleviating poverty or protecting the natural resources on which a majority of people in developing countries depend. Financial support for an authoritarian government often leads to a further strengthening of the repressive apparatus of its regime, worsening the country's human rights situation. Under such conditions, the World Bank's stated goals of achieving broad-based economic development have to be called into question (Horta 2002: 228).*

Compensating the absence of HR promotion by IFIs, on the other hand, it is the critical engagement of NGOs at the local, regional and international arenas, in partnership with the mass media, which has illumined societies on human rights situation, usually done through daily reminders on and continuing advocacies for human rights in response to the abuse, negation and/or neglect of human rights. This is illustrated by the active engagements of iNGOs like the Amnesty International (AI) and the Human Rights Watch (HRW) in their campaigns for the release of or the more humane treatment of prisoners of conscience and victims of torture, supplemented with the strategies of shaming the regimes that torture,

unjustly imprison or disenfranchise their citizens. By internationalizing (the politics of embarrassment) the HR campaigns, the offending regimes are isolated and sometimes the victims are released or given better treatment. Usually, however, these campaigns lead to the establishment of stronger international norms on human rights, particularly those for the protection, as well as the promotion, economics, social and cultural rights: children, ethnic minorities, labor, migrant-workers, refugees, women, and other vulnerable groups – which all respect the individuals and communities at the local levels (Human Rights Watch 2008; Lai 2004a, 2008a/b, 2011).

The articulation and international mainstreaming of ESC rights can be seen in the profile of Human Rights Watch (HRW). Since its formation in 1978, HRW has focused mainly on upholding civil and political rights, but in recent years it has increasingly addressed ESC rights as well. HRW focuses particularly on situations in which HRW methodology of investigation and reporting is most effective, such as when arbitrary or discriminatory governmental conduct lies behind an economic, social and cultural rights violation. More specifically, HRW monitors and mobilizes supports against ESC rights violations when they result from violations of civil and political rights or contributing to the violations of civil and political rights. Reportage of HRW addresses to ESC rights, including the rights to health care, education, and fair conditions of labor.

Paralleling to this HR approach for development, many iNGOs are moving towards the rights approach for ESC rights and services for those-in-need, like *Médecins Sans Frontières*. More specific for the NGOs' promotion of labor rights, the ILO's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and the more recent Declaration on Social Justice and Globalization (ILO 2009) have been serving as a leverage for, and used by, human rights activists and groups to challenge those corporations and state institutions for their duties, as moral obligation, to promote ESC rights.

2.   Dynamics of NGOs' Activism and IGOs' Policy Learning

In the last decade, partly in response to the failure of IGOs and IFIs initiatives in the enforcement of human rights at the global and local (glocal) levels, iNGOs' global movements have been targeting the IGOs and IFIs themselves. And yet, the latter also realizes the potential contribution of iNGOs in shaping participatory human rights movement at societal and community levels (Lai 2011, Rodrigues 2005). Glocal responses against the globalization project are more than obvious: internationalization of advocacies networks and the iNGOs' appeals are more than visibly seen in mass -cum- cyber-media (Lai 2004a/b; 2011). More fundamentally, they see the increasing importance of iNGOs in global affairs,

as can be seen in the burgeoning growth of iNGOs as well as their diversification of services and advocacies. Thus, there seems to have a convergence in the mobilization of international communities' support for civil and political rights (ICCPR) for both the IGOs and NGOs.

Historically, IGOs set the framework for global governance for development, yet discussing human rights, or human rights in the course of socio-economic development is critical for all. Obviously, international and global summits, conferences and symposia organized by IGOs and IFIs become the targets for iNGOs mobilizing work and demonstrations, challenging the established rule and way of governance of the global order. We are witnessing the conglomeration of IGOs and iNGOs in global summits like G8 meeting, World Bank and UN Summits and alike, with confrontational protests and demonstrations outside, yet heated debates within the conference venue (Lai 2008b; Lai 2011).

Overall, NGOs and their activism serve as:

- Base for articulating particular human rights abuses/issues. For example, the Amnesty International has a large monitoring component to challenge human rights abuses, be they individual or collective cases.
- Center where good local supports and iNGO activities help reshape the contours (for the benefits of human rights) for national policy or constitutional domain, which are more likely to promote a shift in the worldview towards global society (Christensen 2006).
- Focal point, platform and network for information gathering and research required to challenge as well as create new policy for human rights like those in the Human Rights Watch.
- Agency for mobilizing and/or articulating various forms and modes of confrontational protests and demonstrations, targeting IGOs and allied Transnational Corporations (TNCs).
- Networking forum for transnational advocacies and communication to push local, regional and international government bodies to react to human rights abuse.

Based on the foregoing discussions, the role of NGOs is obvious (Christensen 2006, Lai 2011, Roth 2004, Tsutsui & Wotipka 2004) and their influences are many folds: firstly, in moving the human rights concern beyond a particular geo-political space, to the global level, shaping global norms, politicking and law governance for human rights; secondly, in shaping policy processes at the international, national and local level, by offering alternative perspectives and logic for socio-developmental course; thirdly, through their activism to establish its legitimacy for non-state actors (iNGOs) and new media as global monitor and

adjudicator for human rights; and last but not least, in providing alternative development strategies for cross-national policy learning (Stone 2004).

For IGOs, regional or international intervention comes in two ways, namely the call (sometimes treated as lip-service) for human rights observance and the creation of development fund (mostly set up by the UN and World Bank and some bilateral funds) for developing countries. For the advocacies side, statements or declarations on human rights without the political, economic, or military sanctioning power are mostly ineffective in preventing human rights abuse, as the genocides prior to international intervention at Sarajevo, Rwanda and Darfur demonstrate clearly.

For example: with reference to the governance and human rights issue at Chad, the receiving country for World Bank's funding, Horta (2002) noted that the situation in Chad and so many other countries shows that money is not the answer; oftentimes it is at the root of the problem. In other words, international development funding often strengthens the hands of an authoritarian government and leads to more human right abuses. It eases pressure within the country for policy changes towards a better society. This observation echoes many NGOs' claims that development funds reinforce human rights abuse and reduce the development potential for better alternatives by legitimizing the authoritarian regime and its abuses on human rights. Perhaps, development funds and corporations are part of the sin against human rights (Darrow & Tomas 2005).

However, despite the obvious inadequacies of IGOs' intervention in promoting human rights through development initiatives, there is also mis-management of human rights issue in the development works by some iNGOs, which is an important aspect of policy learning. Thus, there is an emerging space for joint consultation and joint policy learning processes, between and among iNGOs and IGOs, in targeting nation state's agencies in charge of improving human rights. Their synergetic efforts, though clouded or overshadowed in some instances by confrontational conflicts, are moving into consensus for not only basic human rights but also economic, social and cultural rights in general – highlighting that the project "human rights for all" is much shaped by, as well as shaping, the international norms and values for social and sustainable development.

These initiatives are echoing the call by a recent UN report entitled *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All* (UN 2005): "the world must advance the causes of security, development and human rights together, otherwise none will succeed. Humanity will not enjoy security without development, it will not enjoy development without security, and it will not enjoy either without respect for human rights".

3.   Transformative Human (ESC) Rights Movement: New Social Media for Old Problem?

Thanks to iNGOs' glocal activism, human rights advocacies are transformative, if not revolutionary! Historically, the HR promotion and advocacies have been based on the articulation of people's civil and political rights under the banner of *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, as ratified in 1948 by the United Nations in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust. This has been reinforced by the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

The civil and political rights (ICCPR) has provided ample (imaginative-interpretative) space for both the IGOs and NGOs for further mobilization of international communities' support to the cause of human rights. This is exemplified by the active critical engagements of iNGOs, like Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW), in their campaigns for the release, or more human treatment, of prisoners of conscience and victims of torture, utilizing strategies of shaming offending regimes and, or the politics of embarrassment to "internationalize" their HR violations such as torture, unjust imprisonment or disenfranchisement of their citizens. This has been often forming similar view activists across the globe for direct actions, resulted in the release or better treatment of victims and hence, usually in facilitating the establishment of international norms on human rights (Lai 2011; Rosenau 1997, 1998).

3.1   Human Rights as (Rejuvenated) New Ethics for Glocal Development!

Under the impact of globalization as championed by the IFIs and TNCs, the individual's ESC rights are under threat. At this historical conjuncture, NGOs at both international and local levels are confronted by the social calamities that are rooted and embedded in the globalization processes.

But they are thus moving to a new arena of critical engagement, namely, from the focused articulation of human rights to incorporating ICESCR. For instance, Human Rights Watch (HRW) has in recent years increasingly addressed economic, social and cultural rights as well. HRW focuses particularly on situations in which HRW methodology of investigation and reporting is most effective, such as when arbitrary or discriminatory governmental conduct lies behind economic, social and cultural rights violations. More specific, HRW monitors and mobilizes supports against ESC rights violations when they result from violations of civil and political rights or contributing to the violations of civil and political rights. Reportages of HRW address ESC rights, including the rights to health care, education and fair conditions of labor (http://www.hrw.org/).

Another example is Oxfam (http://www.oxfam.org/), an international development charity movement originating from Great Britain, which has been actively mobilizing people and resources to advocate ESC rights for both developing and developed economies. Strategy-wise, Oxfam International seeks increased worldwide public understanding that ESC rights and social justice are crucial to sustainable development. For advocacy on ESC rights, it mobilizes people for popular campaigning, alliance building and media work designed to raise awareness among the public of the real solutions to global poverty, to enable and motivate people to play an active part in the movement for change, and to foster a sense of global citizenship.

Drawing from decades of endeavour in international movements for human rights and various social movements, NGOs strive to be a global campaigning force promoting HR awareness and global citizenship, seeking to shift public opinion in order to make equity the same priority as economic growth. Hence, human-rights campaigners are now boldly lobbying for ESC rights such as the rights to health, information, healthy water and food, and even sexual pleasure (Oriel 2005, Solomon 2005, Tsutsui & Wotipka 2004).

3.2　　New Epistemology -cum- Praxis for Global Norms on Humanity

Shifting from the old approach for IGO's –led HR promotion, the new advocacies for the civil and political rights towards the ESC ones require transformative change not just in terms of strategy, but also the reasoning and logics of morality. For the latter one, it has to be demonstrated that the moral imperative to stop poverty, exploitation or discrimination against the disadvantaged groups, or disease is as convincing as the moral imperative to stop human torture. The attempt so far is far from successful.

For new *modus operandi* and strategies, the anti-globalization protest movements at the global level, which usually attack IGOs meetings (of APEC, G7/8, IMF, World Bank and WTO) and international business forums (like World Economic Forum), highlight the 'parallelization' of international events. By challenging yet embarrassing the status quo and the legitimacy of the pro-economic liberalization bodies, NGOs contribute a service towards the promotion of ESC rights with timely examples, including visualization, of the victimization of individuals and groups.

Globally, NGOs are now assuming the role of "ethics - morality checker", providing guidance on ESC rights, and usually using tactics of blacklisting and embarrassment publicity for the offenders of international norms on ESC rights such as state agencies, governments and transnational corporations. This is the reason why some TNCs, stung by anti-HR labels, now respond with their so-called

corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives (cf. Bastmeijer and Verschuuren 2005, Dermirag 2005). Hence, the ethics-morality checker *modus operandi* extends to preventive and precautionary one, with suggestive problem-solving options for TNCs and governments to reconsider in enhancing ESC rights of all people.

For instance, Amnesty International (AI) has recently attacked a consortium involving two American oil giants, Exxon Mobil and Chevron, and Petronas of Malaysia, which are extracting the African oil in Chad and pumping it to the Cameroon coast via a 665-mile (1,070-km) pipeline.   This is a $4.3 billion project in Africa, the biggest foreign investment in Africa. This has long been a cause celebre for NGOs, which fearful of the impact of the project on one of the poorest and most ill-governed parts of the world, has exposed the one-sided and anti-people nature of the project (*The Economist*, 8.September 2005, online edition). Against the context that oil firms have often been damned by association with human-rights abuses in similar places, not least Royal Dutch/Shell in Nigeria and Unocal in Myanmar, AI is not (yet) accusing the consortium of any specific human-rights abuses in the Chad-Cameroon project (though protesters against it have been abused in government crackdowns). Instead, the AI's preventive and precautionary report focuses on the potential harm that may be done, as a result of the contracts governing the deal. At the heart of these contracts is a "stabilization of law" clause, under which the consortium will be compensated for any economic harm caused to it by changes in the legal regimes governing the project – a protective clause for the oil firms against the risk of the unscrupulous governmental ripping off foreign investments. But, AI argued that one effect of the clause may be to impose a financial penalty on any government that tries to improve human rights by, for example, requiring higher minimum safety standards or quicker redress for lost land.

To recapitulate, the nexus between business interests and human (civil and political, as well as ESC) rights is that there are many (financial, ethical, regulatory) reasons why human rights have become more than a business issue. This is against the context that, as a key player in the globalization process, many TNCs have been, taking their technological and capital advantages, destroying local customs and cultures, exploiting workers, bankrupting the local poor and widening the gap between the rich and often politically repressive elite and the rest of society. What is more critical now is that, apart from legal obligations set down by the host country, there are basic moral responsibilities towards local and international norms – TNCs can through their foreign direct investment and business practice make important contribution to the promotion of economic and social welfare, the improvement of living standards, the creation of employment opportunities and the realization and enjoyment of basic human rights (Lai 2011;

Sullivan 2003).

4.   Synergy of Cyber-Activism and Human Rights Advocacies for Larger Freedom

Human rights activism stands out to be active in both mass and cyber-media. For example, HWR provides its expertise in human rights abuse reportage, ranging from the political imprisonment to the censorship of the high-tech viaduct, like the Internet. During the *World Summit on Information Society* (WSIS, on 15 November 2005 in Tunis), HRW released a comprehensive report on the repression of Internet users in the Middle East and North Africa, exposing that the host of WSIS has been jailing individuals for expressing their opinions on the Internet and has been suppressing Web sites critical of the government. Nation states have been facilitating the spread of information and communications technologies mainly with economic benefits in mind. At the same time, they pursue a contradictory and double-bladed policy by maintaining their old monopolies and control over the flow of information. Thus, HRW argued that the Internet has proven a boon to the development of civil society and freedom of information, but it has occasionally provoked government backlash as well.

Thanks to ubiquitous communication networks in the era of informational globalization, the timely and fast dissemination of information on human rights and human rights abuses is extremely important: the informational rights should be protected and become the fundamental one for ESC rights (Lai 2005, Rodriguez 2005, Roth 2004). The essence of NGOs' ESC rights advocacies brings back the informational rights (for freely access and communications) that are obviously an extension of ESC rights. In short, the new campaigning theme for human rights NGOs is broadening and deepening into all aspects of human development.

The new form of mobilization called cyber-activism has four distinct yet inter-related issues (Piper & Uhlin 2004; Keck & Sikkink 1998,1999): Firstly, the globalization processes have put state-society relations at very peculiar position, as both are exposed to the challenges of 'external' forces. Capital, goods and labor (and jobs) are more mobile than the previous international order. Sometimes, the globalizing forces adversely affect the livelihoods and jobs of the people, causing human rights abuses (Piketty 2014; WCSDG 2004). There is the recognition that global economic change reinforces the existing socio-economic-cultural fault-lines, but it also creates new and different kinds of alignment of non-state actors around core issues and across borders. Their collective impacts are rarely addressed by government policy. The contribution of transnational advocacy network of NGOs like AI, Greenpeace International, HRW and Oxfam alike is invaluable and should help address this missing link.

Secondly, thanks to ubiquitous new media, the cyberspace has become a domain where individuals can articulate non-mainstream politics, ranging from human rights to animal rights. Here, non-state actors can participate and non-traditional political themes can be discussed. Moreover, they can gain visibility in international politics beyond one's nation state territory (Sassen 2004). Indeed, the diffusion of human rights information, ranging from the 'abuse' to 'good practices', from individuals and among NGOs, from HR movement to social movements, can be instrumental in defining the global and local human rights agenda.

Thirdly, the issue of culture and language (*lingua franca*) has to be taken seriously, especially considering that human rights form part of global values that many (but not all) cultures share. The problem of cyber 'imperialism' and cultural domination over the universal values of human rights should be noted (Hamm & Smandych 2004) here. In 2010, English was used as the primary language of cyber-communication (27.3%), followed by Chinese (22.6%), Spanish (7.8%), Japanese (5%), Portuguese (4.2%), German (3.8%), Arabic (3.2%), French (3%) and Russian (3%) and Korean (2 %). In a highly differentiated way, the top ten languages accounted for 82.2% of the cyber-communications. Here, English consequently is the *de facto* standard language of the Internet, and the domination effect of the English language in global communication is threatening the existence of minority languages (Lai 2004b). Furthermore, other than the language itself, the contents and messages for communication are influenced for commercial and political purposes, such as the promotion of the US style of life or perspective in movies, music, comics, other forms of popular culture (cultural imperialism), and news and documentaries (the US version of the War Against Terrorism represents such a case). These are cultural manifestation and celebration of the Western global capitalism. In short, as long as the Internet is based on the existing social cultural structure, the Internet could also work to reinforce such cultural imperialism in our complex, globalizing world.

Obviously, it is culturally sensitive that global human rights values be communicable in local languages, to make the case of human rights universalism down-to-earth. For this, AI has a Russian language website (http://www.amnesty.org.ru) to promote respect for human rights in the Russian Federation, and the campaign for justice in the Russian Federation (http://www.amnesty.org/russia), with more almost one million views in 2007.

Last but not least are the networking dynamics. The offerings of informational society enhance the least advantaged groups' life chances or choices (cf., Lai 2008a/b, 2011). More specific, the logic of new (social) media enhanced e-mobilization is its bottom-up process: communities and interest groups are able

to connect to one another. We need to enable the deliberative skills (informational personality) people may possess, and look into about what actually happens in the space for advocacy. The cyberspace is instrumental in various stages of building up the informational personality in social mobilization: individual chat rooms and discussion lists enable people to communicate and learn from each other. The discovery of new knowledge, the building up of trust among each other, and enhancing the capacity to mobilize others to make social change – this cycle is clearly a progressive capacity-building process for social change. In short, human rights advocacy is not just talk and communication in cyberspace, but action in the real world as well: direct progressive actions at the local (for both individuals and groups) level are still the basics for social change for a better world.

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