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Looking for Evidence of the New Politics: Globalisation, power and democracy.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements of
The Nottingham Trent University for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2006

To Moira and Niamh.
My Girls.

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Preface

In the mid-1990s it seemed like everyone was writing about the ways technology was going to change the world. Even as a trade union researcher I found myself writing about issues such as the proper use of the Internet at work (maybe buy a book from Amazon, but stay away from the fleshpots) and the impact of new means of surveillance in the workplace. It sparked an interest in what this technology might do for society in general, and the political sphere in particular, that led me to read widely on the subject. To my frustration I found that the more widely I read, the more I found people saying the same thing. Globalization was all-conquering, democracy was irretrievably broken and people were going to be swept away by forces they could not control.

Not believing in the inevitability of all this, lead me to look for ways to counter those arguments, which, eventually, led to this thesis.

The scope of this thesis is both enormously wide and very specific. There scale of what is at stake if the predictions of revolutionary change are correct cannot be

understated – the end of the welfare state, the nation-state, perhaps even democracy – these are serious matters. But the process of beginning the search for whether these changes are actually happening is actually quite specific. It is based on research from one relatively small sample of one debate that took part over six weeks during the 2001 General Election. As such the claims for this thesis are also relatively modest. Always aware of the limitations of the methodology and research design, there is no claim here greater that in a particular place, at a specific time, using these techniques, this was observed.

It is my belief, however, that the findings are significant. Perhaps the future is not as certain as those proclaiming this new political era have supposed. There may yet be room for choice.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my wife, Moira McGrath, for everything, Stuart Maddison for his assistance with the content analysis, Nottingham Trent University for the financial and academic support that made this thesis possible and to the members of my the supervisory team, Matt Henn, Christine Bellamy and Fraser King for their encouragement and perseverance.

Abstract

This thesis takes as it starting point the three crises said to be facing liberal democracy: the crises of globalisation, fundamentalist identities and the decline of democratic legitimacy. When combined with the transformative potential of new communication technologies, these crises form the foundation for the *new politics* and promise a moment of revolutionary change for Western liberal democracies. This thesis looks at three apparently diverse responses to the *new politics* from the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools and contends that, despite their differences, these schools share a number of core assumptions that cause them to limit the range of valid strategies of responses to the *new politics*. Their vision of globalisation shares the assumption that it is a novel, irresistible and culturally and politically homogenizing phenomenon. Their conception of power as a one-dimensional resource leads them to cast individuals in relationships of dominance and subjugation. Their loss of faith in liberal democracy encourages them to propose deliberative democratic forms intended to produce rational decisions reached through reasonable debate and delivering greater equality. This thesis seeks to test these assumptions, subjecting them first to critical scrutiny by contextualising them within the wider academic debates on globalisation, power and democratic theory and in each case finding that their claims to represent the only viable responses to the *new politics* falling short. The second test is built upon the central role these authors give to new communications technologies as tools of propaganda and as exemplars of a new form of social organisation. By comparing output from the traditional and new media this thesis will look for evidence of the three schools predictions of the overwhelming scale and penetration of the *new politics* in the conduct of a political debate in the context of the 2001 British General Election.

Introduction

Introduction

This project was born of two concerns. The first was the identification of a number of common themes running through the writing of a wide variety of authors, from apparently diverse viewpoints, about the challenges facing social, economic and democratic institutions in the future, particularly with regard to the impact of new communications technologies and global markets. Having identified these common themes, a second concern arose from the fact that the evidence used to support these claims often seemed partial at best – frequently featuring anecdotes or the stretching of short term phenomena into long term trends. Often writers would rely on the use of data collected from small groups of people, distinct regions or nations and assume that the same principles of desire, fulfilment and transformation could (indeed must) apply universally.

This study sets out three schools of writers who represent apparently quite diverse social, economic and political positions but who, it is argued, can be best understood by considering their response to the issues raised by the *new politics*. Having

set out the apparent diversity of these responses in Section One, Section Two will look more closely at their writings and highlight crucial common assumptions that underlie their work. The common concerns of these authors have been labelled here the *new politics*. In Section Three these assumptions will be tested in reference to the conduct of a political debate in the 2001 British General Election.

The study has had two goals. First, to explore whether the assumptions of the *new politics*, and in particular their tendency to present a very narrow range of policy options as viable, can be sustained in the face of a critical analysis of the arguments put forward by the writers from techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools. And, secondly, to determine whether evidence can be found to support these assumptions in the conduct of an actual political debate.

The crises of democracy and, in particular, the assumptions that are shared by the three schools under scrutiny here have become taken for granted "facts" about the future for a very wide range of writers. As such they have very often been presented as the basis for elaborate constructions about how the world "must be" in the future and how societies must react now to ensure they are not left behind. This makes the critique of the issues presented here important, because it attempts to open up an often sealed box, subject them to critical scrutiny, and design tests to seek evidence in their support.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to spend some time setting out some definitions and clarifying some key points.

What is the new politics?

Broadly speaking, the *new politics* represents a set of concerns about the impact of global markets, the increasing fragmentation of society and the failure of democratic institutions. It claims that the current social, political and economic shape of Western, liberal democracies are facing imminent threats to which they are unable to respond

effectively.

Although the issues raised by the *new politics* are widely shared, as we shall see in Sections One and Two, it is Castells' (2000, 2000a, 2000b) who most concisely and usefully sets out the extent of the three crises of democracy: the crisis of globalisation; the crisis of fundamentalist identities; and the crisis of democratic institutions.

The Crisis of Globalisation

For Castells, the increasing interdependence of national economies and their integration into global networks of production, distribution and consumption is of central importance because of the impact it has on the relationship between citizen expectations and government's ability to deliver. The welfare state was a central part of the contract between individuals and the state and: "was a crucial source of political legitimacy in the reconstruction of government institutions after the Great Depression of [the] 1930s, and World War II" (2000: 342).

There are benefits, Castells concedes, for the state in unburdening itself of the bureaucratic load that the welfare state imposes, but they will be short lived. By worsening the living conditions for the majority of citizens, governments break the social contract between capital, labour and the state, and so remove "the nuts and bolts of legitimate government for common people" (2000: 354). The decline of Keynesianism and the fading away of the labour movement – a victim of internationalised finance and production and the individualisation of work – removes another source of social cohesion.

Since the state can no longer keep fundamental promises to provide basic levels of protections for its citizens, Castells argues that: "both its legitimacy and authority are called into question" (2000a: 346). This crisis of legitimacy has a number of effects in relation to the crises of individualization and democratic institutions. For the state:

"Globalization of capital, multilateralization of power institutions, and decentralization of authority to regional and local governments induce a new geometry of power, perhaps inducing a new form of state, the network state" (2000a: 347). The responses to globalisation – the World Trade Organisation (WTO), World Bank and even the European Union – have seen governments shift power upwards to multilateral institutions that (though preserving elements of control over global economic forces) reduce national sovereignty.

Though Castells does not believe the state will disappear he does expect it to fragment and for traditional nation-states to find it increasingly difficult to compel the obedience of their citizens or even persuade them to comply with common goals based on shared senses of loyalty.

Aided by the power of new telecommunications technologies and the capabilities of information processing, the global economy will continue to expand in the twenty first century, claims Castells: "It will penetrate all countries, all territories, all cultures, all communication flows, and all financial networks, relentlessly scanning the planet for new opportunities of profit-making." (2000a: 354). But globalisation will not treat every location or individual equally – the valuable will be linked into its ever expanding networks, but it will discard the rest.

This image of globalisation as an irresistible force, technologically empowered and beyond the control of states, people or institutions is one that is repeated in the work of the authors of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools.

The Crisis of Fundamentalist Identities

If, as Castells insists, the state can no longer claim to be protecting its citizens' well-being from the threats of the free market, then it must find new sources of legitimacy. One route open to it is to assert a collective identity – the mythology of the *Volk* as a

fundamental in defining the state (Christiansen 1997) – at the expense of other values and of minority identities.

This has two consequences. It is first the cause of a growth of "fundamentalist nationalist, ethnic, territorial, or religious states" (2000: 343) rising out of the current crisis of political legitimacy. Such states cannot, argues Castells, support a functioning liberal democracy because the principles of representation between the two systems are contradictory.

Even within those states that continue to function as liberal democracies, the shift of government's role from provider of social goods to protector of national identity has an immediate and damaging impact to the diversity and strength of democratic governance. This second consequence is the increasing mobilisation of issue-oriented groups pursuing singular goals. New communication technology can play an important role in allowing such groups to coordinate their actions outside the political and media mainstream

There is, for Castells, always the hope that political decision-making processes may find a way to create a link between these new sources of activity and incorporate them in a new "electronic grassroots democracy" (2000: 352). Then energies devoted by citizens in support of political mobilization around non-political causes (such as those promoted by Amnesty International, Greenpeace or Oxfam) might provide the energy for the reconstruction of democracy in the network society. However, Castells acknowledges, that the resultant state is unlikely to look much like existing liberal democracies.

Nor are attempts to construct democratic institutions and states around fundamentalist identities likely to be without their dangers. The emergence of "resistance identities which retrench in communal havens, and refuse to be flushed

away by global flows and radical individualism" (2000: 356) may not create groups of citizens willing to cooperate. One possible form of resistance identity may build their communes around "traditional values" (God, nation, race and family) and enclose their space with ethnic emblems and territorial claims. Such individualistic identities do not communicate with the state "except to struggle and negotiate on behalf of their specific interests/values" (2000: 356) and they certainly do not communicate with other such communities likely to be built upon sharply distinct and conflicting principles.
The result of the crises of individuality is a state unable to exercise control over its citizens, indeed perhaps not even recognised as sovereign by many of those within its borders.

The Crisis of Democratic Institutions

As well as the crises facing liberal democracy at the level of the legitimacy of the state, the institutions of democratic governance are themselves facing increasing threats to their relationship with the voters who have, until now, provided the legitimacy for government. The political system based on competition between competing parties is facing a crisis of credibility. Involvement is in decline and the level of trust in politicians has been undermined and, increasingly, it is reduced to a bureaucratic tool deprived of public confidence.

One of the central causes of the collapse of trust in political institutions, and in particular the political party system, is the way in which they have become captured by global media conglomerates. Reliant on these global business interests, the ability of politicians to represent their constituents' desires are at once limited. However, there are other, more subtle factors at work. The need to shape debate for media consumption reduces politics to personalized battles between leaders, it increases politicians reliance on sophisticated forms of news manipulation and drives the political agenda towards

scandal-based politics. It should hardly be surprising, Castells observes, that the net result of such campaigns is that: "public opinion and citizens' individual and collective expressions display a growing and fundamental disaffection *vis à vis* parties, politicians and professional politics" (2000: 343). The growing alienation of people from politics has powerful expressions worldwide, it predicts declining support for mainstream parties in established democracies, though Castells concedes that despite the decline they remain by some distance the most important political actors.

Nevertheless, Castells claims, the increasing unpredictability of the political system and the singularization of politics around the issues that create fundamentalist identities results in the fragmentation of the state. Though people may continue to fight for political freedom, political democracy "has become an empty shell." The "new institutional, cultural, and technological conditions of democratic exercise have made obsolete the existing party system, and the current regime of competitive politics, as adequate mechanisms of political representation in the network society" (2000: 349). People still have a sense of how important politics is, if only to prevent the taking up of political power by tyrants, but they are no longer clear of how to pursue their desires through the political process.

Caught up in "the logic of informational politics" political parties are no longer capable of acting as autonomous agents of social change. However, Castells still believes that political parties "of some kind" have a crucial role to play as instruments to process the demands of society. Their role, however, will be significantly different: "They are influential brokers rather than powerful innovators" (2000: 360).

The importance of new communication technologies

In all the responses to the *new politics*, new media technologies are given a position of

importance as the mechanism by which new relationships of power are built and society transformed. Castells takes as his starting point the assumption that the end of the twentieth century was one of the rare intervals in history: "characterized by the transformation of material culture by the works of a new technological paradigm organized around information technologies" (2000:29). This new technological revolution is creating a new social order that will be "both capitalist and informational" in a break with the past that is, Castells argues, as significant as the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century: "inducing a pattern of discontinuity in the material basis of economy, society and culture" (2000: 30).

Information technology is central to this new revolution – as important as the steam engine, electricity, fossil fuels and nuclear power have been to previous moments of technological innovation. It is not the knowledge or information gathered that characterizes this revolution, Castells says, but the application of information processes and new communication devices to the knowledge in a "feedback loop between innovation and the uses of innovation" (2000: 32).

This, in turn, leads Castells to identify the key differences between the present era and past industrial revolutions: the speed at which technology is diffused around the globe. The material of the information technology revolution has spread across the planet in little more than twenty years. He concedes there are still areas of the world and segments of society who are not connected but: "the dominant functions, social groups and territories across the globe are connected by the mid-1990s in a new technological system that, as such, started to take shape only in the 1970s" (2000: 35).

The result of the spread of this technology has been the creation of a new economy with the distinctive features of being both informational and global. It is informational because "the productivity and competitiveness of units or agents in this

economy (be it firms, regions or nations) fundamentally depend on their capacity to generate, process and apply efficiently knowledged-based information" (2000: 66). Castells is keen to avoid the accusation of technological determinism, arguing that he seeks to place "this process of revolutionary technological change in the social context in which it takes place and by which it is being shaped" (2000: 4). Comparing the different fates of Japan and the former Soviet Union, he seeks to demonstrate that technology and its application alone are not sufficient to explain the success or failure of a nation or region. He stresses the role of the state, which by stalling, unleashing, leading or shying away from technological innovation continues to play a decisive part in organizing the social and cultural forces at a particular place and time.

At the same time, however, Castells clearly places considerable importance on the role of technology, not least because of its influence in transforming the relationships in the workplace and, for Castells: "The process of work is at the core of social structure" (2000: 201). The technological transformation of work is a central part of the emergence of the networked business and, therefore, "the main lever by which the informational paradigm and the process of globalisation affect society at large" (2000: 201). It is through the central role of technology, therefore, that the changes occur that allow the emergence of the new networked society as it enables a structural transformation in the relationships of production, power and experience. In this information age, the fundamental social divisions will be between "information producers and replaceable generic labour" (2000a: 346), there will be no place for the discarded workers and consumers whose value has been used up or those whose needs do not match those of the global network of capital flows.

Ultimately, the revolution of technology plays a key role in the restructuring of the economy and the emergence of a new culture, which together converge "toward a

historical redefinition of the relationships of production, power and experience on which societies are based" (2000a: 340).

Responses to the *new politics*

The *new politics* has provided common ground for three groups of writers: techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters, whose work builds upon the assumption that Castells' crises are real and who, therefore, predict that we are witnessing the creation of a new era in social, economic and political organisation. Section One explores the nature of these groups more fully, but for now it is worth pointing out that these three groups do not represent an exhaustive list of responses to the *new politics* but they do represent important threads in the current political landscape. The techno-liberals represent a neo-liberal, primarily American, form of conservatism who, for the most part, unequivocally welcome the consequences of the crises of democracy, regarding them more as opportunities, and worry only about governments getting in the way of rapid, through-going change. The social entrepreneurs are linked to "third way" social democrats. Like the techno-liberals they generally see globalisation as a good thing and believe the *new politics* as inevitable, but seek to make governments better able to cope so as to provide protection for those who do not prosper in the new era. Resisters represent the anti-globalisation movement and see international capitalism and weak politicians as the cause of a number of immediate threats to personal liberty, communal institutions and environmental sustainability.

Although these groups possess apparently distinct and diverse attitudes towards the impact of the crises of democracy, it is the contention of this thesis that their visions of the future are built upon a number of shared assumptions.

A shared vision

The techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools take as their starting point the assumptions of the *new politics*, a society in which the individual increasingly acts without restraints, where government is becoming irrelevant in the face of global business, and where traditional liberal democratic political institutions are incapable of decisive action. The shared agenda that unite the three schools are dealt with in much more detail in Section Two, but to summarising briefly, they share the following assumptions:

> **Globalisation:** Global markets and multinational corporations have created an economic force that is novel, irresistible and homogenizing. Its novelty places it outside the realm of existing policy initiatives; its irresistible force means that traditional social, economic and political institutions are helpless and, as an homogenizing force, it imposes certain forms of government and behaviour on all societies;
>
> **Power:** Power is shifting fundamentally away from government and collective social institutions and towards individuals and multinational businesses. However, the three schools share a somewhat simplistic, one-dimensional notion of power as a tool or weapon to be used against others, which leads them to limit scope for the expression of resistance.
>
> **Democracy:** The decline of liberal democratic institutions lead the three schools to make proposals for new types of democracy built on more direct or deliberative forms of decision-making. The assumptions behind such claims are that they will deliver policies that are more rational from debates that are more reasonable and create outcomes that are more equitable than those of the present democratic system.

The combined effect of these assumptions is to reduce the freedom of choice available to citizens and communities in the face of the crises of democracy. The techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools present their distinct visions as

the only viable responses to the threats of the *new politics*. In each case we are presented with the argument that radical and immediate change is necessary and that existing social, economic and political institutions must be replaced or totally overhauled. The purpose of Section Two is to subject these assumptions to critical analysis, to explore whether they can be taken for granted as the basis of wider theories of society. By placing these assumptions in the context of the wider debates about globalisation, power and democratic theory, Section Two attempts to show that alternative responses to the crises of democracy may remain valid and that other policy choices may still be open.

Looking for evidence of the new politics

Section Three aims to explore whether evidence can be found to support the claims that the *new politics* is an identifiable, pervasive and immediate force in modern democracies. This study begins by noting the emphasis each of the three schools place on the central importance of new communication technologies. In particular the Internet is seen as a means of diffusing the ideology of the new politics, as a model for new institutional structures based on the paradigm of the network and as vanguard of such changes throughout society. Assuming that such claims are right, then the evidence for the impact of the *new politics* should first be seen in the differences between the content of the new media and that of the traditional media (television and newspapers) as representative of institutions of the existing liberal democratic order.

It is in the media, therefore, that we should see evidence of the effect of the *new politics* on political debate and I have chosen to search for that evidence in the debate conducted during the 2001 British General Election. Using techniques of content analysis to compare the debate on taxation during this campaign in the old media (television and newspapers) and the new media (websites), the goal is to determine

whether or not there is evidence to support the thesis that a *new politics* is fundamentally changing the political landscape. If the assumptions about the crises of democracy and the central place of new communication technologies are correct, then in the era of the new politics we might expect:

> *1. That the new media will favour the interests of global markets and multinational corporations over and above the traditional media and therefore will favour policies that move national policy in the direction of neo-liberalism.*
>
> *2. That the new media will contain a greater range of opinions, making room for those "fundamentalist identities" that the traditional institutions of liberal democracies cannot contain.*
>
> *3. That the new media will pursue a significantly different agenda from the traditional media which remain tied to the failing institutions of liberal democracy.*

Given the narrow scope of this research, this study cannot prove or disprove the claims about the crises of democracy in the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur or resister writings. However, the claims that the three schools make for the overwhelming scale and the deep penetration of the changes that the *new politics* heralds do suggest that these trends should be clearly visible in all parts of society.

Conclusion

Predictions of revolutionary change are common amongst those who write about the impact of new technology and the social, political and economic changes that will accompany the crises of democracy in the era of the *new politics*. The coming together of technological innovation and liberalised global markets have inspired many authors to claim that society is on the verge of an extraordinary shift in the way people live, work, and interact with their fellow citizens.

The position taken by this study is that extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. This study cannot and does not seek to confirm or deny that the necessary evidence for the claims of the three schools (or indeed other writers, such as Castells) exists. However, it does set out to explore whether evidence to support these extraordinary claims can be found in a particular arena (the debate during a British General Election) and at a particular time (2001).

As has been stated, the presence, absence or nature of such evidence will not, in itself, be conclusive. However, in relation to the claims made by techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers for the scale and scope of the impact of the crises of democracy, the absence of evidence, even in the narrow scope of this study would raise significant questions about the predictions made about the future prospects for liberal democracy.

Section 1
Three responses to the *new politics*.

Chapter 1.1
Introduction

The purpose of this section is to set out the positions of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools in their responses to the crises of globalisation, increasing individualism and declining democratic legitimacy. These crises, as summarised by Castells (2000a: 342-343) have been the subject of works by many writers not contained within the scope of this research, so, in introducing this section, it is necessary to spend some time explaining why these three schools have been chosen as the particular focus of this study.

The crises of democracy can be summarised as follows:

1. The integration of economic activity into globally interdependent systems means that governments can no longer keep their end of the welfare state bargain that forms a critical source of political legitimacy.
2. While the nation state draws legitimacy by identifying itself with community – to the exclusion of minority identities – the current era is seeing an increasing emergence of fundamentalist ethnic, nationalist and religious identities that are incapable of sustaining liberal democratic institutions.

3. The party political system in liberal democracies has lost credibility. Reliant on media conglomerates, politics has been reduced to conflicts of personality and the party system has lost the trust of voters.

There is no attempt to suggest that the schools of writers chosen here represent an exhaustive list of all possible responses to either the crises of democracy or, for that matter, to the impact of new technologies on modern societies. Nor is the intention of this study to set out the competing claims of these groups with the purpose of justifying one set of writers at the expense of the others. On the contrary, as subsequent sections shall demonstrate, despite an apparent diversity of response to the challenges facing modern nation states, it is the contention here that these groups actually share a number of underlying assumptions.

These groups have been selected for study because they share a number of common concerns. First, they each assume that new communication technologies represent a significant cause of rapid change in modern societies. Second, they accept that the three crises of democracy are genuine and imminent threats to the modern nation state. Third, they each present a vision of the future in which existing institutions will be rendered incapable of coping with the pressures they face and that, as a result, society will undergo a dramatic dislocation with the past. Finally, each group is closely linked to broader movements that represent significant elements in the current political landscape.

One of the central concerns of this project is the contribution of new communications technology to economic, social and political change. The techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters adopt distinctly different attitudes to benefit or dangers of particular technologies, but each also gives new communication technologies a central role to play in enabling the transformation of society. There are

many other writers – for example, Callinicos (2000, 2002, 2003), Barber (1986, 1998, 2003) and Kaplan (2000, 2001) – who have produced work concerned with the crises of democracy who are not included in the any of the three schools because they do not place the same emphasis on technology. By the same token there are many eminent writers on the new communications technologies – for example, Poster (1995) and Lessig (2000, 2002, 2005) – excluded from consideration here because they have not responded in an explicit way to the crises of democracy.

Another key reason for selecting the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters for further study is their close ties to three important threads in the contemporary political scene.

- The techno-liberals represent a strand of neo-conservative, neo-liberal thinking that has proven itself influential with some elements of the American Republican and British Conservative Party. They share a common concern to ensure increasing liberalization of global free markets and the limiting of the role of government.
- The social entrepreneurs are most closely linked to the "third way" social democracy of Tony Blair's "New Labour" in Britain and Clinton's "New Democrats" in America. Drawing influences from the post-Soviet-era attempt by Giddens (1998) to reconcile social democracy with global free markets and from Castells (2000, 2000, 2000a) on the tranformative nature of networks, social entrepreneurs attempt to ameliorate the worst damage of global markets while seeking to harness their power for innovation and wealth creation.
- Resisters represent the anti-capitalism/anti-globalization movement that developed rapidly following the demonstrations in Seattle against the World Trade Organisation in 1999. The concern of resisters is to return economic, social and political choice to citizens by breaking up global markets and radicalising democracy in the face of what they regard as increasingly compromised and incapable democratic institutions.

What is noticeable about all three groups has been their capacity, in different arenas, to achieve considerable success in pursuing their goals. The techno-liberals, for example, find themselves at the heart of the "Washington Consensus" and their policy prescriptions adopted as doctrines of faith by the World Bank, national governments and many economists. The social entrepreneurs have been successful in the United Kingdom and, under the former Clinton administration, in the United States in getting elements of their agenda – the remodelling of government services along more market oriented lines, for example – adopted and enacted. Finally, though generally more distant from the centres of power, the resisters have used channels such as the World Social Forums, direct action and intense lobbying, to highlight their agenda. Their success, for example, in highlighting poverty in the developing world and in raising the profile of campaigns to cancel third world debt reveals the resister's formidable capabilities to achieve at least some of their goals.

A number of cases could be made against the choice of these groups as the subject of a serious study. In the first instance, most of the writers under consideration here are not academics and do not frame their arguments using the language or form of discussion used to consider political issues as the object of an academic discipline. There are academics in these groups but few have a background in politics (there are economists, scientists, management theorists, computer scientists and others) but there are also commentators, journalists, futurists, politicians, lobbyist, activists, campaigners and management consultants. This wide variety of sources reflects two important facts: the enormous response that ideas of the *new politics* have generated across a very wide range of disciplines; and the interest in the potential that communication technologies have for changing society.

It might be argued that these groups are straw men, set up simply so that their positions can be demolished. It is true that in Sections Two and Three these groups' claims are subject to scrutiny and to criticism, but as Section Two will demonstrate, the assumptions the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters make are far from being uniquely their own. The criticism applied to writers of these three schools can also be applied to writers from significant academic traditions in political studies. In any case, the three schools are far from being helpless, they possess considerable resources that they exploit in the pursuit of their agendas.

These writers deserve to be taken seriously because they appear to be having genuine and lasting impacts on policy decisions. They deserve to be taken seriously because they have shown they are capable of offering visions of the future that resonate with diverse groups across many societies. And, finally, they deserve to be taken seriously because their work is read by citizens, campaigners, activists, decision-makers and policy-shapers and contributes to the shape of the debate on crucial issues facing modern democratic states.

The following chapters set out the distinct responses of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers to the crises of democracy and the apparent diversity of response contained within the work of the three schools. Section Two will set out how this diversity of response is underpinned by a number of shared assumptions, which when combined place significant limitations on the policy options the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers present as valid in the face of the crises of democracy. Section Three, drawing on a content analysis of a political debate from

the 2001 British General Election, will then attempt to find evidence of the claims made by the three schools.

Each of the following chapters in this section has the same pattern. The introduction to each chapter considers the particular importance each school places on communication technologies in their vision of the challenges facing democratic states. The chapters then set out, in turn, each school's response to the crises of globalisation, growing individualism and the decline of democratic institutions. The goal, in setting the chapters out in this fashion, is to allow easy comparison of each school's approach and to emphasise the apparent diversity of the different schools responses.

Chapter 1.2
Techno-liberals

In the mid-1990s, as the Internet expanded from being the preserve of academics and a handful of technologically adept early adopters, there emerged a group of writers proclaiming its importance not just as a form of communication but as a radically new model of organisation with revolutionary implications for business, politics and society. As early as 1990 Gilder (1990, 2000) had been proclaiming the revolutionary potential of the entrepreneurial spirit in the computer industry. Toffler (1971, 1981, 1993) claimed that technological change was creating a dislocation between modern society and past forms of social organisation. The adoption and adaptation of these ideas by a group of writers closely connected to the technology companies of California's Silicon Valley marked the launch of a significant ideological offensive.

Clustered around the technology magazine *Wired* there emerged writers such as Rheingold (1992), Katz (1997b), Dyson (1998) and Kelly (1998) proclaiming the birth of a new economy and the emergence of a *new politics* ushered in by a technological revolution and global markets. These themes were taken up by a variety of writers

including politicians such as Gingrich (1995) and Howells (2000) arguing that this marked a new era for democracy. Business leaders, like Gates (1996, 1999) and Ohmae (1995, 2000, 2002), argued that the way nations, people and corporations did business was dramatically changing and the role of government should be to enable the diffusion of technology and smooth the path of global markets. And, as Internet stocks rocketed, writers like Schwartz and Leyden (1997) proclaimed that the "long boom" marked a fundamental break with past forms of economic organisation,

When the Internet stock market bubble eventually popped, it might be imagined that the techno-liberal school would have been chastened and perhaps even abandoned their wider claims for the transformation of society. It is true that *Wired*, for example, which in the late 1990s seemed to offer as much space to political manifestos as it did to stories about computing had, by 2003, largely abandoned its radical agenda and refocused on gadgets and cutting-edge technology. But it would be a mistake to assume that all these writers had abandoned the techno-liberal school.

Gilder (2005), for example, continues to write about the transformative potential of new technologies in a free market led by entrepreneurs. Ohmae (2005) is still promoting a global vision of free markets and new communications technologies as the best way to ensure international properity. Rheingold (2002) continues to put the case for new communication technologies, particularly mobile technologies, as tools capable of fundamentally reshaping communities. For Wilmot and Nelson (2003), communication technologies and corporations are the key tools in providing guidance for citizens in an increasingly complex world while Weinberger (2003) makes the case for the Internet's crucial role in bringing together people and resources from around the world in new business and social structures.

Others have retained the techno-liberal's free market ideology and their concern with the importance of technology – but have moved on to new technologies that they believe will fulfil the potential once attributed to the Internet. Gershenfeld (2005) promotes the development of personal fabrication machines, Vaitheeswaran (2005) identifies the hydrogen fuel cell as a crucial technology and Hewitt (2005) argues that blogging (web logs, essentially diaries published online) will overthrow media monopolies and institute enormous economic change.

Of the three schools of writing examined here, the techno-liberals are most committed to the importance of technology and unfettered free markets.

The techno-liberal response to the crisis of globalisation

While their relationship with new communication technologies is a defining feature of the techno-liberal group of writers, it is the importance of this technology in enabling more perfect markets and in allowing the coordination of such markets on a global scale that represents its most significant consequences. However, globalisation is more than an inevitable consequence of the spread of new technologies, it marks for many techno-liberals a moment of liberation as business and individuals are set free from the inefficiency of national governments.

For Ohmae (1995) the decline of the nation state and the resultant creation of the borderless world marks a new era. Freedom of investment, footloose industry and increasingly demanding individual consumers are linked by information technology and combine to leave governments with no choice but to cede their autonomy to smaller regions, to allow markets to operate without interference and to allow citizens to express their desires through unfettered consumption. Money will follow opportunity, regardless of geopolitical boundaries. Businesses now act only in the pursuit of markets and suitable resources. Individual consumers no longer feel bound to goods simply

because of national associations. The era of national governments as the most powerful actors in the international era is over as an "invisible continent" (2001) is opened to exploration and exploitation by businesses and consumers.

There are four dimensions to this new continent. The visible dimension – that which remains of the economic institutions of the old world. The borderless dimension – the decline of the importance of boundaries "because of the growing sophistication of and interactions of consumers and citizens around the world, who have been acclimated to a global point of view" (2001: 5) by cross-border communication, travel and consumption. The cyber dimension – computers do more than enhance communication, they change the way we consume and produce and they have altered the civic environment. Finally, what Ohmae calls the dimension of "high multiples" – the vast wealth of corporations based on stock market valuations that are far above of the value of actual company assets creates a "terrifyingly slippery entity for governments, businesses and even speculators to deal with" (2001: 7).

Ohmae identifies a number of significant characteristics for policy-makers that define the newly globalised era as distinct from what has gone before. First, information now flows easily across all sorts of boundaries and governments can no longer hope to exercise a monopoly on information or to control the news agenda. One consequence of the freedom of information is that consumer choice is no longer restrained by national politics and is inhibited only by the aggregate tastes and desires of customers.

Second, as a "continent without land" the new global economy is easy for almost anyone to enter – there is no limit to the space available so any nation, company, race, ethnic group or individual may enter – making it, in this sense, much fairer than the old world. However, Ohmae notes, there is a price to pay. To succeed on the new

continent requires those who would enter to abandon their old ways of thinking and to adapt to the rules of the new economy. This makes the invisible continent far less diverse than its real world equivalents: "People who enter, no matter what their ethnic origin or gender, have all learned to act in particular ways and to hold particular beliefs" (2001: 18).

Third, the invisible continent does not yet have a fixed form of governance or infrastructure, which makes the position of early colonists particularly strong and means that those who come later will find it very difficult to "capture" their territory – early adopters effectively define the shape of the new continent.

Finally the new continent embodies highly individualistic values – worth is not decided by connections to family, community or old-style establishments, but through the material benefits for the group that each individual can bring to the table. Nor is there a single elite establishing itself that is able to set the tone for the continent's perception of the qualities that are worthwhile and those which are not. On Ohmae's invisible continent "there are thousands of elites – rolling elites, only vaguely aware of one another's values" (2001: 20).

Ohmae's construction of the invisible continent as a place free of rules, full of opportunity and populated by individualists making choices in a close approximation of perfect market conditions is reflected in the work of other techno-liberals. Kelly (1998) notes that the geography of wealth is being reshaped by the combination of shrinking computers and expanding communications. His new economy has three distinguishing characteristics: "It is global. It favours intangible things – ideas, information, and relationships. And it is intensely interlinked" (1998:2). Taken together these attributes create a new type of marketplace and society, a new politics rooted in ubiquitous electronic networks.

In his rules for the new economy, Kelly emphasises the irresistible nature of this new economy, claiming that its success is "self-reinforcing" – becoming exponentially more powerful and more difficult to resist as each new member joins. The new economy offers challenges to ways of doing business but it also means dramatic changes for government and individuals.

The primacy of economic decision-making has important implications. The choices of citizens become the choices of consumers. Government no longer directs policy or sets an agenda, instead it is the aggregation of individual choices made in the marketplace of ideas and goods that will be the primary means of shaping society, politics and the economy of the new era. Traditional government may provide a foundation, ensuring that laws protect business rights, Dyson (1998) notes, but so long as there is freedom of choice and freedom of speech, the market can be trusted to work. It will be the: "arbitrary, all-over-the-place actions of diverse individuals and organisations seeing opportunities and making up their own minds to do something about them" (1998: 9) that forms the best way of directing policy choice in the future.

The techno-liberal response to the crisis of individualism

The rise of what Wilmot and Nelson (2003) call "new individualism" marks the moment when an ever increasing number of financially and technology empowered people express their individuality through their ability to exercise greater discretion in their purchases. With more disposable income they also have less to lose if their choices go wrong as each choice represents a smaller proportion of their total wealth. Consumers, therefore, are increasingly able to insist upon more goods, increased choice and a service customised to their needs.

Although increasing choice represents a victory for the financially independent consumer there is also a price, argue Wilmot and Nelson. The increasing complexity of

society places demands on the consumer that did not exist in previous eras. The rising importance of networks of relationships, of global markets, new technologies and changes in social organisation combine to make life increasingly complicated. Economic growth and rising affluence may allow the consumer to express their individuality more freely, but the declining influence of, and deference to, the prescriptive functions of traditional institutions means that there are fewer fixed roles and fewer lifestyle choices that seem natural in the new economy.

With deference to traditional institutions declining and traditional communities undermined by the power of global markets, people need new forms of attachment. Since the role of consumer has supplanted that of citizen, family member and other social interconnections, it should also be the market, Wilmot and Nelson suggest, that provides the guidance and advice that people need in the future. There will be local and regional identities but, increasingly, an individual's attachments will be defined by their place in the market. Indeed there will be opportunities for companies, through brand loyalty and the use of sponsorship, to place themselves at the centre of these new networks of relationships.

The new complexity explains why new communication technologies are so important. While technology contributes to complexity – periods of rapid technological change are also periods of confusion and disorientation – new information technology also provides a means by which the information and choices available in the new economy can be processed both by consumers and by business. As individualism grows and complexity increases "consumers become less segmentable and less predictable" (2003: 23), and the categorisation of consumers by stereotypes based on age, race or gender will become less useful guides to attitudes and behaviour.

The impact of this individualisation on communities is dramatic. Traditional forms of organisation based on the imposition of social order from above, centrally controlled access to information and regulation by laws and rules are replaced, Rheingold (2002) argues, by networks that "use many possible paths to distribute information from any link to any other, and are self regulated through flat governance hierarchies and distributed power" (2002: 163). Where once it was feasible for powerful elites to shape expectations and demands of the majority by their control of information, the new, networked society will increasingly be informed by peer-to-peer sharing of information. Enhanced by mobile, personal communication devices, the network society enables individuals to form, shatter and reform alliances seamlessly in the pursuit of particular common goals without having to negotiate broader coalitions. Rheingold's "smart mobs" will be unpredictable. They will certainly be beyond the capabilities of traditional government to respond to their rapidly changing demands.

It is possible that individuals making up elements of the swarming and ever changing mob will not recognise the implications of their choices. These mobs have the potential to display "emergent" properties – behaviour that cannot simply be described by the aggregation of individual actions. For Rheingold the potential for such unforeseen developments is created by the increasing individualisation of society and new technologies. Where cooperation is necessary it will not be created by government: "the emergence of democratic, convivial, intelligent social forms depends on how people appropriate, adopt, transform, and reshape the new media once they are out of the hands of engineers" (Rheingold 2002: 214-5).

Rheingold encapsulates the techno-liberal themes of increasing expectations of individualised services, of the importance of choices made in the consumerist mode over choices made as citizens and the central importance of technologies as enabling

the formation of new social structures. The exercise of control in these new social orders is beyond the capability of traditional community and political institutions.

As Dyson (1998) notes, these Net-based communities have only limited resources to impose upon their members' freedom to act as they choose. Unlike traditional communities they can operate only by consent of their members and unlike geographically-fixed nations, they are in active competition for the allegiance of their members. As a result, these networks must offer their members real benefits if they want them to retain them. Dyson sees these benefits defined by the market – superior goods and services through the provision of "a clean, transparent marketplace with defined rules or consequences" (1998: 131).

Techno-liberals welcome the fact that traditional forms of government and community organisation are incapable of responding to their swarming, wealthy and technologically empowered individuals. Their goal, far from seeking to ameliorate the impacts of such dramatic change is to look for ways in which such transformations might be encouraged. In the era of the new politics, techno-liberals expect individuals to cast off traditional allegiances, define themselves through their consumption and abandon traditional forms of government.

The techno-liberal response to the crisis of democratic governance

Techno-liberals regard the increasing importance of global markets and the rise of the "new individualism" as undermining the position of the traditional nation state. The impact of increasing individualisation and the growing importance of global markets marks an end to politics as usual. In some instances (Dyson 1998, for example) it means an end to politics as a distinct social activity outside the market. The rise of the "new individualism" and the shift from citizenship to consumerism does not only

challenge social and economic institutions, it also presents the traditional structures of political organisation with a series of insurmountable problems.

One of the earliest statements of the political stance of the techno-liberals, the "magna carta for the knowledge age" (Gilder et al: 1994) is, effectively, a declaration of independence for the "electronic frontier" – demanding that cyberspace adds "social and political dominance to its accelerating technological and economic strength." Though dated the "magna carta" remains revealing about the techno-liberal's hostility to traditional forms of government. It demands that government adopt, as its central function, the development of clear and enforceable property rights necessary for profits to be made in "cyberspace". Otherwise government's role should be confined to staying out of the way of free markets and doing all it can to enable the rapid advance of the technological and economic transformations that will eventually make it obsolete.

Technology, again, plays a key role for techno-liberals. This chapter has discussed the importance they have placed on the move from centralised control of information to "peer-to-peer" models as marking a fundamental shift in the balance of power. In politics, Katz (1997) argues, the same kind of shift in information flows will have a dramatic impact on the quality and style of political campaigns. A new, thicker, form of politics will emerge based on debate and on the centrality of reliable information. In contrast with the rhetoric of traditional politics and journalism, the net will allow the instantaneous sharing of factual information without mediation. The result should be a newly rational type of politics – defeating bias and bigotry with relentless doses of truth: "Where conventional politics is suffused with ideology, the digital world is obsessed with facts" (Katz 1997: 50) and that obsession creates the opportunity for a form of rule that rejects ideology and dogmatism.

This rational, democratic and reasonable "digital nation" will replace remote and unresponsive existing political institutions with an online culture that offers the means for individuals to have a genuine say in the decisions that affect their lives. Nor do the benefits stop there, these new communication technologies to allow citizens to speak directly to one another, without intermediation by journalists or politicians. This creates the opportunity for greater understanding, the sharing of ideas and the development of politics as a conversation amongst interested parties. In coming to agreement through such conversations, individuals may never fully agree with each other but, Katz claims, they will: "fully understanding the other person's position" (1997: 191).

While this might seem to imply a "Jeffersonian" style democracy, that may not be the case. The "conversations" between citizens in this form of democracy need not take place in a specifically political arena, they may be mediated through market transactions. Katz himself argues that politics needs to be more "deliberate, patient, careful, inclusive" (1997: 25) but concedes that the actual effect of new technologies have been to increase competition, noise and speed rather than comprehension.

The intermediaries of the traditional political system are no longer required or are relegated to relatively minor roles. People can rule themselves, make decisions for themselves and reach compromises for themselves: the future of the traditional politician, whose job was to manage expectation and oppose order on competing claims, seems bleak.

As Weinberger (2002 notes, the new political order, like the Internet, is "profoundly unmanaged". The new order, he claims, is a mess made up of voices proclaiming whatever they think is worth saying, experimenting with extremes, being wrong in public and making fun of sacred cows. The new political order: "takes

traditional command and control structures and busts them up into many small pieces that then loosely join themselves" (2002: 23). This looseness of association is a crucial factor – the new model of political organisation is not that of a mass of passive television spectators but of many small groups (each one flexible and many ephemeral) engaged in conversations. Traditional political institutions rely on entrenching the sort of stable sense of belonging that the new political order simply cannot sustain. National governments may continue to try and exercise their dominion by asserting their monopoly of control within fixed geographical boundaries but, increasingly, their citizens will offer allegiance to other associations capable of delivering their wishes without unilaterally imposing demands for obedience in other areas.

Conclusion

The defining traits of the techno-liberals are their unrestrained excitement about the application of unfettered, technologically enabled markets to the widest possible array of economic, social and political questions. A major consequence of this is that the individual becomes increasingly important but their role as citizen has been usurped by their role as consumer.

In responding to globalisation, to growing individualism and to changes in politics, the techno-liberals' constant refrain has been to let the market decide. This stance has radical implications for businesses, communities and political institutions in the era of the *new politics*. It reflects the techno-liberals closeness to the new-conservative movement in America and Britain and the fact that they regard the so-called crises of democracy as moments of significant opportunity to radically reshape Western liberal democracies.

The techno-liberals welcome the increased intrusion of markets into the realm of political and personal decision-making. They regard as outdated most social,

economic and political institutions and embrace the dramatic changes of the new political era as an opportunity for radical change.

As Professor of Information Systems and trenchant social critic Angell claims, there will be losers in the dramatic changes that are set to accompany the transformation of society but the change will come nevertheless. According to this view, there is an elementary force to the breadth and depth of these changes and those who can't cope, or who miss out on the opportunities on offer will be left behind: "It is pointless bemoaning the unfairness of it all. The die is cast and there is nothing anyone can do about it" (Angell 2000: 2).

Chapter 1.3
Social Entrepreneurs

Social entrepreneurs are most closely associated with the "Third Way" social democratic movements in Britain and America. A number of the key figures amongst the social entrepreneurs are directly linked to the New Democrat and New Labour hierarchies. For example, Mulgan (1991, 1997) currently leads Tony Blair's Downing Street Policy Unit and Leadbeater (1999, 2000, 2002) has written a number of UK government Green and White Papers[1] while Cherny (2000) has been senior speechwriter for former US Vice-President Al Gore and senior campaign aide to the 2004 American Presidential challenger, John Kerry.

More than any other group, the social entrepreneurs are tied to particular political parties and, in the UK particularly, to a small number of think tanks that surround New Labour.[2] The social entrepreneurs are also strongly influenced by two

[1] DTI White Paper on Knowledge Driven Economy (1998); DTI Science White Paper (2001); DTI Competitiveness White Paper (1998); DCMS Culture Online Vision Statement (2004); DCMS Libraries Review (2004).

[2] Demos is, in particular, a key source of social entrepreneur texts (it was founded by Mulgan) though both The Fabian Society and IPPR have produced texts that express similar themes.

key academic thinkers – Giddens (1998, 2000) and Castells (2000, 2000, 2000a).[3] From Giddens they draw inspiration for their post-Soviet conception of social democracy shorn of the traditional expectations of what they describe as the "old left" – the statist, social welfare systems of post-war Europe – and the prospect of a continuation of a "radical" process of reform that is reconciled with capitalist free markets. From Castells they take the central concern with the importance of networks in the modern society and a belief that this new form of organisation has revolutionary implications for the way in which society, politics and the economy are organised.

The social entrepreneurs give a central role to the importance of technology, and in particular to new communications technologies, as leading to a transformation of society. Like the techno-liberals, the social entrepreneurs are overwhelmingly positive about the likely impact of such technologies. Coyle argues that these "revolutionary technologies have revolutionary consequences" (2001: ix) and places particular emphasis on the way these technologies emphasise "weightless" aspects of goods – innovation, design, skills, knowledge – rather than material aspects. This weightlessness, she argues, allows the potential for previously undervalued qualities (compassion, empathy, caring) to take a central place in a new society in which technology, greater leisure and longer lifespans contribute to a new ordering of needs. For Cherny (2000) and Leadbeater (2004) the crucial element of the new communications technologies is the way in which they enable the exercise of greater choice amongst citizens and the consequent shift to more personalised services from companies and corporations. Cherny defines the cohort of children who are growing up taking the Internet for granted as the "Choice Generation." For these "Choicers" the "demand for personalized decision-making power when working and shopping is

[3] Neither Giddens or Castells are included here as members of the social entrepreneurs – both writers possess characteristics that place them outside the scope of this study.

second nature" (2000: 37) and developments in technology will only reinforce their expectation of choice. Leadbeater (2001) recognises that a society of technologically enabled networks has potential drawbacks, with the rapid expansion (and equally rapid collapse) of the political equivalent of financial bubbles – issues that explode in importance such as the fuel tax protests or anti-paedophile campaigns in the UK in 2000, and then evaporate. However, Leadbeater believes that the potential benefits of new technologies outweigh their dangers.

These benefits are most succinctly summarised by Mulgan (2004) who argues that the network society offers government:

- ***transparency*** – with the ease and cheapness of sharing information citizens have the ability to gather information, monitor government and corporate activity and to challenge experts and professionals;
- ***holism*** – since the nineteenth-century governments have sough to break problems up to simplify their management, it is now possible to see the whole picture and create solutions that include all those with a direct interest in the process;
- ***directness*** – technology cuts through the layers of intermediation that once separated citizens from those who could solve their problems;
- ***multiple levels*** – government now occurs at a variety of levels, from local to national to European to global without clear boundaries and the relationship between local and global issues becomes conspicuous;
- ***leanness*** – government primary concern with the processing of information and knowledge the new communication technologies offer government greater productivity gains than the private sector.

Despite regarding the consequences of the network society as beneficial, social entrepreneurs like Mulgan are aware that these also present significant challenges. Although social entrepreneurs often find themselves at the heart of the traditional

institutions of liberal democracy and governance they do not offer "business as usual" solutions. On the contrary they embrace the idea that government must undergo a radical reinvention if it is to continue to have relevance in the era of the *new politics*. Their advocacy of the importance and benefits of the market is tempered by a recognition that there are limits to the areas where market-style choices bring benefits, unlike the techno-liberals. However, their preference for the individualisation of services and their acceptance of the reach and potential benefits of global markets goes too far for resisters.

A number of writers – Frank (2000) and Callinicos (2001), for example – have argued that the social entrepreneur position is essentially indistinguishable from neo-liberalism – accusing the social entrepreneurs of abandoning the principles of the traditional left and aligning with the techno-liberals and the so-called "Washington consensus". However the social entrepreneurs have a distinct response to the challenges of the *new politics*, which are neither the state-centred policies of traditional social democratic parties nor the surrender to global markets proposed by neo-liberals.

The social entrepreneur response to the crisis of globalisation

One of the key differences between the techno-liberals and social entrepreneurs is the way in which the latter see globalisation as a double-edged sword for business. In contrast to the way in which the techno-liberals equate increasing penetration of market style choices with an increase in the ability of large corporations to direct the business of government, social entrepreneurs assume that as global market choices increasingly penetrate society, the role of companies will alter radically.

Coyle (2001) for example notes that, in the era of the *new politics*, the changing economy "is undermining power bases just as surely as the original Industrial

Revolution undermined the traditional landed aristocracy" (2001: ix). Within this process of change not only are governments and politicians having to face up to a radically new relationship with the citizens, but capitalist and corporate structures will also come under attack. Citing as evidence the rise in anti-globalisation/anti-capitalist demonstrations during a period of, in general, increasing affluence, Coyle identifies this "paradox of prosperity": that affluence brings the confidence to protest. However, she argues, the protestors have chosen the wrong target. They are mistaken in assuming that the new economy is just old capitalism gone "turbo or manic" and, rather than attacking capitalism, they should be seeking to exploit the radical potential in the new global market economy to bring about radical political change. This is, she believes, an era in which capitalism has fundamentally changed and can be used to overthrow entrenched hierarchies in politics and in business and harnessed to build "a fairer and better society" (2001: xi).

The new economy, Coyle argues, is more than the stock market bubble in high-tech stocks. The long period of sustained growth in the US and British economies marks a distinct break with past models of economic performance. Global capitalism and new technologies have combined to produce an increasingly "weightless economy" in which actual physical goods are less important, and worth less money, than the quality of the ideas, creativity, marketing and design that are encompassed by them. The transformative power of the global economy is also a theme for Zuboff and Maxmin (2004) who stress the differences between existing capitalism and what they call "distributed capitalism" which places power in the hands of technologically empowered consumers. These consumers can, literally, make choices from goods and services available across the planet, and presents fundamental challenges to both government and business. Arguing that people have changed more than the business

and political institutions that are supposed to serve them, Zuboff and Maxmin construct a model of a future global economy that will enable greater individuation of services and products. The need to respond to the increasingly diverse expectations of more individualistic, technologically empowered citizens is the key distinction between the old and new economy.

In any case, social entrepreneurs insist, it is only the new global economy that can deliver the wealth and resources we have come to take for granted. Cherny notes how the continued wealth of America depends on its ability to adapt to the demands of a global market (2000: 17) while Leadbeater goes further, arguing that the resisters are wrong and that what poor countries need is not protection from global markets but greater access to them. Leadbeater notes (2001: 313-316) that during the second half of the twentieth century, the period of globalisations most rapid expansion, extreme poverty has fallen. In 1980, thirty-one percent of the world's population lived on less than one dollar a day. By 2000, that figure had fallen to twenty per percent. In 1820, the equivalent proportion of extremely poor people was eighty-five percent. He also notes that life expectancy in the developing world has rapidly increased – ninety per cent of people can now expect to live beyond 65 years of age compared to only sixty percent in 1960. And he points to similar advances in food production, education, access to clean water and other social goods that have seen significant advances in the era of globalisation. However, despite these advances, Leadbeater concedes that the rapid increase in the gap between the richest and the poorest is both morally and practically damaging and unsustainable.

Elsewhere (2004: 44-52) Leadbeater has set out the limitations of the market. The application of consumer choice to social issues is, he says, a good thing "in markets that trade goods and services where property rights are relatively clear,

products are relatively easy to compare, consumers can gather information easily and there are many buyers and sellers of services" (2004: 45). However, unlike the techno-liberals, Leadbeater is willing to set out a set of criteria (and therefore public policy issues) where markets and consumer choice are inappropriate means of responding to matters of public service. These include:

- areas like policing where it makes no sense to have competing providers;
- issues where services cannot be packaged and priced in monetary terms as consumer goods can – like community safety;
- where the exercise of individual preferences cannot be easily separated from those of the wider community – such as education;
- where information about the best services and the most efficient choices are complex and difficult to interpret – such as the choice of provision over different forms of healthcare;
- in situations of very high diversity of choice it becomes increasingly difficult and expensive (in terms of both money and time) for an individual to gather all the necessary information – there is also a point where millions of individuals gathering vast amounts of similar information becomes self-defeating; and finally
- where market consumerism applied to public services would threaten the principles of equity on which public services are based – Leadbeater cites health and education as key resources that are essential to allow each person to play a full role in society.

Although these limitations to the market's role would not satisfy resister concerns about the corruption of government by business, they do go beyond anything that would be acceptable to techno-liberals. It is clear that the relationship between social entrepreneurs and global capitalism is not that of simple acquiescence as suggested by some of their critics.

The social entrepreneur response to the crisis of individualism

One of the key themes of the social entrepreneur response to the new global economy is the increased demand for individuation of the services provided by government and business from citizens and consumers. This can be seen as a clear expression of the second crisis of democracy, the rise of "fundamentalist identities" and the struggle by nation states' social, political and economic institutions to contain the increasingly individualistic demands their citizens make. As individuals learn to manipulate their demands there is the opportunity for the radical reshaping of government, the economy and the organsiation social relations. This is not the atomised consumer society of the techno-liberals, Cherny argues, where people "never leave their home – ordering their groceries on-line and never making friends in the cereal line" (2000: 233) but a society in which people use technology to make connections and develop relationships. Through this process they come to express more clearly and more precisely what it is they demand from businesses, communities and governments.

For social entrepreneurs this crisis represents both a threat and an opportunity for radical reform. Social entrepreneurs recognise the potential for elite groups to hijack the control of key technological and economic resources in the era of the *new politics* and the danger that this will give them a stranglehold over the future of social development. As Coyle (2001: 274) notes, highly skilled, globe-trotting professionals look the most likely winners and, as income inequality grows, poorly skilled manual workers in depressed localities could end up losers. At the same time these writers recognise that what Leadbeater calls the new class of knowledge workers represent an important nexus of key themes – technological control, weightless skills, independence – that provide a perfect example of the potential of the new economy to benefit

everyone. As well as representing a potential threat, they also represent a vision of how society in the era of the *new politics* might work.

It is the process of what Zuboff and Maxmin (2004) call "individuation of consumption" and what Leadbeater (2004) refers to as "personalisation" and what Cherny (2000) calls the "choice revolution" that represents, for social entrepreneurs, the most significant change to the position of the individual. Rather than accepting what is handed down to them by government or business, the individual in the era of the *new politics* exploits new technologies and the freedom of choice in the global market. They expect to be offered services and goods that are tailored to their demands rather than be provided with "off-the-shelf" solutions that it suits an agency or corporation to provide. This, they claim, marks a decisive decentralization of power from state and corporations to individuals. However, rather than acting as a mass of individuals maximising their own gains, the social entrepreneurs see people acting together to get what they want. For Cherny this is achieved as part of communities of interest (2000: 216). For Leadbeater, it takes place through the creation of mutual societies (Leadbeater and Martin: 1998; Leadbeater and Christie: 1999). For Mulgan, people develop of networks of connexions across society (1997: 102-7). And, for Zuboff and Maxmin (2004), this coming together occurs through the development of networks of support and relationships of trust with a variety of professionals and advocates.

The development of connections between citizens causes another important division between the techno-liberal and the social entrepreneur visions of the individual in the era of the *new politics*. The corollary of the creation of these networks of support is the development of relationships of mutual responsibility. For Leadbeater (2004: 57-60) personalisation offers citizens the opportunity to take an active role on the development and delivery of the services they demand from government. As partners of

the professional providers they become involved in intimate consultation to unlock their needs, preferences and aspirations, which in turn results in the development of expanded options of choice in the way that services are directed to meet their needs. In exploring their choice of options, users should also develop their capability to make comparisons and to judge what is appropriate for them and develop a partnership with those who provide for their needs. At the same time the professionals become more than just providers. As partners they become advocates for the users and the result is that the final service is a co-production – shaped not just by the user or provider but in a way that both feel involved and responsible.

But this relationship of responsibility places the individual in a relationship of power which social entrepreneurs are willing to exploit for their vision of the social good. So, Leadbeater argues, a state that is committed to protecting private freedom must "continuously shape how people use their freedom in the name of the wider public good" (2004: 90). Personalisation comes at a price. It ties the individual into a concept of the public good that is, at best, only partly shaped by their desires. Personalisation places a considerable duty on the individual to internalise norms of responsible behaviour. At the same time, the networks of relationships involved in the creation of services become responsible for the policing and continued appropriate behaviour of everyone involved.

This is not the paternalism of the "nanny state." Social entrepreneurs are as dismissive of "top-down government that took personal choices out of [citizens] hands" (Cherny 2000: 214) as they are of the neo-liberal conception of individualism, "a base breed of selfish narcissism" (Cherny 2000: 216). For Cherny, government's role becomes that of a successful modern business, creating a sense of common purpose amongst its employees by reminding them of their common duties to each other and

their common goals. The Choice Revolution, Cherny argues, develops a brand of individualism in which "individuals take responsibility for both themselves and those around them" (2000: 216).

The social entrepreneur response to the crisis of democratic governance

The third crisis of democracy claims that democratic institutions have lost the trust of their citizens, having become dependent on business for their funding, for their access to media resources and because they are no longer able to keep their promises in relation to the traditional welfare state. As a result, democratic institutions are in decline, with politicians considered untrustworthy and parliament ineffective. Although the social entrepreneurs tend to be closely linked to institutions of government, there is no sense in which they opt for the status quo in their prescription for the future of governance in the era of the *new politics*.

For Mulgan (2004) the growing connectedness of the world is the most important social and economic fact of our times. It renders redundant many of the dominant political, social and economic ideas based on discrete sovereign identities of the nation, company or individual. Interconnectedness challenges all our assumptions about our relationships and responsibilities to others. We remain in a world where many risks and challenges can only be addressed collectively, so while individualised market solutions may be appropriate in many instances there remains a role for government.

Government actions must be co-ordinated at increasingly complex levels to match the challenges and expectations of citizens who demand solutions not organisational excuses: "Economics, environment and security do not exist in neatly

demarcated boxes. Nor do nations, companies or even families" (Mulgan 2004: 59) and governments must recognise these elements of connectedness.

The idea of personalisation plays an important part in the social entrepreneur conception of the future of democratic systems of government. As Cherny (2000) notes his "Choice Revolution" places change at the heart of the way politics is conducted. Those elites that currently run government on the basis that "they know best" will find themselves under increasing pressure to step aside – or be swept away. As a general rule, Cherny believes, governments should allow people to have personal control over the money being spent on their behalf: "putting decision about the direction of government programs into their hands instead of those of bureaucrats" (2000: 179). The role of government is not to solve problems for people but to equip them with the resources to solve their own problems. In issues like education, retirement provision, job training and health care the Choice Revolution gives citizens the capablity to make their own decisions. It thus achieves both a radical decentralization of power and fulfilling the public's desire for personal freedom. Technology is a key impetus behind these changes and the Internet era demands a new kind of politician and new forms of political leadership built on: "conversation, not monologues. It values mounds of detailed information that voters can scan to find the facts and the proposals that they care most deeply about. And its central premise is the idea of individual empowerment" (2000: 212).

The Internet is not just a glorified Town Hall meeting, which simply set the broad agenda for the elite establishment, says Cherny, but the opportunity for something far deeper: "democratic power, the power to rule, would be vested in the citizens' own hands" (2000: 213). The Choice Generation could fundamentally change

the nature of the relationship between citizens and democracy returning to the bottom-up aspirations of Jeffersonian forms of government.

Coyle (2001) also sees the opportunity for dramatic change – arguing that while party politicians cling to opinion polls and focus groups in an attempt to construct winning combinations of policies, the public understand that politics has moved on. The parties are confined to an outdated and inflexible framework. Politics as usual is "rotten and ripe for revolutionary change" (2001: 262) as participation in traditional channels of political activism steadily declines and "nine out of ten say they believe politicians lie and more than half of all young people say they have no interest in politics" (2001: 263). Individuation, says Coyle, is liberation from bureaucratic controls of the traditional welfare state and from traditional sources of authority and opens up the opportunity for greater democracy and wider choice. The combination of new technology, the choice of global markets and the increased expectations of citizens can deliver a fairer and more prosperous society. But, says Coyle, it will paradoxically be necessary to: "shed the traditional centre-left obsession with centralized government and paternalistic social engineering and embrace instead decentralization and market solutions" (2001: 273). By abandoning the traditional tools of social democracy social entrepreneurs can harness the markets power for "creative destruction" to overcome entrenched interests, elite power and out-of-date institutions. Power, Coyle says, is up for grabs and "nothing is inevitable about the outcome" (2001: 274).

There will be many instances in which the consumerist solution is the most effective but social entrepreneurs do recognise limits to their acceptability. This does not mean that some government departments are beyond the reach of reform. On the contrary, Leadbeater argues, the personalisation of services based on a partnership between citizens and professionals can go far beyond crude privatisation. It provides

the basis for a non-market, citizen-driven, bottom-up reform to government that combines the sensitivity to individual demands with the capability of fundamentally changing the way in which government works.

The aim should be to extend personalisation of services further and deeper into government: "not to sustain existing, often outmoded forms of provision [but] to disrupt these models and find new, more adaptive solutions" (Leadbeater 2004: 25). The result of such personalisation is that formerly government-run services become increasingly subject to direct control of those who deliver and those who depend upon them. Decisions about services will be taken on a deliberative basis, built around discussion about how to deliver services which meet the demands of users and the professional standards of providers. Government no longer the imposes of solutions from the centre: "In a liberal, open society, the government's chief role is to encourage the emergence of collective solutions from within a society that wants greater scope for self-organisation and bottom-up initiative" (Leadbeater 2004: 42). Across a range of activities government attempts to deliver collective solutions from on high are failing because decisions are too distant from those affected and policy tools are too cumbersome. In many instances Leadbeater's "personalisation through participation" would see control of services pass from bureaucrats and politicians to users and providers turning government into a bystander.

Personalisation does not, however, quite mark the end of the social democratic mission to deliver greater equality. For, Leadbeater notes, the capacity to make informed choices and to lobby on behalf of one's desires are not equally distributed within society. Indeed it is precisely those with the most resources that would get the most out of personalisation, so: "The least well educated, informed and ambitious will need additional help to exploit the opportunities personalisation makes available to

them" (Leadbeater 2004: 77). There remains a role for government in ensuring that as services become more personalised, public resources are increasingly skewed towards the least well off to equalise opportunities. A personalised public sector will need to be monitored to ensure that the most vulnerable and most at risk are actually receiving the bespoke, labour-intensive and precisely directed services they require.

Conclusion

The social entrepreneurs' responses to the crises of democracy posed in the *new politics* are distinct from those of the techno-liberals and the resisters. They do embrace the market as a source of social transformation, but they also outline aspects of society and social provision where the market is poorly suited and other forms of decision-making need to be employed. They see a continued role for forms of communal response to the economic, social and political challenges facing Western liberal democracies, but these are distinct both from the social democratic strategies of traditional parties of the centre-left and from the more radical solutions proposed by the resisters.

Globalisation represents a challenge not just to government and social institutions but to the institutions of capitalism and this opens up the opportunity for a dramatic realignment of economics with the potential for markets to be used in pursuit of a fairer and more just world. Individuals find themselves both as the possessors of new and powerful techniques for the pursuit of their desires but also enmeshed in a new set of responsibilities that direct them away from the crude consumerism of techno-liberals and towards mutual solutions driven by shared interests. Finally, government is in flux. We continue to require its capacity to share and combat collective risk but it is also subject to pressures to disintermediate its services and respond more effectively to the desires of individuals.

Attempts by techno-liberals to portray the social entrepreneurs' arguments as some sort of stalking-horse for the protection of a bureaucratic, big-government status quo (Angell 2000) or, for that matter, claims by resisters that the social entrepreneurs are simply providing "leftish" camouflage for an unreconstructed neo-liberal attack on the traditions of European social democracy (Frank 2001) seem unfounded. The attempt to accommodate both the dynamism of free markets and a form of the basic protection of citizens offered by European social democracies may risk falling between two stools, but there appears to be no evidence to suggest that the social entrepreneur's positions are not genuinely held.

Chapter 1.4
Resisters

Resisters are the most diverse group considered in this study. Callinicos (2003), in his survey of the anti-globalisation/anti-capitalist movement identifies six distinct threads in a list that he describes as far from exhaustive. Exhaustive or not, Callinicos's list gives some idea of the scope of this movement:

1. *Reactionary anti-capitalism*: Encompassing all those that reject capitalism in favour earlier, often idyllic, social forms. Amongst resisters it includes neo-Luddite[4] writers like Mander (1996, 2002) and Brook and Boal (1995), who seek less technologically dependent forms of social organisation;

2. *Bourgeois anti-capitalism*: Lasn (1999), Hertz (2001) and Quart (2003) base their strategy for humanising capitalism on the influence of "consumer

[4] The classification of these writers as Luddite is not intended to be derogatory. As Pynchon (1984) has noted the Luddites were no simple-minded or indiscriminate wreckers of machines but a complex and distinct response to specific social and industrial transformation. I have some sympathy with Boal's position that: "Those who criticise the deployment of certain modern technologies yet flinch at the sobriquet "Luddite" are complicit with the logic of progress, fearful about being branded technophobes, or finally, losers along with the peasantry and the doomed tribes. But it is a lie that direct action against the instruments of production has always been hopeless or that it somehow entails being 'anti-technological' as if that were a possible position *in general*" (Boal 1995: 11). The current negative connotation applied to Luddism is a symptom not of the failures of the Luddites but the success of their opponents in manipulating the story of their struggle.

power." They are not opposed to capitalism but concerned that it has become too powerful;

3. *Localist anti-capitalism*: The "localism" of Greens like Hines (2000) and developing world campaigners like Bello (2004), respond to global capitalism by demanding the return of decision-making to the lowest possible level of control and a reorienting of business and political activity from international to local relationships of trade;

4. *Reformist anti-capitalism*: George (2004) and Wainwright (2003) echo classical labour movement reformism in seeking to transform the institutions of national governments (and of international trade and governance) to deliver the demands, as they enumerate them, of ordinary citizens;

5. *Autonomist anti-capitalism*: Rejecting national and centralized power, autonomists such as Klein (2001), Monbiot (2000, 2003) and Hardt and Negri (2001) emphasize the distinctive methods of organisation of the anti-globalisaton movement – activist-led, consensus-seeking, decentralized groups – as a challenge to capitalist (and socialist) forms of organisation;

6. *Socialist anti-capitalism*: Authors such as Schiller (1999), Frank (2001) and Kingsnorth (2003) base their analysis on the continued centrality of the relationship between working and ruling classes and proposing some form of revolutionary path to a better society.

Callinicos then proceeds to identify challenges and tensions within the anti-capitalist movement[5] and concludes that, as a result of these tensions, only socialist anti-capitalism, can provide the necessary answers to the problems of creating a viable

[5] It is futile, Callincos (2003) says, to attempt to challenge global capitalism through engagement – for example through NGO negotiations for improved conditions and rules of trade – and thus rules out hope for reformist strategies. He argues that the fragmented and decentralised approaches of the autonomists cannot effectively respond to the centralised state's use of violence when threatened. Solutions based on localism, Callinicos says, fail to take into account the relations of power inherent in capitalism – including the importance of class relations – and thus cannot succeed. Callinicos also dismisses attempts to construct a non-ideological left arguing that political problems cannot simply be melted away by the logic of the struggle against them, they must be addressed by the "effective articulation of ideologies and the organized pursuit of political strategies" (2003: 103).

alternative to capitalism. For the purpose of this study, however, writers from all the threads are encompassed under the title of "resisters".

However resisters are not simply anyone who identifies themselves as part of an anti-globalism/anti-capitalism movement[6]. As noted in the introduction to this section (Chapter 1.1) there are a number of concerns that these groups share that identify them as of particular interest in this study. They share a common interest in constructing a response to the three crises of democracy – globalisation, changes in the roles of the individual within society and the degeneration of existing forms of democratic organisation. But resisters also give a central place to the importance of technological change in enabling the transformation of society. This is most obvious in the work of neo-Luddites, for whom the relationships of power created by new technology are absolutely central to their analysis. But is also the case that the other writers of the resister school give a central place to new communications technologies. Many resisters retain some degree of the reactionary anti-capitalists' suspicion of technology, as the socialist Schiller (1999) notes, they are seen as *permissive technologies* that have enabled centralized control over global corporate organisation: "networks permit transnational companies to elevate footloose profit hunger into what they dignify with the term *globalisation*" (Schiller 1999: 208). There is, however, a degree of ambiguity for some. Lasn (1999) promotes technology's capability to allow corporate messages to be subverted while recognising that it also permits their wider dissemination. For Klein, the Internet is both a means by which corporations extend their reach (2001: 43) and the provider of an organisational model to aspire to: "a blueprint for decentralized but cooperative decision making" (2001: 396).

[6] Callinicos, who has so usefully outlined the movement's shape, is himself excluded from the resister camp because he explicitly rejects the centrality of technology (Callinicos 2001: 33-43), arguing that the importance of information technologies has been overstated and casting their development as a typical expression of the drive of capitalism for higher profits.

The resister response to the crisis of globalisation

With multinational companies and global markets acting to strip competencies from regional and state governments and relocating them out of the reach of ordinary citizens.

Resisters regard the unfettered global market and its agents, the multinational corporations, as a threat that must be fought against. Their attitudes on how this should be achieved vary widely. Consumerists (Lasn 1999, Hertz 2001), who seek to use the exercise of consumer choices to limit the freedom of big business to do as they please. While revolutionaries (Sale 2000, Kingsnorth 2003) argue for the radical recreation of society along anarcho-syndicalist (Sale) or socialist (Kingsnorth) lines.

There are, however, significant unifying themes in the resister response. The first is that corporations have acted to bring the policy-making powers that once resided in the hands of citizens through their government, into their own hands or have shifted them to undemocratic, international bodies. So, for example, Hertz (2001) attacks the "silent takeover" of government by corporations. Klein (2001) argues that these corporations have increasingly infiltrated civil society to the extent that they exert control over the way many people think and how they frame their own desires. Monbiot (2000) claims that the "corporate contraptions" invented to serve citizens, are "seizing powers previously invested in government and using them to distort public life to suit their own ends" (2000: 4). The result has been what Monbiot calls "government in exile" – in which the power to make decisions has been removed from the citizens of every nation and transferred ever upwards. The most common resister response has been to demand the return of power to local and national levels. Indeed, where Callinicos argues that localisation is a distinct thread in the anti-globalisation school, it

might better be seen as a solution that has been adopted by almost every resister writer. Resisters want the return of economic power to the lowest possible level. Bello (2004) sets out some rules for the process he calls deglobalization. The new state should raise finances locally, not through foreign investment, redistribute land and income, maximise equity at the cost of growth, make strategic economic decisions through democratic not market mechanisms, exclude transnational corporations and encourage cooperatives, small private enterprises and state enterprises. It should enshrine "the principles of subsidiarity in economic life by encouraging the production of goods to take place at the community and national level if it can be done at a reasonable cost" (Bello 2004: 114).

Some resisters have expressed concern with the localist programme. In *The Captive State* (2000) Monbiot takes a broadly localist stance based on a reassertion of the nation state, however his position has shifted and in *The Age of Consent* (2003) he is critical of localist approaches, arguing for a form of grassroots internationalisation. Localisation, he argues, excludes the poor from the rich world's market, which by definition is where the money is, "there is a case for allowing *poor* nations to protect some parts of their economies, the localization proposals which permit rich nations to do the same are inherently regressive" (2003: 208).

Secondly, resisters see the market as threatening and oppressive, eradicating forms of social organisation that do not immediately acquiesce to its demands. Far from offering choice, they see it as limiting the freedom of people to preserve traditional ways of life, to pursue unconventional lifestyles or to develop alternative forms of social organisation. The unfettered global market imposes a restricted set of choices and punishes, through economic or social exclusion, those who attempt to find different forms of expression. So, for example, both Klein (2001) and Quart (2003) argue that

the power of corporations and their brands are shaping the expectations of young people and preventing the development of genuine youth culture. Perhaps more seriously, Hardt and Negri (2000) have argued that along with "the bomb" (military power) and "ether" (control of communication), "money" is the third means of global control. It leads to the "deconstruction of national markets, the dissolution of national and/or regional regimes of regulation, and the subordination of those markets to the needs of financial powers" (2000: 346). Rather than meeting local needs, according to the resisters, globalisation recreates local markets in its own image, reshaping demand or reorganising supply to match what best enables the pursuit of profit.

The final theme that unites these writers is the danger of the "race to the bottom" in the standards of workplace and social protections that the global market creates. At its most romantic, amongst some neo-Luddites, there is a bucolic longing for "past generations of millwrights, blacksmiths, and machinists" (Stoll 1995: 74) who did honest, physical labour. Other resisters share elements of this longing for "honest" jobs that no longer exist. Klein opens *No Logo* (2001) with a sort of paean for the lost Toronto garment industry – setting it against the shallowness of mall culture, yoga instructors and graphic designers that have replaced it in the buildings that once housed factories where people made coats. Sennett (1998) bemoans the way that the loss of real jobs in heavy manufacturing industries, and their replacement by service industry jobs and temporary employment agencies, has resulted in the "corrosion of character" of the American people. These lost jobs (often jobs for life, usually for men) were crucial in the formation of a certain (often idealized) type of "authentic" working class communities and their loss is also linked to the perceived decline in workers rights and social provision. So, for example, Klein makes a specific link between the loss of manufacturing jobs in America with the rise of foreign investment by US companies in

developing nations such as the Philippines (2001: 195-198). She argues that, in both nations, workers lose out. Schiller (1999) sees the development of a favoured class of managers and professionals becoming increasingly wealthy because of their control of key technologies in a global market. Their wealth, however, has been bought at the expense of a redistribution from the "ordinary" worker "accomplished via a relentless downward pressure on what some analysts call the social wage" (Shiller 1999: 207) – pay, direct and indirect benefits. This has been achieved directly through corporate *downsizing* and *re-engineering* and indirectly through the cutback of government social programs and the attack on union rights achieved under the banner of deregulation. Resisters dismiss claims that new technologies will empower workers, even in the developed nations. On the contrary, says Head (2005), in the "new ruthless economy" computers have deskilled the work of middle and lower level employees. This has allowed managers to circumscribe workers' freedom to act in the workplace through the introduction of "economic resource planning" so that every eventuality has a pre-planned response. Making this situation worse for employees is the increasingly demeaning application of surveillance technologies that monitor and measure every aspect of their behaviour, to creating an environment that echoes Foucault's panopticon.

The resister response to the crisis of individualism

Resisters regard the rise of the techno-liberal's "digital nation" or the "creative class" of the social entrepreneurs with extreme suspicion. For socialists like Kingsnorth (2003) this represents simply the continuation of the struggle of the many against the few. Globalisation is: "a system which grows by excluding increasing numbers of people from what they need, desire or value" (Kingsnorth 2003: 312) while, at the same time, others revel in unprecedented wealth. The lesson to be drawn from this, he argues, is

that power is never given, it is always taken and the process by which power must be taken back from these new elites is through revolution. Not, perhaps, the revolutions of recent history "power-grabs by red-starred guerrillas or 'People's Parties' equipped with Big Ideas for a New Utopia" (2003: 313) but through the sort of revolution being created by "bottom-up" anti-capitalism movements he identifies in places like Porto Alegre and Soweto. Kingsnorth argues that these struggles are not just about trade treaties or consumerism but about "a strikingly old-fashioned power struggle – a struggle for which globalisation is only the latest word" (2003: 318).

With this revelation, Kingsnorth argues, the many voices of the anti-globalisation/anti-capitalist movement can be more simply understood and those who argue for polite negotiations to make globalisation work better can be dismissed. The movement becomes simply a tool for contesting power – to wrestle if from "remote and illegitimate elites" (2003: 319).

However, there is another side to the changing relations of power in the resisters' responses to the *new politics*. The resisters cast themselves as part of that growth of people possessed of "fundamentalist identities" that cannot be contained by the traditional institutions of the liberal democratic state. Through their forms of organisation and the content of their campaigns against injustice and inequality, they are prototypes of a possible alternative social order.

Wainwright (2003), for example, seeks to find examples of local organisation, to demonstrate how local, grassroots initiatives can tackle entrenched social and economic problems. Danaher and Burbach (2000), Shalit (2002), Shipman (2002) and Mander et al (2002) are amongst the many writers motivated by the street campaigns and social forums that followed the protest against the WTO at Seattle in November 1999 and who have made claims for the potential of such movements to transform

social relations. Sometimes these claims have been extravagant. As Klein notes it can be difficult drawing up grand plans for a movement that cannot always agree on its next move and is in danger of becoming a gang "of meeting stalkers, following trade bureaucrats as if they were the Grateful Dead" (2002: 24). However, for the great majority of resisters this movement of activists pursuing a diversity of goals, drawn together only loosely and bound not at all to collective responsibility or hierarchical organisation represents a radical and fundamentally new method of social organisation.

There is one apparent contradiction in the resister analysis, which is especially evident in the consumerist writing of Hertz and Quart and in Klein's discussion about the impact of corporation in youth culture. Resisters place great emphasis on the importance of their commitment to grassroots democracy as an antidote to the failure of existing demcocratic institutions. So Klein (2002) discusses Porto Alegre, the Brazilian province home of the radical Workers Party and oft-cited (see also Wainwright 2003, Kingsnorth 2003, Bello 2002, Callinicos 2003 and others) example of radical democratic experimentation. She concludes, on the basis of this evidence, that the most convincing response "to the international failure of representative democracy seemed to be this radical form of local participatory democracy, in cities and towns where the abstractions of global economics become day-to-day issues of homelessness, water contamination, exploding prisons and cash-starved schools" (Klein 2002: 202). Hertz, meanwhile, argues that the anti-globalisation protests are creating a movement that gives a voice to those who feel they have been deserted by representative government and who seek to make democracy more direct through protest, questioning, criticising and publicising their grievances. With democratic governments and corporations both reliant on mass support to survive, a combination of consumer activism and political

protest "gives enormous power to the people to impose their own terms of cooperation" (Hertz 2001: 205).

The resisters' position seems straightforward enough – a case of power to the people. And yet Klein, Hertz and others clearly don't mean power to everyone. Klein may be excited at the prospect of young radicals campaigning against capitalism around the world, but she is dismissive of the "army of teen clones marching – in 'uniform,' as the marketers say – into the global mall" (2000: 129). Quart's (2003) teenagers are all either part of the brave minority fighting off the corporate behemoths to "unbrand" themselves, or they are victims told what to think and what to buy and presented as objects of pity. Hertz, at least, recognises that her protest movement is far removed from any familiar notion of participatory democracy or mass involvement: "For those who are not prepared to stand in the clouds of tear gas outside another intergovernmental conference, or to live in tunnels beneath proposed road development sites, the scope for involvement is limited" (Hertz 2001: 204). And yet she too ends up assuming that, given the right information, presented with the opportunities to make their voices heard, the majority of people will support the aims of the activists on the street.

Resisters proceed as if the desires and needs of the majority are self-evidently represented by the minority of those who take on the role of activist and take part in anti-globalisation/anti-capitalism direct action protests. The appropriation of the street protesting tactics of the anti-globalisation movement by anti-fuel tax protesters or pro-fox hunting demonstrators in the UK over recent years has shown that radical movements are not alone in being able to mobilise large numbers of activists. Judgements of relative legitimacy cannot, surely, be reduced to head counts of those on the street. That would only favour those with the resources to bus the greatest number

of people to a particular site. But, given the resisters basic assumption that representative government is corrupt, how else are we to judge whether one group of activists or another truly has the best claim to direct public policy?

The resister response to the crisis of democratic governance

The previous section touched on the resister attitude to democracy. The third crisis of democracy is the breakdown of trust between citizens and the institutions of the liberal democratic state, leading to the abandonment of democracy by the citizenry on whom its legitimacy is built.

For resisters, such claims are self-evident. Even those writers like, Wainwright and Hines, who wish to retain some aspect of the nation state's apparatus are committed to the radical redrawing of the democratic relationship so that it includes a far greater degree of direct and deliberative forms of decision making. Wainwright (2003) argues for the retention of representative, parliamentary structures but she also demands that these be augmented by the direct participation of citizens in the decision-making process – setting priorities, running public facilities and monitoring the workings of the executive and state apparatus. Hines (2000), as an economist, approaches the localization of democracy from the viewpoint of enabling citizens to take an active part in the economy and in economic decision making. He proposes a basic citizens' income (2000: 122-123) that would ensure that everyone had the economic security to allow them to play a part in an "active" democracy.

Other resisters go considerably further, arguing not for processes to complement representative democracy but for total reform to replace the institutions that, in their opinion, have become corrupted by the financial power of big business. Monbiot (2003) argues for an entirely new layer of government, a world parliament, that would act as a

counterbalance to national institutions, representing the real wishes of the people through 600 constituencies each with ten million electors. Kingsnorth (2003) demands that we must tear down the "institutions, laws, ideas and systems which come between us and what we need and desire" (2003: 321) before we can begin the process of building a new world based on new values. His ambitious programme begins with the abolition of the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the end of the system of world trade and finance, the "reprogramming" of corporations to serve the common interest and a "global conversation" (2003: 325) about what we want from democracy. For Kingsnorth, meaningful democracy would mean a redistribution of power to the level of communities and, he adds, people are no longer willing to wait for their elected representatives to act before they start taking the things they want and need.

Mander et al (2002) call for a shift from government that serves corporations to one that serves people and communities. They want a *new democracy* that goes beyond elections to develop a governance system that holds decision-makers to account for the harm their acts bring to others and limiting the rights of "absentee owners", criteria designed to undermine the position of the corporation. Accountability becomes the central feature of this *new democracy*. Since decisions are made by those who will bear the consequences greater emphasis will be placed on the preservation of the local environment and the long-term stability of communities – because local communities will care more than distant bureaucrats or businessmen. Accountability is accompanied by the principles of subsidiarity, sustainability, diversity, economic security and equity. The most radical changes are proposed by neo-Luddites who, like Sale (2000), Mills (1997) and Starr (2000), seek to break up society into small-scale, self-governing, self-sustaining communities capable of operating face-to-face participative democracy.

Conclusion

In their response to the crises of democracy resisters are fundamentally sceptical about globalisation, concerned to address the concentration of power in multinational corporations and unaccountable international organisations. They regard markets as limiting freedom and, therefore, seek to limit the market by placing democratically set preferences above economic concerns. Finally, they seek to resist the race to the bottom in social welfare and workplace conditions.

In relation to the crisis of "fundamentalist identities" they regard the rise of new elites as a threat to the interests of the mass of common people. They also see the anti-capitalist movement as a model for empowering individuals, with grassroots organisation allowing people to achieve their full potential as citizens. The resisters offer little defence of democratic institutions arguing instead for, at the very least, their reinforcement by more legitimate forms of participative, direct democracy and, in some instances, arguing for the total reshaping of the state around a new, localized, self-sufficient model.

Chapter 1.5
Conclusion

Over the previous three chapters we have seen how the writers of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools offer what appear to be quite distinct analyses of the challenges facing society stemming from the threat of the crises of democracy. In each case the schools of writers begin from the assumption that the threat is real and in each case develop a quite distinct vision of the policies necessary to prepare ourselves, our economies, our communities and our political institutions from the inevitable changes that will accompany the era of the *new politics*.

For the techno-liberal writers the coming together of global markets and new communication technologies represents an opportunity for individuals to set themselves free from the restrictions of outmoded forms of social control and inefficient governments. Faced with the increased choice offered by global markets and empowered by new communication technologies people will increasingly come to make demands for individualised services that cannot be met by bureaucratic institutions. At the same time, the nature of globalised markets – the increasing power

of corporations, the impossibility of imposing local control over the flows of information, investment, and the demands of increasingly strident consumers combine to undermine the ability of national governments to preserve their monopoly of control within their own geographical boundaries. The result is the steady decline of government and the nation-state as it has been understood and the growing importance of loose, often ephemeral, coalitions of individuals coming together to pursue specific goals and then scattering, reforming and reshaping as their aims and priorities shift. In the techno-liberal vision the ideal of citizens bound together by rights and responsibilities to construct a "common good" is replaced by the actions of consumers seeking to maximise their own personal gain and cooperating with others only when they benefit.

For social entrepreneurs, global markets and the increasingly individualistic demands of citizens also represent a significant challenge for social, economic and political institutions in the era of the *new politics*. However, unlike the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs can envisage limits to the extent that market forces should be allowed to direct public policy and whole areas from which the market should be excluded. This emphatically does not mean that the social entrepreneurs are proposing "business as usual" for government, on the contrary they argue that to meet the demands of citizens for increasing individuation of services, large areas of government are going to have to surrender the power. Public policy will be directed by mutual or personalised forms of delivery where experts and fully informed citizens design and deliver public goods while government sits on the sidelines.

For resisters the development of global markets represents a threat to communities and freedoms that must be resisted. The process of constructing such an opposition – bringing together diverse organisations and attempting to create consensus

amongst only loosely interconnected groups – has itself produced a model of organisation. It provides both a possible alternative to the damaging structures of global capitalism and represents a voice for the possessors of fundamentalist identities who were denied a say in their own affairs by corrupt governments and the exploitation of capitalism. For most resisters the development of a sustainable future depends to some degree on a return to localism – economically and politically – and the reconnection of the power to make decisions with the people most likely to be affected by those choices.

It appears, then, that the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters offer society a very wide variety of responses to the *new politics* and the crises of democracy. Techno-liberals warmly welcome free, liberalised global markets, social entrepreneurs like the idea, but want to protect the vulnerable from their worst excesses while resisters reject global capitalism as exploitative and dangerous to the planet's long-term well-being.

Techno-liberals are excited by the new individualism and see it combined with free markets as a means of extending to maximum possible degree the freedom of the consumer. Social entrepreneurs want to encourage individualism but want to wrap it up in a layer of responsibilities to others, so that the freedom of choice is tempered by a recognition that there is more at stake than personal gratification. Resisters seek to tie the individual into community efforts, responsibility to the locality means that individual choices should be bounded by understandings of environmental and social sustainability.

Finally, techno-liberals regard the decline of liberal democratic institutions as a cause for celebration, believing that they have acted as a break on market innovation and personal freedom. For social entrepreneurs, democracy remains important but

increasingly it will be enacted directly, with citizens making more decisions for themselves. Ultimately, resisters also welcome the decline of liberal democratic institutions and seek to radicalise democracy through local decision-making and more direct involvement of citizens in the process of setting policy.

However, despite this apparent diversity of response, it is my contention that there exists a set of shared assumptions underlying the writing of the authors of the three schools that reveals important shortcomings in their work. These issues will be explored more fully in the Section Two, but it is worth noting here that in their conceptions of globalisation each school shares the assumption that the progress of multinational corporations and liberalized markets are a uniquely modern occurrence, that they are irresistible and that they encourage homogeneity of culture and political organisation. When they consider the role of the individual, the three schools make assumptions about the way in which power works and is used in society – casting it as a somewhat crude, one-dimensional resource – that makes resistance and collective action seem impossible. Finally, their models of the future of democracy all make assumptions about the superiority of direct and deliberative forms of decision making that assumes they deliver more rational, reasonable and equitable outcomes.

Section 2
Shared assumptions.

Chapter 2.1
Introduction

As Section One demonstrated, the *new politics* assumes that the nation state is being undermined from both inside and outside and is unable to resist the pressures it faces. As Castells (2000a) has summarised them, the three crises facing modern democracies are: first, the growth of a global economy restricting the ability of the state to respond to the demands of its citizens; second, an increasing fragmentation of society through the development of multiple fundamentalist identities; and, finally, the decline of legitimacy in traditional democratic institutions.

As the previous section demonstrates, the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools present apparently diverse prescriptions for action to ensure the appropriate response in the era of the *new politics*. These responses encompass the entire spectrum from outright rejection of the "modern" that characterises some resister writing to the futurist-inspired espousal of a new world order that is the hallmark of some techno-liberal writing. On the surface, at least, it might appear that these responses to the *new politics* share nothing in common except their concern with the

Castells' crises. However, this section will examine some of the significant similarities in the approach of the three schools and explore whether these shared assumptions can be sustained under closer scrutiny.

This examination will look at some of the themes in the work of the three schools in the context of wider debates about the nature of the issues at hand. In particular it will explore the way in which *new politics* constructs ideas of power, democracy and globalisation.

Chapter 2.2 will address the idea of globalisation, arguing that the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister responses to the *new politics* share three common assumptions about globalisation. First, they assume that globalisation is a uniquely modern creation of new technology and trans-national corporations. Second, they assume that it is irresistible, that nations, corporations and individuals are incapable of resisting. And, finally, they regard globalisation as imposing a homogenized mono-culture across on everything that comes within its purvey. While not wishing to deny the strength and potential influence of increasing international trade and the growing importance of international bodies in national politics, Chapter 2.2 takes issue with all three of these assumptions.

Chapter 2.3 explores the way the three schools characterise power and its use in the modern world. The techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters take a "one-dimensional" view of power, regarding it somewhat simplistically as a tool that can be used against others without consequence or reciprocation. This "realist" conception of power is, it is argued, inadequate and, by contrasting it with the idea of power and its use put forward by Foucault, this chapter seeks to demonstrate how a more nuanced conception of power better describes the way people live. The three schools assume that governments and individuals who find themselves in opposition to the global

economy cannot resist because they do not have sufficient power. By contrast, a Foucauldian conception of power presupposes resistance in every exercise of power.

Chapter 2.4 studies the characterisation of the future of democratic institutions by the three schools. In particular, it examines the assumptions they make in favouring direct and deliberative forms of democracy to replace existing models of government. In proposing radical change to the present democratic system the three schools share the assumptions that better communications between citizens will establish a more legitimate and rational form of democratic decision-making, encourage citizens to be more reasonable in their dealings with others, and deliver more equitable outcomes. This chapter will question whether rationality is a sensible goal for a democratic body, whether greater communication will encourage citizens to be more reasonable, and whether a democratic institution based on deliberative models can really hope to overcome inequality.

The theme that runs through all three of the following chapter is that the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters present a future of limited choices and restricted possibilities – at least in part because they hope that this will encourage readers to accept their prescriptions for a better society as the inevitable response to irresistible change. The aim of this section is to suggest that there remains the possibility of alternative conceptions of the key issues of globalisation, individual power and democracy that may open up alternative policy options.

Chapter 2.2
Globalisation

Introduction

The techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters predict the approach of an era of *new politics* that demands fundamental change throughout our social and political structures. Identifying these three schools as techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters, section one sought to set out how these groups presented themselves as the only valid set of responses to the immediate and implacable threats to our existing roles as individuals in society, the persistence of communities and the continued relevance of democratic and social institutions. These schools present themselves as radically opposed to each other, each insisting that they possess the only viable means to ensure a secure and more-or-less prosperous existence under the strictures of the *new politics*.

However, it is the purpose of this section to demonstrate that, far from representing very different analyses of the "crises" facing contemporary societies, these three schools share, at their heart, a number of common assumptions. These shared assumptions – on the one-dimensional nature of power, the superiority of direct forms

of democratic decision-making, and the overwhelming reach of globalisation – act in the case of all three schools to limit range of apparently valid responses to the new politics. It is the contention of this thesis that there are significant weaknesses in these shared assumptions that, when taken together, suggest that a much wider range of responses are available to individuals and societies than the three schools permit.

Identifying his first crisis of democracy Castells (2000a: 342) notes that the impact of globalisation is "particularly critical" for the continued legitimacy of democratic governance. Specifically Castells believes that it will be the inability of nation states to keep up their end of the post-war social contract – their failure, in the face of global competition, to maintain effective welfare states and high levels of social provision – that will lead to a failure of the legitimacy of democratic institutions amongst citizens. This failure of legitimacy is caused by the: "integration of production and consumption in a globally interdependent system and the related processes of capitalist restructuring" (Castells 2000a: 342).

In many ways the different positions of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools of thought are primarily defined in relation to their attitude towards the changes that Castells predicts will be caused by globalisation. Those attitudes were explored at length in Section One so are outlined only briefly here.

The techno-liberals welcome and encourage the adoption of a model of globalisation based on the neo-liberal 'Washington' consensus. Most are keen to see an end to the state's "interference" in markets and argue that such a change, far from threatening political legitimacy, may allow, through the radical transformation of the state, the creation of new, dynamic and popular democratic institutions. Some techno-liberals (Dyson 1998; Barlow 1996; Gilder 2000) have the radical goal of sweeping away old forms of government and replacing it with a boundary-free consumerist

democracy – with 'policy decisions' left to the action of market forces. Even amongst those techno-liberals who see a continued role for government (Katz 1997; Kelly 1999; Ohmae 1995, 2000, 2002), it is in a reduced role – primarily as the provider of the legal basis for market activity and the educator of workers for the needs of business.

Social entrepreneurs also broadly endorse a market-led globalisation, though they wish to soften the worst of its impact on the losers in such a society, However, far from supporting the post-war/post-Keynesian status quo, social entrepreneurs such as Leadbeater (1999, 2002) and Coyle (1999) regard traditional government institutions as incapable of coping in the globalized world and proposed community-based responses through mutual or co-operative style provision. Others, such as Mulgan (1997, 2004), Beck (2000) and Sassen (1998) foresee more responsive governance organised at the level of regions and in "cosmopolitan" cities constructed around forms of network organisation.

Finally resisters regard the current form of globalizaton, based on unrestricted trade and multinational companies, as an immediate threat to personal liberty, community institutions, economic freedom and the environment. From the neo-luddite localism of writers like Mander (1996) and Sale (1995, 1996, 2000) through to the more reformist critiques of consumerism by Lasn (1999) and Hertz (2001, 2002) – via more traditional Marxist responses of Frank (2000) and Kingsnorth (2003) – the resister response is to reject what they see as the business-led, profit-driven forces of globalisation. Some resisters would pursue their goals through protectionism and a turn towards "localism" in economic organisation (Hines, 2000). Others, like Bello (1990, 2000, 2004) and Monbiot's more recent work (2003), argue for a democratisation of globalisation to achieve radical transformation of national and international forms of governance.

Beneath the veneer of radical difference between the work of the three schools, I want to argue that their analysis of globalisation is predicated upon three assumptions:

1. That globalisation is a novel phenomenon brought about by a unique combination of technological advance and the growing power of multinational corporations and thus outside historical traditions of social struggle and compromise;

2. That existing political and social institutions find globalisation irresistible. The coalescence of economic and political power behind globalisation means that only radical reformation of governments and communities will suffice to allow us to overcome the challenges of globalisation;

3. That the effect of globalisation is the homogenisation of cultural expression, consumer choice and political structure. Globalisation acts to create a single pot of choices from which we are all forced to choose.

This chapter sets out how these assumptions manifest themselves in the writings of the three schools and how they limit the scope of potential policy responses to the impact of globalisation as part of the *new political* agenda. It places them in the context of the wider debate on globalisation and explores the viability of alternative characterizations of economic change in the era of the new politics.

Shared themes in the new politics of globalisation

As Section One sought to demonstrate, the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools differ markedly in their attitudes towards the balance of benefits and threats presented by globalisation. This section sets out the shared assumptions that, it is argued, underlie the three schools' different stances, and explores how, taken together, these assumptions act to limit the range of apparently valid policy options available to respond to the *new politics*.

This Chapter highlights three particular shared assumptions:

- That globalisation is a novel phenomenon;
- That globalisation cannot be resisted by currently existing social and political institutions; and
- That globalisation has an homogenising effect in the economic, cultural and political spheres of society.

Taken together, these assumptions play a crucial role in establishing, for the three schools, the supposedly overwhelming nature of global markets. This is particularly important because each of the three schools argue that the coming crisis of the *new politics* will require immediate and dramatic action of a kind that is socially transformative and irreversible. A novel, irresistible and homogenizing globalisation would create a threat that cannot be bargained with by traditional institutions of liberal democracy.

This chapter will first explore the claims made by the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers for globalisation as a novel phenomenon.

Globalisation is new

For techno-liberal writers the idea that we have entered a new economic and political era is self-evident. For the *Wired* writers we are living in a *new economy* that, as Kelly (1998) notes, requires an entirely new set of rules for consumers, sellers and governors. Ohmae (2002) imagines a *borderless world,* in which businesses and governments must adapt to the radically new rules of international relations and trade.

Kelly's new economy is being built upon a foundation created by shrinking computers and expanding communications spreading rapidly across all aspects of our society. This new economy has, he argues, three distinguishing features: it is global; it favours intangible things (ideas and information); and it enmeshes those involved in its interactions in intensely interlinked networks. Taken together, says Kelly, this produces "a new type of marketplace and society, one that is rooted in ubiquitous electronic networks" (Kelly 1998: 2).

Networks, spread wide across the planet and deep into our personal relationships, represent, for Kelly, the central metaphor by which this new economy should be understood. These networks enable a vast extension of the power of markets, instantaneously linked across boundaries and borders that completely overwhelm existing political and economic institutions. Interrelationships clustered around goods and services create their own regulations through agreements on the quality and standards of the goods and the expectations of consumers. Such technical standards and agreements will take on the importance of laws and Kelly argues that "Netizens", in setting their own rules, are creating "a meta-country" that contrasts with the nation state in that "no geographical or temporal boundaries exist" and "multiple overlapping networks exist, with multiple overlapping allegiances" (Kelly 1998: 72).

For Kelly, national economies of the past, in which value was largely derived from local scarcity of goods, will be replaced in the new global economy by an era of

plenitude in which value will be derived from the ability to initiate innovation and place oneself at the centre of commercial networks by forming relationships of mutual trust.

Ohmae's vision of a *borderless world* (2002) assumes that within the "interlinked economies" (Europe, North America, Japan and some other nations such as South Korea) the rules of government and business have been entirely changed. The previous era, in which national governments estimated their national wealth in terms of natural resources has been replaced by an era when wealth depends on international trade and open markets.

To take one example, Ohmae explores the differences between Singapore and Japan in relation to agriculture and food. Singapore, he notes, has no natural resources and no land on which to carry out agriculture yet its people pay less for their food than do the Japanese. The reason is that, while Singapore has an open market for food imports, Japan persists in protecting its agricultural industries – particularly rice and beef – in the belief that these are strategically important natural resources which should be preserved to cope with "what-if" scenarios. As a result the Japanese consumer loses out by paying more, scarce flat land suitable for development or leisure use is wasted on inefficient industries and, as access to global sources of information grows, government is revealed to be pursuing unrealistic objectives and therefore undermined. Protectionist policies, Ohmae insists, belong in the nineteenth century rather than this new, borderless, era.

In the past, a nation may have regarded its natural resources as a bank vault that could be dipped into when necessary. From this viewpoint the encroachment of external forces, foreign companies, could be seen as a threat that would siphon riches from the national pot to competitor nations. This view makes no sense in the borderless world, Ohmae argues, as today's global corporations are "nationlityless". Global corporations

serve their consumers not governments. They do not exploit a region and drain away profits, they invest, train, pay taxes, build up infrastructure and provide good value to customers in the countries where they do business. This borderless, market is so powerful that it has "swallowed most consumers and corporations" and is making bureaucracy, politics and the military "declining industries" (Ohmae 2003: xi).

Social entrepreneurs are equally convinced by the novelty of the globalized economy than techno-liberal writers. What Leadbeater (1999) calls the "knowledge economy" is the means of spreading new technology, disseminating new knowledge, driving up living standards and economic growth. It reaches deep into a person's personal life, enlisting them as consumers and workers. Without the networks of social relationships and social capital at the heart of the new global economy individuals and communities cannot harness capitalism's enormous creative power.

There are obvious similarities between Leadbeater's conception of the central role played by networks of relations in the new economy and Kelly's vision of netizens creating their own world free from the restrictions imposed by physical boundaries. There are also important differences, as set out in Section One, Leadbeater, while promoting markets as a driving force of innovation, recognises their limits and argues that a defining feature of the knowledge economy will be that it reveals those limits more starkly. In the knowledge economy: "We are likely to see a proliferation of new measures of value of human, environmental and social capital which challenge traditional financial and market measures" (Leadbeater 1999: 226).

For Giddens (Giddens and Hutton 2000) the very widespread nature of the debate on globalisation – the fact that discussion of the term itself has spread across the world, across academic boundaries and into widespread use both by those who praise it and those who wish to resist it – is itself evidence of something very new going on.

Globalisation is not just a single phenomenon, he argues, but a set of overlapping trends which he identifies (Giddens and Hutton 2000: 2) as:

i. The development of a worldwide communications network.

ii. The arrival of the "weightless" knowledge economy.

iii. The continued influence of the decline of the Soviet Union and the development of the post-Cold War era.

iv. Transformations on the level of everyday life – in particular the growing equality between men and women and its impact on family life.

Taken together these changes mark a significant break with the past – they mark both a shift in the "macro" political and economic environment in which nations and communities must act but also a challenge to individuals in the "micro" levels of their own lives. Markets are undeniably powerful and, Giddens believes, they are primarily a force for good but he concedes that this new global economy places increased expectations upon the individual. As globalisation increasingly disrupts traditional institutions and ways of living, it will increasingly be a struggle simply to sustain a consistent identity and an overall work career. In responding to those increased pressures social entrepreneur writers such as Mulgan (1997, 2004) and Leadbeater (1999, 2002) have proposed a variety of community responses based on networks of common interest and mutualism respectively.

There are those within the resister school who seek to emphasise the continuity of modern globalisation with the past. Kingsnorth (2003), for example, pursues a Marxist analysis that stresses the unbroken thread between modern "globalized" capitalism and that which has gone before. However, most resisters do believe that the

phenomenon of globalisation represents something significantly new, with its own distinct threats to individuals, communities and the environment.

Hertz (2001) is typical, seeing the rise of the global economy and the growing power of its chief instrument – multinational corporations – as marking a decisive break with the past in the political arena. Globalisation has seen business extend itself into the public realm: "The political state has become the corporate state" (Hertz 2001: 11). Governments have been rendered increasingly powerless, unable even to acknowledge the problem without shattering the illusion that there remains a contract between the state and the citizens that government can fulfil.

For Gray (1998, 1999) the influence of the global economy is, if anything, even more dangerous. A truly global economy is being created, he argues, by the worldwide spread of new technologies, imitated, absorbed and adapted by every economy. No country can insulate itself from this wave of creative destruction. The result is not a universal free market economy but an anarchy of sovereign states, rival capitalisms and stateless zones.

Gray absolutely rejects claims that modern globalisation is simply an extension of previous trends. Describing globalisation as completely unprecedented in terms of "the speed, size and interconnections of the movements of goods and information across the globe" (Gray 1999: 61) he concludes that it is a fundamental mistake to believe that the modern era is simply a return to trends evident in the *bell époque* before World War One. He is similarly dismissive of those who argue that the solutions of European social democracy can be applied to the conditions of the modern globalized market – such solutions "belong in the past" and fail to recognise the true scale of changes in the world economy. Power is shifting. The West no longer possesses the

hegemonic power to direct the world economy in the way it did before World War One – and instead we will witness the increasing power of Eastern capitalism.

The result of radical globalisation is, according to Gray (1998, 1999), a much less governable world in which the hopes of both the social entrepreneurs for some form of "revamped social democracy" or "continental Keynesianism" (1999: 67) is unworkable. At the same time, the techno-liberals' dream of an era of plenty will also be dashed. Instead Gray predicts: "a tragic epoch, in which anarchic market forces and shrinking natural resources drag sovereign states into ever more dangerous rivalries" (1998: 34).

Globalisation is irresistible

For the techno-liberal writers, the notion that the existing social, political and economic institutions of the modern state are incapable of resisting the impact of the new globalized economy is axiomatic.

For Gilder (2000) every institution will have to adapt to the *telecosm* – the coming era of infinite bandwidth in which physical scarcities have largely been banished. Indeed practically the only limit in Gilder's *telecosm* is the attention span of the citizen or consumer. Inefficient businesses, maladapted schools, bureaucratic government or, worst of all in Gilder's view, the "egregious, obsolete and atavistic" technology of television – must change or die in the era of the *new politics*. Citizens, students and customers will no longer be content to allow their most precious resource (their own time) to be squandered by organisations incapable of adapting to the demands of the *telecosm.*

In the *telecosm* unlimited access to information allows the individual citizen or consumer to "survey the entire global market and make optimal purchases" (Gilder

2000: 249) – a power which, according to Gilder, will make us all as powerful as a factory tycoon or broadcast magnate. Only those institutions which adapt, that save their customers time, will survive in the new era for no one will choose to waste time on inefficient or unresponsive services.

For Ohmae (1995, 2001, 2002, 2005) the empowerment of the individual and the perfecting of the market allowed by a combination of new technology and globalized markets also plays a central role in making globalisation irresistible. The boundaries of the interests of citizens and consumers no longer necessarily coincide with the fixed geographical boundaries of the nation state. "The global economy follows its own logic and develops its own webs of interest" (Ohmae 2002: 183) and, as a result, the institutions constructed around the nation state have lost much of their meaning. Increasingly the impact of globalisation is contributing to the creation of what Ohmae calls an "invisible continent" (2001) that has its own rules and its own risks for consumers empowered by information technology. The effects of technology and global markets are both irreversible and irresistible, changing the structure of business processes and on the values, judgments, and preferences of citizens and consumers in all parts of the world. So powerful are these effects that, "there can be no turning back. Against this kind of current, no traditional strategy, no familiar line of policy, and no entrenched form of organization can stand untouched or unchanged." (Ohmae 1995: vii)

Social entrepreneurs are equally convinced of the inevitability of globalisation's dominance over existing national institutions. For Mulgan (1997) few of the institutions in our modern world act with full competence. They are neither fully aware of the changes taking place around them nor able to act effectively in response to the new global economy. Institutions: "look out on to a world that is hard to comprehend and

that appears to be changing at a bewildering speed" (Mulgan 1997: 10). Nor is it just institutions that are finding it difficult to cope, individuals, far from being the masters of the market, are just as prone to being overwhelmed by the pace and scope of change. Taken together the personal and institutional uncertainty contribute to a feeling that we are "in over our heads", Mulgan says, and unable to match our capabilities to the tasks that face us. "The personal and institutional dimensions of the inadequacy of the present social order reinforce each other" (Mulgan 1997: 10). The result is that many people are simply abandoning public institutions, leaving both the individuals and the institutions increasingly isolated and vulnerable.

Leadbeater (2002) notes that, though multinational and global organisations are important players in the global economy, globalisation "is not a process they can control in detail, as if they were a kind of executive committee for global capitalism" (2002: 293). Globalisation, for Leadbeater, is an "evolutionary process" in which there are many possible niches, many players and strategies. In such circumstances the traditional role of social and political institutions, of directing development and guaranteeing protection against negative outcomes, becomes impossible since no group can foresee where globalisation might lead.

While both techno-liberals and social entrepreneurs see the impact of globalisation as decentralising the power of existing social, political and business institutions, resisters believe that power is being transferred to corporations and multinational enterprises. Klein is typical of this attitude, arguing that trade and investment are being used to erode the very principles of self-government. The result is a constant upward flow of political power away from individual citizens. "Real power has moved from local to state, from state to national, from national to international, until finally representative democracy means voting for politicians every few years who

use that mandate to transfer national powers to the WTO and the IMF" (Klein 2002: 200). Corporations have taken the role of government and their only constituency is their shareholders. In the global economy citizens have no means of making the most powerful bodies accountable for their actions.

Monbiot (2000) echoes Klein's concern that globalized business is overwhelming our social institutions. Big business seeks to extract political decision-making from the national dimension and make decisions in the international sphere. Seizing powers previously invested in governments they use them to "distort public life to suit their own ends" (Monbiot 2000: 4). The result is that citizens cannot intervene in the decisions taken about their world and political and social institutions are rendered redundant.

Globalisation is homogenizing

For Ohmae (1995) globalisation is creating a "new melting pot" – the sharing of goods and ideas has gone on since ancient times but the speed and depth with which these occur in the modern world means that the barriers to such exposure have either disappeared or been proven to be endlessly porous. Though there will always be local elements to culture, the mass sharing of information and goods across borders and geographies cannot help but lead to convergence of tastes and preferences. The growing awareness of "global brands of blue jeans, colas and stylish athletic shoes" has contributed to a "California-ization" (Ohmae 1995: 29) of expectations amongst consumers which, in turn, has added to the pressures to widen deepen globalisation.

Ohmae argues that as developing nations become wealthier there will be an "upward racheting" of expectation as people become more alike in what they see, hear, buy and how they spend their time. These expectations will become more uniform until

they cross a threshold "beyond which changes in degree of shared lifestyle become changes in kind of attitude and orientation" (Ohmae 1995: 30). Add to this fact the growing reach of the media and the radical change implied by new media technologies, and, Ohmae claims, you have a definite disruption of continuity in the traditions that define individual nations.

This generational division is picked up by other techno-liberal writers. Katz (1997) also sees the new online, global community as being the creation of a younger generation. This new Digital Nation will be young, "libertarian, educated, materialistic, worldly, tolerant, rational, technologically equipped, and blissfully disconnected from political organizations" (Katz 1997: 60). This empowered elite will have more in common with each other, regardless of their geographical location, they have with their parents and their power is growing rapidly.

For social entrepreneurs like Leadbeater (1999), the creation of an elite sharing common interests that are distinct from the community around them is also a likely outcome of the new global economic system and communication technologies. Leadbeater's "knowledge workers" will be "mobile, skilled, affluent, independent, hard-working, ambitious, environmentally conscious, people who can trade on their skill, expertise and intellectual capitalism" (Leadbeater 1999: 228). The empowerment of this elite will not be without its political, social and economic consequences, Leadbeater envisages that such a shift will create a modern form of class conflict as the mobile knowledge workers come to identify themselves increasingly as an international class, those left behind, the immobile, may move toward increasingly nationalistic responses.

Ultimately, however, Leadbeater does see a form of cultural homogenisation spreading through the whole of society, though he prefers to see it as a two way process. Globalisation promotes global brands, products and standards, he concedes,

but though this global culture is accessible it is also shallow: easily picked up but also easily set aside. It spreads easily precisely because it lacks the depth and influence of national cultures.

This cultural globalisation is, in any event, a two-way street and globalisation also allows cultures to mix, forming new dialects and hybrids, perhaps increasing diversity not reducing it. We may increasingly see ourselves, and our communities, in global terms as our access to global communications and the globalized market allows us to experience the ideas and products of diverse societies. So globalisation "often spreads local products and cultures to international markets, rather than imposing global products on local cultures" (Leadbeater 2002: 112-3).

The great cosmopolitan cities, he argues, demonstrate that the trade in cultures travels both ways – that, in this sense, globalisation is not just the imposition by the powerful West of cultural artefacts and media images. "Local cultures" can spread their "food, music and design" to global markets to the extent that most "major cities are now patchworks of globalized versions of local and regional cultures. The cultural flows in globalisation are from south and east to north and west as well as the other way round" (Leadbeater 2002: 323). This cosmopolitan patchwork does not devalue these cultures, Leadbeater claims: sushi is not less Japanese simply because it can be bought anywhere.

Klein and other resisters disagree with Leadbeater on precisely this point. It is precisely "this candy-coated multiculturalism" that Klein regards as the main force behind the homogenizing effect of the global markets monoculture. Rather than representing a diversity of culture Klein dismisses the "market masala" of modern cities as an "ethnic foodcourt" designed to create "a One World placelessness" (Klein 2000:

117). This is not local cultures infiltrating the West, it is a marketing ploy by the big brand corporations to deflect criticism of their cultural colonialism.

As the corporations succeed in imposing increasing homogenisation through the global market, the illusion of diversity becomes increasingly important in maintaining the pretence that ubiquitous branded products actually represent significant lifestyle choices. Despite embracing polyethnic imagery, the real result of global trade and the power of multinational corporations is "an army of teen clones marching in uniform" (Klein 2000: 129) through the mall.

Nor does the homogenisation of culture stop at the mall. Globalisation, says Klein, has the tendency to treat trade not as one part of internationalism but as the infrastructure around which all else is built. Under the influence of multinational corporations and their allies, trade is swallowing every aspect of our lives. It is not just culture that is being homogenized but human rights, the environment and democracy. What globalisation and its allies are really creating is a "template for a one-size-fits-all government, a kind of *McRule*" (Klein 2002: 78).

This homogenisation of the forms of government is generally presented as a "race to the bottom" in terms of welfare provision, environmental regulation, workplace protection and political freedom. Kingsnorth (2003) notes that the World Trade Organisation's "dossier of legislation" designed to remove barriers to trade has resulted in the decline in national government power and protection for the vulnerable: "Unfortunately, a corporation's 'barrier to trade' is often a citizen's environmental protection law, social programme, public health regulation or community support scheme" (Kingsnorth 2003: 69). Faced with the choice between environmental or social protection and corporate demands, Kingsnorth argues, the WTO has always ruled in favour of business. Meanwhile, in domestic politics the traditional divisions are

dissolving as politicians become managers for a global order imposed by unaccountable, transnational agencies.

Novel, irresistible and homogenizing?

Despite the apparently diverse nature of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister responses to globalisation, there are significant shared assumptions at the heart of their analysis. The impact of these assumptions is clear: If globalisation really is novel, then nothing in the existing armoury of policy prescriptions can be guaranteed to work in the new economic and political era; If it is irresistible then nation-states are both incapable of protecting citizens from the worst of its excesses and of fairly distributing its potential benefits; If globalisation is homogenizing, then the cultural, social and political choices available to us as individuals and communities are circumscribed by what the global culture will allow. In each case, if these assumptions are correct, the choices of individuals and communities are limited to a narrow range prescribed by the mutually exclusive options offered by the three schools.

The following section seeks to widen the parameters of the discussion on globalisation to bring in the work of some of those theorists who work outside the three schools under study. The purpose is to explore how those theorists who have made similar assumptions about the nature of globalisation have supported their claims and defended them against the criticism of others. In broadening the debate in this fashion, this chapter hopes to explore whether the shared assumptions of the three schools can withstand more thorough critical scrutiny.

Is globalisation new?

What is immediately clear from an examination of their attitudes towards globalisation is that, while techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters share the assumption that globalisation is novel, there is not necessarily agreement (even within the schools) about which aspects of the phenomenon are new and which of these are most important. The writers in the three schools are far from being alone in sharing the conviction that there is something about globalisation as we are experiencing it in the modern world that is fundamentally different from past eras. But, equally, they are not alone in being unable to quite pin down what that novel factor is. The same difficulty can be found in the wider debate on the nature and impact of globalisation.

Scholte (2000: 15-16) identifies five broad themes authors have used to identify the novelty of globalisation:

1. *Universalization*, the creation of a 'planetary synthesis of cultures' as a key factor in defining the distinct modernity of globalisation;
2. *Liberalization*, the lifting of government restrictions and the creation of the 'borderless' economy;
3. *Internationalization*, a growth in the international exchange of ideas and material items and a consequent increase in the impact of distant changes on local circumstances;
4. *Westernization*, the spread of a distinctly Americanized form of modern culture as spreading across the globe swallowing all others;
5. *Deterritorialization*, the spread of a "supraterritoriality" – social spaces can no longer be wholly mapped in terms of geography.

Scholte, however, goes on to declare redundant the first four of these claims to novelty as a means of defining a distinctly modern form of globalisation.

For Scholte *universalization* is not a new phenomenon – indeed the sharing of goods and ideas across cultural boundaries has a pedigree that stretches back to our "global prehistory" (2000: 45). It may be the case that there is now greater speed in the dissemination of ideas but, as Scholte notes, for several thousand years the world's major religions have been able to profoundly influence the thinking and actions of individuals across much of the globe in a way that makes the need for a modern explanation in the form of "globalisation" unnecessary.

Similarly, Scholte argues, *liberalization* as a way of defining globalisation as something new is also redundant. The long established discourse of 'free' trade is quite adequate to convey these ideas, the rhetoric of globalisation was not needed to describe liberalization's earlier phases and is not needed now. The issue of multinational companies will be dealt with in more detail in the next section, but it should be noted here that while such companies are undoubtedly powerful it is difficult to argue that liberalization has made them more powerful. No modern corporation can claim to rule over a fraction of the one fifth of the world's population ruled by the British East India Company in the mid-nineteenth century in India, Burma, Singapore and Hong Kong (Lawson 1998). The history of similar corporations, The Dutch East India Company or Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company, which also employed their own navies and armies, suggests that modern multinationals may indeed be powerful but their power is not without historical precedent (Gilpin 2001: 278-9).

Internationalization, Scholte claims, is probably what most people think of when they consider globalisation. In this sense globalisation is the increasing interaction between people in different countries and a greater sense of

interdependence. Scholte does not deny that the scale of cross-border exchanges has increased in recent decades, but he also argues that such intensifications have occurred in the past. The late nineteenth century had levels of migration, direct investment, finance and trade that, in relation to the relative size of the world's economy, are comparable with or greater than present levels of activity. Thus, "the terminology of 'international relations' arguably remains quite sufficient to examine contemporary cross-border transactions and interlinkages" (Scholte 2000: 44).

Finally, Scholte also dismisses *westernisation* – the spread of a single Western culture across the globe at the expense of local ways of living – as a novel element of globalisation. Such activity has a history that long predates the modern era, Scholte argues, and can be understood in terms of "modernization" or (more radically) "cultural imperialism" without the need for recourse to a theory of globalisation.

The result is that, for Scholte, only one element of the definition of modern globalisation withstands closer scrutiny – *deterritorialization*. Though territory still matters in the globalizing world, it no longer constitutes the whole of our geography and, instead, the modern world is marked by a distinct kind of "space-time compression." We live in a world of global transactions where "place is no longer territorially fixed, territorial distance is covered in effectively no time, and territorial boundaries present no particular impediment" (Scholte 2000: 48).

While we are entering an era in which international relations, constructed of cross border exchanges over distance, are replaced with global relations, taking place as transborder exchanges without distance, Scholte does concede that territoriality will continue to matter. The world is globalizing, not globalized, and faced with the continuing evidence of nationalism, Scholte concedes: "the rise of superterritoriality shows no sign of producing an end to territoriality" (2000: 59). The supraterritorial

phenomena, which define globalisation for Scholte, will continue to have to engage at some level with territorial places, governments and identities.

Scholte's analysis is strongest in identifying the weaknesses in the claims for novelty of the most commonly affixed attributes of globalisation. He is most convincing arguing that these are better understood in the light of a longer historical context – threads that can be traced back through time rather than something unprecedented and unique to the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.

Scholte's point about the effectiveness of ancient institutions, such as religious organisations, to universalise aspects of knowledge seems valid, but just because ideas or doctrine can be spread universally (however swiftly) does not imply that they will be universally adopted. As Held (2004) notes, it is a mistake to confuse the globalisation of communications with *universalization's* synthesis of cultures into a global unity. Exposure to other cultures may create lasting links, but it may also accentuate "what is idiosyncratic and distinctive in particular cultures, further fragmenting cultural life" (Held 2004: 7). In this sense, institutions such as the medieval Catholic Church, with its mechanisms for enforcing doctrinal adherence may have been more effective conduits of *universalization* than modern forms of globalisation.

The importance of trade and the *liberalization* of trading rules is also best understood in context. The end of the nineteenth century saw the opening of borders and a great blossoming of free trade, so much so that, while it is true that we trade more today than ever before, as a proportion of their economy, international trade in the UK and France is about the same as it was in the nineteenth century and Japan's trading activity is rather less (Keohane and Nye 2000: 3). The scale of trade and the reliance of economies on traded goods are very far from being unique to the modern period of globalisation.

The cultural imperialism implied by *westernization* can also be seen to have ancient roots, Alexander's army of a few tens of thousands of men was too small to militarily control the vast areas he conquered but his dedicated programme of city building brought the Greek culture of the polis to the heart of Asia. Hitchens (2004) is surely right to note that Alexander's spreading of Greek culture, specifically the Greek idea of the *polis*, through the seeding of city states throughout Egypt and Asia was "an early form of primitive globalisation" – westernization with ambitions at least equal to that of the modern era.

Finally, *internationalization* can also be seen to have similar historical roots. In some instances, for example migration, the modern "globalized" era cannot compete with the past. A recent report by the United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs (UNDESA) has noted that, even though more people (some 160 million – approximately two per cent of the world's population) now live outside their country of birth than ever before, current rates of international migration are lower than in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when 59 million people left Western Europe alone – mostly for America, Canada and Australia (UNDESA 2004: ix). Although there was a big jump in the number of migrants in the 1980s (the collapse of the USSR caused internal movements to be reclassified as international migration), the figure has remained almost unchanged since 1990 (UNDESA 2004: 25-26).

Although Scholte's critique of the claims to novelty of some forms of globalisation appears convincing, his attempt to construct an alternative explanation of globalisation's novelty around *deterritorialization* is less convincing. Rosenberg (2000) subjects Scholte's claims for *deterritorialization* to sustained and effective critique and finds them wanting. Rosenberg is critical first of the foundation on which *deterritorialization* is built. The "retrospective discovery of the centrality of speed of

communication in the constitution of social order" (Rosenberg 2000: 1) required to justify *deterritorialization* means that the "socially specific and culturally peculiar" (2000: 5) construction of time and space in Western societies is required to be raised in importance, indeed even reified, in the apparatus of social explanation at the expense of other possible influences on the social structure. Globalisation, which began as an *explanandum* of the historical processes responsible for change has become the *explanans* of the changing character of the modern world. The argument has become circular – globalisation becomes the process of becoming global.

One result of this reification of the space is, according to Rosenberg, the need for Scholte to bolster the "Westphalian system" (the traditional view of the organisation of nation states as discrete, self-governing and independent entities) in a way that ignores the historical facts. As part of the necessary generation of "retrospective discoveries about past epochs" (2000: 5), Rosenberg argues that Scholte places too much emphasis on the independence of states in the past and ignores the historical evidence. Taking the British empire as an example, Rosenberg notes first how some regions (Argentina, for example) were effectively integrated into the empire without ever being conquered or physically administered by Britain. Indeed, Rosenberg argues (2000: 31) the conscious effort of successive British governments in the nineteenth century was to control such regions through influence rather than the application of military strength.

Rosenberg goes on to note that many British industries of the time – he looks particularly at the cotton industry with its complicated web of international relationships and interdependences – can only be properly understood if we regard them as operating "supraterritorially". The real (and only) existence of these industries lay in "the social and ecological relations by which millions of human lives were

interconnected both within these different places and across vast distances which (territorially) separated them" (Rosenberg 2000: 22). Rosenberg's conclusion is that *deterritorialization* is not a phenomenon just of the modern era, but may be seen as intrinsic to capitalist social relations themselves.

So, Rosenberg argues, in order to establish *deterritorialization* as the key feature in a genuinely transformative era of globalisation Scholte has been forced to create a mythic past in which the "Westphalian system" was supremely dominant and in which territoriality was the defining feature of the international system regardless of domestic concerns. The history of transnational relations from other eras is suppressed and the penalty for this suppression "must surely be a misrecognition of their significance in the historical present" (Rosenberg 2000: 40). Indeed, because Scholte has absorbed thoroughly absorbed the "Westphalian myth" he is, as we have seen, unable to explain why the spread of supraterritoriality is showing no signs of ending territoriality and, in fact, concedes the continuing coexistence of both forms of organisation.

The whole "spatio-temporal problematic" is fundamentally incoherent and undermines the whole edifice of a theory of globalisation as a uniquely modern phenomenon. Such problems would disappear, Rosenberg insists, if Scholte and other writers on the subject would rein in their claims for globalisation as an *explanans* of social change and allowed it to resume its original, purely descriptive role.

Rosenberg's critique seems convincing. While it is clearly tempting, in the modern era of jet planes and near instantaneous global communication, to assume that, for the first time, distance and space have been overcome, the idea that this is a new and transformative feature of society does seem to depend on the idea that the peoples of the past were somehow hermetically sealed in cells that divided them from each other.

For Rosenberg the predictions of Marx and Poulantzas (that the spread of capitalism would be accompanied by a proliferation of transnational relations) are sufficient to explain the present phenomenon called globalization. Though such a proliferation is significant there is no need to assume that it is the signal of an incipient transformation of the international system itself. Indeed it may be possible to go further than Rosenberg's claim that supraterritoriality is peculiar to capitalism and suggest that supraterritoriality is a trend evident in all sufficiently complex or imperial or metropolitan societies.

Placing globalisation in an historical context, writers like Hopkins (2002) and Ballantyne (2002) have made a case for seeing complex networks of interdependence such as those Rosenberg attributes to the British cotton industry in the trade, social institutions and politics of the colonising era of empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Others have made connections with the universalization of the pre-modern muslim world (Bennison 2002) or with the expansionist Tang dynasty in China (van de Ven 2002). Such work, placing supraterritoriality in a pre-modern context, suggests that complex interdependences should be seen not as a unique feature of modern society but as part of a thread that defines all sufficiently advanced, expansionist societies.

There is, however, one aspect of the claims for globalisation's novelty that is undeniable – that we live in an era of new technology that facilitates global communication. Of course global networks of communication are not in themselves new. Standage (1998) has made the case that the impact of telegraphy ("the Victorian Internet") was to create a global network of communication of enormous social, economic and political importance. For a century the technology has existed that allowed at least some people to assessed distant situations in (almost) real time and

make instant responses. One can argue whether such speed is always beneficial. As in Aesop's fables, sometimes the tortoise wins the race. Not every first mover acquires the benefits they hope for and early adopters can find themselves carrying the can for expensive development costs and overcoming early bugs. In any case, it might be argued, in terms of competitive advantage e-mail and the Internet have rendered speed advantages less important that they were in previous eras. When almost everyone can access material instantaneously, being first by a few fractions of a second is unlikely to offer significant advantage.

At the same time, however, most commentators (certainly all the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers) feel that modern communications technology offers an indisputably new element in the global economy. Even if it is not always clear what that novel feature is.

It is not just that they allow the easy communication across borders, as Rosenberg has argued the idea of a past filled with citizens trapped in hermetically sealed cells is a fiction. In terms of international communication the significance of Latin as a *lingua franca* across the Western world until relatively recently indicates that a means for allowing cross border and cross cultural communication was worth the extra burden required for elites in many nations to learn a second language.

There is clearly something significant in the sheer scale of communication allowed by these technologies, though in some sense this is offset by the way (as we shall see in the Chapter 2.4) that they encourage debates to fragment and for people and groups to gather into enclaves with those that already share their views. However the feeling that everyone could, if they wanted to, share their views with everyone else seems psychologically important. The proliferation of blogging, the practice of people keeping public diaries on the Internet, sharing with the world their considered (or not so

considered) views of current events, details on their hobbies, information about their pets and many other subjects, suggests that this sense of being able to project one's thoughts to others is an important part of what globalisation means to some people. Even if almost no one actually reads what many bloggers write (Hewitt 2005).

Perhaps it is enough that the technology itself is new. However care needs to be taken to avoid the trap of technological determinism. There is not room here to develop a full debate about the issue of technological determinism, but a number of core points are worth making.

Hughes (1983), the historian of technology, has approached the idea of technology as a system, emphasising the importance of the distinct but intertwined elements of physical artefacts – the institutions that construct and use them, the environment in which these artefacts are employed – so that we possess an understanding of the technical, social, economic and political aspects of any given technology. The work of writers like Law (1986, Law and Hassan 1999) and Latour (1988, 1996) goes further. By treating all the environmental, technical and human actors in the creation and use of a technology as equal elements in an "actor network" – the complex interrelationship of factors that combine to produce the artefacts we understand as a piece of technology in a certain role. They then seek to open up the "black box" of relationships that form the apparently natural use of a technology within society.

Their assumption is that artefacts (like a computer) tend to be presented as being value-free, when, in fact, they are the product of a process of construction that makes many assumptions about the values of a given group or society (Grint and Woolgar, 1997: 92). To give a very brief example, early models of computing were built around the idea that a central server would provide the software and processing power for

distributed dumb terminals. The modern computer does its own processing, stores its own software and, if it is connected to a server at all, it is likely to be primarily for services such as email. The modern desktop form of computer contains the "ideology" of distributed computing and user customisation. It is a product of a struggle between competing assumptions about computing, between competing commercial entities and between the demands of users and technology experts. It is not value-free, it could, on one level, be said to represent a victory for individualism over communal provision.

Every technology, and every use of technology within specific circumstances, should be seen as containing more than just the "natural" results of the application of technology. Technology is formed by and is part of a network of relationships in society. The telegraph became a centrally controlled resource even though many early visions of the telegraph society envisaged one in every home (Standage 1998). The radio became a broadcast medium, even though many early visions saw it as a means of mass two-way communication (Woolgar 1988). The factors behind such shaping of technologies are not necessarily inherent in the technology itself, they are shaped by everything from domestic organisation to global economic forces.

What these approaches reveal is that the use of any technology in society is shaped by relations of power and interest and that no such use is "natural" or "obvious". While the technology may indeed be new, there is nothing intrinsic to modern communication technology that defines how they must be used within society. As such, though undeniably new, the idea that this technology alone is the crucial factor shaping what we call globalisation is difficult to sustain. That is not to deny the importance of such technology, but the role it plays is not preordained by technical factors. There are likely to be an almost infinite number of alternative shapes the agglomeration of technologies we call the Internet could have taken. That they have been constructed as

tool enabling global capitalism to work more effectively cannot be the result of technological factors alone. The design and application of technologies is the product of a process of struggle, negotiation and competition and as such at least as much a reflection of a social structure as a tool capable of transforming it.

Is globalisation irresistible?

Claims that globalisation is irresistible are build around a belief that global markets cannot be restrained and that the market's most important actors, multinational corporations, are able to behave as if the location of sites of production and distribution are inconsequential to their corporate strategies. The result of footloose finances and production in a globalised market is that national boundaries are overwhelmed and national institutions – be they political, economic or social – are incapable of responding effectively. This vision is shared across the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools and is built upon "facts" of the unprecedented levels of trade, the enormous size of many multi-national companies and their mobility in the world market.

At the same time, there have been a number of critiques of the power of globalisation. One of the most influential of these critiques has been Hirst and Thompson (2000), but there are others. Barret (1996), Pauly and Reich (1997) Gilpin (2001), Kitching (2001), Edwards (2001) and LeGrain (2002) have engaged in a critique of the most extreme claims for globalisation These works have served a useful purpose in putting into perspective the extent of the influence of global markets.

LeGrain's (2002: 140) analysis of business goes some way to undermining many of the common myths about corporate power. He takes a claim made by Klein (2001), Hertz (2001) and Hines (2000) that fifty-one of the world's top one hundred

"economies" are actually corporations and comprehensively debunks the idea. Such claims are only sustainable if one compares sales with gross domestic product (GDP) and that is not comparing like with like, it ignores companies costs. It is, LeGrain notes, like assuming that a market trader selling £1000 of vegetables each week is richer than a lawyer taking home £900 per week. It ignores the costs of the vegetables and the market pitch. Indeed far from being amongst the biggest economies in the world, even the largest corporations "value added" (worth after costs) cannot compete with quite modestly-sized nations like Belgium, Sweden or Austria, whose economies are between three and five times the size of the biggest multinational. Indeed the "value added" of the top fifty companies is equivalent to on 4.5% of that of the fifty largest national economies. And far from being the steady foundations of a new economy, the life of corporations is distinctly unstable, LeGrain claims. Of the largest 100 companies in 1912 two thirds have either become smaller or disappeared completely. On a shorter scale, of the top fifty largest companies identified by *Fortune* in 1980 only thirty remained in the list in 2000 (LeGrain 2002: 140).

Even if corporations are not as large or invulnerable as has been claimed, their potential mobility would appear to remain a threat to nations' economic stability. The ability, or even the threat, that multinational corporations might abandon nations that pursue policies that are not to their liking is one that is regularly raised as proof of the power of multinationals.

Hirst and Thompson (2000: 38) present evidence that that claims for the mobility of multinational corporations has been significantly overstated. Of an estimated 45,000 multinationals in the mid 1990s, some 37,000 of those (over eighty per cent) were based in just 14 OECD countries and over ninety percent were based in the "developed" world. In addition the "home-oriented nature" of multinationals

remained significant with between two thirds and three quarters of all their activity limited to within the corporations home region. True multinational corporations are, perhaps, less common than the rhetoric of globalisation suggests.

Gilpin asserts that, though multinational corporations are clearly important, they also tend to employ two-thirds of the workforce in their home nation. Multinationals "are not nearly as footloose as many critics charge" (Gilpin 2001: 289). Gilpin also points out that, with very few exceptions, a firm's primary market remains its home market. In recent decades American corporations may have increased the volume of goods they trade overseas to twenty percent of total production, but the remaining eighty percent remains largely insulated from the world economy. Looking at industrial policy and the behaviour of Japanese companies, Gilpin argues that while academics and business consultants may "propagandise the idea of the global corporation, Japanese business and the Japanese government have definitely not accepted the idea that corporations have shed their nationality and become stateless" (Gilpin 2001: 300). Gilpin notes the same is also true of American and European Union policies.

The continued location of most so-called global corporations in their "birth" nation and the continued primacy (in most instances) of the home market for their business has important implications. If multinationals were truly footloose then all attempts to regulate the action of the globalized economy could be undermined as these corporations simply shift bases to suit the prevailing political situation. However, most companies continue to base their most significant operations (headquarters, research and development) and the majority of their employees in their home nation. And they continue to rely on their home nations for the core of their markets. Such corporations do not appear to have risen far beyond the reach of government. It is, of course,

possible that such a large organisation might make the decision to conduct a wholesale relocation but it would surely be at least as painful and expensive an option for the multinational corporation as it was for the nation they sought to leave behind. As such, it seems that there remains scope for the continued application of national controls. However, as Kitching (2001) notes, this potential for control is weighted towards the larger, wealthier nations. It may still be the case that the smallest countries could be vulnerable to manipulation by large corporations control of investment.

It is certainly the case that we live in an era when the flow of money across borders has rapidly increased. The trade in foreign exchange has almost tripled from a daily average of $640 billion in 1989 to $1,880 billion in 2004 (Bank of International Settlements 2004). Such enormous flows of money can, as the Asian crash in the late 1990s demonstrated, do very serious damage to a nation's economy should traders suddenly withdraw their support for a currency.

Edwards (2001) points out, however, that the range of such investment is not as truly global as many writers on globalisation imagine. Indeed the smallest economies, those that might be imagined to be most at risk from rapid shifts of capital, are actually relatively immune to these flows because significant investment never comes their way. As Edwards point out, seventy-five percent of countries in the world see little sign of globalisation in the sense of foreign investment since less than ten percent of the world's total is directed towards their economies. The rest of the investment is concentrated in the industrialized world together with a few larger developing markets in East Asia and Latin America. It is a point reinforced by Gilpin, who notes that between 1991 and 1995 the nation that received the most foreign direct investment was the United States ($198.5 billion). China was the developing nation which received the largest investment ($114 billion), Mexico received only $32 billion in the same period.

Gilpen points out that "the least developed countries in Africa and elsewhere have received a pitiful percentage of the total amount invested in the developing world" (Gilpin 2001: 290). This skewed pattern of the distribution of capital does not match the three schools image of the globalised economy as an unrestrained, uncontrollable phenomenon sweeping through every nation, for good or ill.

Multinationals are clearly important economic actors and global trade and financial flows are undeniably influential in the state of national economies. However, there appears to be grounds to believe that the new global economy has not yet disappeared beyond the ability of national governments to exert considerable levels of influence. Even allowing for the possibility of intergovernmental cooperation, it is clear that the mobility of capital has the potential to disrupt the plans of even the most powerful nations but, even so, the are aspects of the global economy that continue to rely quite heavily upon the foundations laid by nation and national government.

Is globalisation homogenizing?

There are two distinct types of homogenization proposed by techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister authors. The first is a cultural homogenisation – this can take two forms – there is the creation of a global cultural elite (the "digital nation" or "knowledge workers") or the broader "market masala" of competing global brands dominating the shopping habits of consumers around the world. The other, in my view more serious issue, is the supposed threat of political homogenisation, the limiting of the ability of nations or regions to choose their own political future because choices have been proscribed by the power of global markets.

On the supposed swamping of local cultures, it can be argued that writers like Klein place too much emphasis on the power of brands and on the importance of

teenage fashions. LeGrain accuses Klein's *No Logo* (2000) of patronising ordinary people who are so gullible that they cannot see through the mythology of brands in the same way as Klein and her fellow activists (LeGrain 2002: 126). Far from being all powerful, LeGrain notes, many brands fail and their vast expenditure on advertising to persuade us to buy their goods is hardly a sign of brand invulnerability. "If they are making ever more desperate attempts to win us over, it is typically a sign of weakness, not strength" (LeGrain 2002: 128) – if corporations had truly succeeded in controlling our desires, spending vast sums on brand promotion would be unnecessary. In any case, as a foundation for constructing a power capable of world domination, brands – whose only strength comes from image and reputation – would be a remarkably fragile and an incredibly vulnerable tool to choose.

Held (2004) also argues that it is a mistake to imagine that globalisation implies a threat to local cultures, pointing out that "it is a mistake to confuse the globalisation of communications with the globalisation of culture" (Held 2004: 6). Indeed, Held argues, though global communications may allow the sharing of images and ideas in a way never before possible that does not mean that mutual understanding across borders must, or even is likely, to happen. Exposure to outside influences can also lead to an "accentuation of what is distinctive and idiosyncratic in particular cultures, further fragmenting cultural life" (Held 2004: 7).

The assumption that the intermingling of ideas will create unity is common, but it need not be the case. For Mouffe (2000) conflict is always at the heart of a society in which "universal principles" often act as cover for individual and group interests. There exists in civil society the "omnipresent possibility of conflict" resulting in the need for regulation to prevent the creation of an uncivil society. Mouffe's "agonistic pluralism" – a view of society built around conflict – appears at least as plausible as claims for the

unifying power of communication. This issue is addressed further in Chapter 2.4 but the evidence of sharpening divisions between ethnic groups, religions and nations around the world, there seems little evidence that communication is creating homogenous cultures.

The proposal that globalisation is restricting the ability of states to govern their own affair, and is creating Klein's (2001) one-size fits all "McRule" is more serious. It chimes with the experience of citizens of Western Europe and America who have seen their parliamentary politics shift decisively from the more polarised arguments of the seventies and eighties to a more centrist debate amongst parties with barely distinguishable platforms. As Kingsnorth (2003: 64) puts it, politicians from left and right appear to be "morphing into a managerial class of hemmed-in technocrats" whose only options in government are to satisfy the demands of the market.

And yet there are aspects of the claims for homogenisation of the political culture that do not seem to fit the available evidence. Despite the demands of the right and the fears of the left there has not been a simple and universal "race to the bottom" over social, environmental and political standards. The European Union has played a significant role in setting new standards for workers rights through health and safety and employment rights edicts. Even in the UK, whose Blairite government many resisters (Frank 2000) argue is a prime example of the nation state surrendering to globalized business interests, the period since 1997 has seen the introduction of a number of significant employment rights: the right to trade union membership; the minimum wage; working hours limits; the right to paid leave; increased maternity rights; and new paternity rights, amongst others. One can argue whether such provisions go far enough, but these developments are difficult to explain if governments are simply engaged in a race to the bottom in employment standards.

And it is not only in the developed countries that governments appear to be able to make a difference to the welfare of their people. Kennedy (2002) compares the relative fortunes of Costa Rica and Haiti – two similarly resourced, similarly positioned nations providing radically different environments for their people. Costa Rica is Central America's model democracy, acting as an intermediary in regional disputes and offering a stable government, while Haiti is "a basket case" (Kennedy 2002: 17), the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Kennedy notes the vast differences in life expectancy, infant mortality and adult literacy between the two nation and argues that they are due to "simple, understandable reasons" in the methods of governance. Costa Rica is an open, transparent government that respects human rights and the rule of law, while Haiti has historically been run by corrupt dictatorships.

Kennedy's specific argument is too simplistic. He ignores the fact that France and America have, throughout Haiti's 200 years of independence, played some part in maintaining the rule of dictators and corrupt governments (Farmer 1994). Even today French and American governments are accused of cooperating in the coup that removed the elected president Aristide in 2004 (Chomsky and Goodman 2004). In such circumstances it is not only national governments that determine a nation's fate.

However, the choices of a nation's rulers influence the environment in which their citizens live. Costa Rica is a neutral nation, independent enough to resist American aggression in the 1980s but with no standing military and a long and relatively peaceful history that is marked by leaders who have introduced social welfare programmes and progressive economic reforms. Land reform, investment in health and education and the early adoption of democracy have all contributed to Costa Rica's relative stability and wealth. It has also been lucky, even when military coups or civil war have occurred, in the generals Carillo (1830s) and Guardia (1870s) Costa Ricans

found themselves ruled by more or less "benevolent" dictators who introduced strong public administration, progressive reforms and public works (Palmer and Molina 2004).

Not all nations have been as fortunate as Costa Rica. In Africa a history of corrupt colonialism, economic exploitation and even racism blight the continent and international interference has often worsened the status of already fragile nations. The fact remains, however, that corruption, greed and cruelty on behalf of indigenous leaders in some African states has been a contributing factor to the continued growth of poverty in Africa, even in resource-rich nations such as Uganda and Liberia.

Poor leadership can hardly be blamed for all of Africa's problems, the relative stability and dynamic economy (though highly unequal distribution of wealth) of Botswana or the high levels of literacy and sophisticated welfare system in Libya (despite a poor record on democracy and personal liberty) suggest that even in the most difficult circumstances there are spaces in which governments can make choices that matter. At the same time it cannot be right that of the sixteen poorest African nations (those with per capita GDPs of less than $1000) five spend as much or more than the United States (as a proportion of their GDP) on their military. Eritrea, one of the poorest nations on earth, spent twelve percent of its national income (four times the US level) on their military in 2001. Kennedy is surely right when he says such spending is "simply immoral and offensive" (Kennedy 2002: 19).

By contrast in southern Asia, even after the economic crashes of the late 1990s, the populations of countries like South Korea and Taiwan enjoy a steadily improving standard of living: a 6.6% per annum increase in income per person between 1965 and 1999. That means that an average person is nine times better off than they were a little over a generation ago. In the same period South Korean life expectancy has risen from 54 years at birth to 75 years and to 77 in Taiwan (LeGrain 2002: 69-70).

It is, of course, possible to criticise the shortcomings of all the so-called "Asian Tiger" economies for their various failures on human rights or their often shallow commitment to democracy. There undoubtedly remain problems with inequality and exploitation, but states throughout Asia entered the 1950s with economies and levels of development broadly equivalent to Africa. The choices made by respective governments have meant dramatic differences to the well-being of the citizens on the two continents. During the 1990s alone, Held notes, the number of people living in extreme poverty (people living on less than £1 a day) fell by half in East Asia and the Pacific and by 7% in South East Asia. At the same time 20 sub-Saharan African nations finished the decade poorer than when it started (Held 2004: 45). Held is surely right to note that states still matter and that "poor human capital, corrupt and/or autocratic governance and weak market institutions have played a contributing role in some countries being 'overwhelmed' by globalisation" (Held 2004: 48).

There certainly are pressures placed on national and regional economies by increased global trade and it may be the case that the poorest nations, with the weakest political institutions, could be swamped by unfettered market forces. At the same time, however, there is evidence in both the developed and the developing world that national governments continue to take decisions that matter.

Carnoy *et al* (1993) note that while the range of choices available to nation states are framed by political forces, they retain a crucial role to play and cite as evidence the "variation in macroeconomic and social policies even among highly industrialized Western Capitalist nations" (Carnoy et al 1993: 1). Inflexible methods of production or state organisation are likely to be unable to cope with the "informatization" of the world economy, they say, but national activity can enhance the local economy in ways that go beyond building human capital for distribution to

international markets. Even in the global economy, they argue, politics remains crucial in shaping the way domestic and foreign businesses interact with the national society and culture. They dismiss the idea that the "end of history" has taken the form of states bound to the liberal economics of the 1980s as Fukyama predicted and argue that new democratic political forms will emerge that make "the information age as politically turbulent as the Renaissance or the age of industrial capitalism" (Carnoy et al 1993: 13).

Previous industrial revolutions saw the creation of states as diverse as the laissez-faire capitalism of imperial Britain and the United States, the communist states of the Soviet Union and China, fascist dictatorships in Germany, Italy and Spain and the liberal social democracies of Scandinavia. All of these nations faced similar pressures but responded in dramatically different fashions. It seems improbable that the impact of the *new politics* should be able to achieve homogeneity where past revolutions have failed.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to highlight the commonalities in the apparently diverse responses of the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters to the first crisis of democracy and to explore whether those assumptions were robust in the face of critical analysis. Though, as Section One, demonstrated, the three schools have taken apparently diverse positions in regard to the opportunities and threats of globalisation, this chapter noted that they shared three assumptions:

1. That globalisation was a novel phenomenon distinctive to the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.

2. That existing social, economic and political institutions are unable to resist the pressures created by globalisation.
3. That globalisation represents a force for homogenisation, destroying traditional cultures and imposing limited political choices.

In challenging these assumptions the goal has not been to establish an alternative overarching view of globalisation, still less to deny that there is such a thing as globalisation and that the world will simply go on as before. However, in each instance, there appear to be reasons to doubt that the forces attributed to globalisation are as overwhelming as the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs or resisters claim.

Kitching (2001) argues that when we read an account of the "facts" of globalisation that leaves us with the impression that it is a: "massive, steamrollering 'purely economic' or 'purely technological' process that cannot be reversed and which must be adjusted to in a variety of ways, we have to be aware that what we are dealing with here is an attempt to *persuade* – not, or not simply, an attempt to describe something" (Kitching 2001: 8). With this in mind it should be understood that the assumptions at the heart of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writings in this chapter limit the scope of possible responses to globalisation. Each of the three schools seek to persuade us that only their unique prescription for sweeping changes are valid.

The evidence at least suggests that the assumptions of the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters are less than the whole story. Despite claims that globalisation is distinctly new, the precise definition of that novelty seems harder to sustain on closer inspection. It seems more useful to understand most claims for the novelty of globalisation as part of a historical trend – one that has notably ebbed and flowed over time. Even modern communication technologies, which are undeniably

new, are not causative but are best understood as part of a network of relationships that have moulded them into their present shape at least as much as they are contributing to the creation of a new society. The pressures combining to create globalisation might, then, be best understood in their historical context as part of the interplay of economic, social, political and technological forces that shaped society in the past and may continue to shape it in the future.

When it comes to the supposedly irresistible nature of globalisation, we see that claims for the overwhelming force of global markets and their much-vaunted vanguard of multinational corporations may be overstated. There are undeniable challenges posed by both liberalized markets and the activities of some corporations but little evidence that the ability to respond has slipped entirely beyond the reach of local, national or regional tiers of government.

Finally, claims for globalisation's ability to force the homogenisation of culture and politics seems questionable. Based on the contestable belief that increased communication between diverse groups will lead to greater unity, it is therefore assumed that global communication will result in a reduction in the diversity of cultures around the world. But the coincidence of ideas may encourage polarization – as has often been the case with religion, and recent history suggests that the increased proximity of cultures is not creating greater understanding. At the same time the array of responses to previous periods of technological and economic revolutions suggests that, rather than reducing the variety political responses, external pressures may encourage a range of political experiments reflecting the diverse demands of citizens and their rulers. Indeed the challenge may not be the blandness of Klein's "McRule" or Fukuyama's "end of history" but of avoiding the excesses that accompanied previous periods of political experimentation.

Chapter 2.3
Power

Introduction

The second crisis concerns the pressures placed on the state by the changing expectations of the individual citizens. Individuals are increasingly adopting "fundamentalist identities" based on nationalism and religion. These identities cannot be enlisted by existing democratic states because they are exclusive of other forms of identity and so conflict with the liberal state's need to encompass all its citizens. They "cannot, and will not sustain democracy (that is, liberal democracy) because the very principles of representation between the two systems (national citizenship, singular identity) are contradictory" (Castells 2000a: 343).

Section One set out the responses of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools to this crisis of individualism to democracy. The techno-liberals embrace the diversity of new identities and their usurpation of state power. Dyson (1998) argues that the market and new communication technologies provide the means by which diverse identities can be accommodated within decentralized communities

that can form, dissipate and reform as individuals demand without serious consequences. The expression of desire through market-like forces and voluntary membership of communities means that unlike terrestrial states, which seek to monopolize power in a defined space, Dyson's Net governments can co-exist. Citizenship of Net governments would be entirely voluntary.

Social entrepreneurs see the increasing individuality of citizens' demands as a fundamental threat to the structures of a welfarist social democracy and as proof that the institutions of the traditional state are no longer capable of responding effectively to the demands of the modern age. Their response to the increased power of individuals is to personalize the state (Leadbeater 2004), effectively removing government from large parts of its current role, leaving the design and planning of services to professionals and users in networks of control and joint responsibility. As with techno-liberals, the social entrepreneurs see factionalism as a central theme of the *new politics* and base their model of future society on a networked model (Mulgan 1997) in which allegiances are fluid and new fundamentalist identities can form their own communities.

For resisters, power is being stripped from ordinary people and transferred to corporate interests and unaccountable bureaucrats. Fundamental identities are, in part, expressed through the diverse forms of the anti-capitalist/anti-globalisation movements, which resisters see as models for an alternative society capable of returning power to make decisions to ordinary citizens. Insofar as such identities coincide with the aims of these movements, they are encouraged. The resisters' support for localist models of organisation leads many resisters to imagine that the problem of opposing fundamentalist identities can be addressed by the shift towards smaller communities characterised by a greater sharing of interests (Goldsmith 1996). For others (Monbiot 2004: Klein 2001, 2002: Kingsnorth 2003) conflicting fundamentalisms appear to be

symptoms of the corporatist/capitalist state that will disappear when the necessary reformation of economic, political and social institutions has been completed and they are reintegrated into society.

Despite this apparent diversity of approach, this chapter argues that underlying these responses to the second crisis of democracy is a common assumption about the nature of power. In describing the way in which people interact with both the state and the economy, the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools all employ a "realist" appraisal of power, treating it as a tool to be employed in pursuit of one's goals or a resource to be gathered up and used against others. The corollary of this view is that those with the most power are free to act as they wish, imposing their desired outcomes on others. In the *new politics* power is shifting, the three schools claim, and there is little the weak (government, those not part of the "digital nation") can do. States are becoming weaker and corporations are becoming stronger. The individual is becoming stronger but collective institutions are in decline. Angell (2000) compares the fate of a lucky few with skills that are in high demand to film stars, pursuing global opportunities and becoming increasingly detached from the majority, either unlucky or unskilled, who will be left behind.

The limitations of the three schools' perception of power is best demonstrated in comparison with Foucault's alternative model. Foucault offers an approach that better explains real world phenomena and suggests a society in which power is widely diffused and resistance as an integral element of any attempt to exercise power or use force on others. This chapter compares Foucault's conception of power against criticisms made of it by realist and critical realist theorists. Though there are numerous other criticisms of Foucault's work the realist stance most closely mirrors the position of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers. Critical realists see "how

the brute exercise of power in a material form can control the forming and working of constitutions" (Trigg 2001: 237) and share with the three schools a view of power that is rooted in issues of might and wealth that, they believe, cannot be dealt with by reference to "social construction". Power, in the realist conception, is a "material constraint" that can be wielded by one group to achieve their goals at the expense of others.

One-dimensional power

Though techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers make many assumptions about power, they tend not to explain what power is or what they mean by it. For these writers power is taken for granted and one-dimensional – it is a simple tool or resource employed in the pursuit of one's goals and exercised without consequences.

For techno-liberals like Wilmot and Nelson (2003) the key feature of the modern era, created by new technology and greater wealth in the developed world, is the rise of a "new individualism". People increasingly express themselves in a market place where they have little to lose (because costs are low compared to their disposable income) and the greatest challenge is to cope with the complexity created by an excess of choice. In these circumstance people will do their own thing and states and corporations will be forced to respond to those demands or they will be left behind. These "fundamentalist identities", they argue, mean that people no longer automatically connect with "restrictive groups such as social class, a profession or a geographical entity" (Wilmot and Nelson 2003: 24). They expect products and services to be moulded to their individual needs rather than those of an amorphous group.

Wilmot and Nelson go on to argue that the shortages of the past constrained what people could and could not do, hence the tendency to form close-knit groups and

accept narrowly defined roles to increase the opportunities to survive. In an era of plenitude, the grip of traditional institutions is weakened and the lifestyles dictated by those traditions are in decline. Wilmot and Nelson attribute these changes to the "simple fact" that greater wealth has made people more able to pick and choose what they want to own and to do. For traditional institutions the "danger" of such changes is that an increasingly affluent majority of consumers are more confident and more demanding. Because they exist in relative security with their basic needs accounted for, the affluent majority "know they can pick and choose, argue and pontificate over what are, effectively, non-essential items" (Wilmot and Nelson 2003).

Katz (1997) meanwhile notes that, like it or not, this Digital Nation empowered by education, wealth and privilege will create a political force that the rest of society will be forced to reckon with. "Technology is power. Education is power. Communication is power. The digital young have all three" (Katz 1997: 191). The result is that no other group will be capable of exercising such control over the global economy and the *new politics.*

For social entrepreneurs the increasingly individualistic demands of citizens are also a crucial factor in the *new politics*. Cherny (2000) promotes the "Choice Revolution", which will transform society. Though placing himself in the tradition of American progressives that includes Franklin D Roosevelt, Cherny argues that this revolution means that government funds should go directly to the citizen bypassing inefficient and bureaucratic institutions. Government should become an engine of fulfilling individual aspirations, not just an out-of-touch annoyance that is ignored and avoided when possible.

The central impulse of Cherny's Choice Revolution is to replace the one-size-fits-all programs of traditional social democracy with ranges of options capable of

matching the demands of a citizenry who are increasingly unwilling to "forgo individual choices in exchange for freedom from fear" (Cherny 2000: 180). Cherny argues that a government reformed in this manner would simply be extending the choice already available to the rich. Cherny proposes that, with the provision of a basic level of social security, American citizens should be able to invest their own social security taxes as they see fit, replacing the public provision of social democracy with the individualistic organisation that is "flexible" enough to contain the expectations of information age citizens. The freedom offered by the information age goes beyond welfare provision because the Internet can play a part in entirely bypassing traditional governmental structures to allow citizens to exercise greater freedom. Although Cherny sees this shift of power to the citizen as partly offset by a rising set of community responsibilities, these responsibilities are not mediated by government but through local neighbourhoods. It means government is forced to cede to its citizens: "more individual decision-making power and personalized services while citizens will have to be more involved in the life of their country and community" (Cherny 2000: 223).

Recent history, say resisters, is marked by the shifting of the power that once resided in local and national government to undemocratic transnational organisation, global corporate interests and capitalist elites, with a resultant decline of individual input to and trust of traditional democratic institutions. In response to this shift, they point to the variety of anti-capitalist and anti-globalisation protesters as evidence for a widespread rejection of the current institutions of governance. Postman (1993), for example, warns of the dangers of technology empowering a new elite and widening the scope of liberal markets. Those who have control of these new technologies "accumulate power and inevitably form a kind of conspiracy against those who have no access to the specialized knowledge made available by the technology" (Postman 1993:

9). For other authors, like Klein (2001) and Kingsnorth (2003), their personal experiences of committed groups of resistance to corporate interests represent proof that there is widespread dissatisfaction. These groups represent both a countervailing force to corporate strength and a locus for the legitimacy that once resided in now discredited democratic institutions. Kingsnorth writes of the rapidly rising popular movements he has seen amongst the poor on five continents who feel they have been cut off from their societies by economic forces, illegitimate private power, unfair trade laws and all-pervasive consumerism. Reacting against this exclusion, these groups are determined to redress the balance and they have learned what Kingsnorth regards as the most powerful lesson: "that power is never given, it is always taken" (2000: 313).

The majority of resisters favour the empowerment of local communities as a means of countering the power of global trade. For the most trenchant (Sale 2000) such communities would break up the present social system into self-sufficient, small-scale communities – bioregions – that would act as centres of resistance and protection for ordinary citizens against the power of corporations and global market power. Even where the demands of localization are less stringent – Hines (2000), Mander et al (2002) – the aim is the same. Local communities in which individuals are part of the day-to-day decision-making process about the economic, environmental and political choices that impact upon their societies. Localism employs the principle of subsidiarity to ensure that decisions are made at the smallest practical level.

Of course the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters differ in their response to what they have perceived as a shifting balance of power, but they share two crucial assumptions. First that such a shift is taking place and second that power is a quality that can be accumulated, possessed and used at will. They share a notion of power that is predominantly one-dimensional.

Not everyone views power in such a simplistic way. Lukes (1974) characterises it as a multi-layered and complex social phenomenon and calls the idea of power an essentially contested concept: "one of those concepts which inevitably involves endless disputes about their proper uses. Indeed to engage in such disputes is itself to engage in politics" (Lukes 1974: 26). Lukes' concept of power is not one that the authors in the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur or resister schools would recognise. He identifies three distinct dimensions of power. The most visible level, Lukes notes, is the pluralist notion of power that is exercised through the ability to control decision-making in situations where there are conflicting desires. We might think of this as the 'common sense' notion of power, where open conflict is resolved through the deployment of resources (wealth, weapons, votes) in a public arena. The obvious nature of the conflict at this level means that it is possible to mistakenly assume that this as the only form of power in society. This is the conception of power held by the techno-liberal, resister and social entrepreneur writers.

And yet, while the use of power in this way may be the most obvious it is also the crudest. A government that relied on the presence of armed men to enforce every law might, with vast armies, look powerful but such a regime could hardly survive long. Brute force is not the most effective means of employing power. Power must, therefore, be multi-dimensional. Lukes, for example, identifies the ability of some groups to shape public debates to their ends so that inconvenient issues are never discussed and decisions never made. Finally, however, the most insidious exercise of power is to prevent people from having grievances by shaping their perceptions so that that "they accept their role in the existing order of things either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural or unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial" (Lukes 1974: 24).

Foucault's theory of power

Foucault's work does not often seem easy to apply to the real world. If Lukes is correct when he says that debating the definition of power is engaging in politics then, at times, it seems as though Foucault has done everything possible to resist such an engagement. Deliberately eschewing programmatic definitions of how power can be seized and denying any notion of 'progress' that might make man free, Foucault seems to offer little for the practical understanding and exploitation of power in our society.

And yet Foucault's theory of power creates a window into the exercise of the manipulative forms of power identified by Lukes and suggests that it may be possible for everyone to exercise an element of power and offer resistance to the forces which shape our desires. Foucault's work, despite its limitations, offers tools with which to study power.

Foucault's studies of social institutions such as the treatment of insanity (1990a), the practice of medicine (1990b), and crime and prisons (1991) form the foundation of all his work. Foucault used the term genealogy to characterise this work. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982: 119) describe genealogical studies as examining modern institutions by bringing dissenting theories and 'local' knowledge about their past to light to allow the exploration of the controversies and struggles their history that shaped the existing institution. Thus genealogy fills in the gaps found within an institution's understanding of itself, allowing greater understanding without making any claims to greater truth or to neutrality. A Foucauldian genealogy of an institution or social practice is always aware that history is unavoidably written with a political and polemical intent.

From these genealogies Foucualt developed a complex theory of power that operated at micro, covert and local levels through specific forms of behaviour or sets of practices. It is frequently difficult to see who is exercising power, if anyone is, and

what purpose that power is serving as it becomes disguised as the common practices of a social system. So, as Turner notes, social institutions become the means of both disguising power and of exercising it through day-to-day practices and rituals (Turner 1997: xii).

Foucault sees power in every relationship, between parents and children, between doctors and patients, between the governed and those who govern. Foucault's description of power is complex and there is not room here to examine its implications fully. Instead this chapter outlines three key concepts in Foucault's theory of power: power/knowledge, problematisation and governmentality. These concepts are central to the Foucauldian understanding of power and they highlight the key distinctions between his ideas about the way power works in society and the realist conception held by the three schools being studied in this thesis.

For the three schools, knowledge is a tool to gain power. Its possession, or the lack of it, are material constraints on the freedom of citizens to achieve what they wish. For Foucault, as we shall see, the relationship between power and knowledge is much more complex. Problematisation, the means by which social phenomena are categorized and made subject to control, is the central difference between realist and Foucauldian conceptions of power. For a realist problems are, to put it crudely, just "out there" waiting to be addressed. For Foucault the situation is more complex – the categorisation of phenomena as problematic is the result of a social process of negotiation between groups. Finally, governmentality, the way in which power relationship work in multi-dimensions shaping individuals' lives from the most personal level to the most public, represents a significant contrast to the realist idea of power.

Power/knowledge

Our 'common sense' attitude to knowledge can be summarised by Leibniz's assertion that: "It is the knowledge of necessary and eternal truths which distinguish us from mere animals, and gives us *Reason* and the science, raising us to knowledge of ourselves" (Liebniz 1898). That knowledge is empowering is fundamental to the view of those writers who accept the assumptions of the *new politics* and emphasise the role of new communications technologies in allowing the agglomeration of knowledge and, therefore, power.

It is this idea of knowledge as necessarily empowering that Foucault challenges through the construction of power/knowledge as a single entity. Power/knowlege places the gathering, organisation and use of knowledge side by side with the manifestation and exercise of power. As Kearney notes, Foucault did not believe that knowledge was neutral. Behind the veneer of the knower as a disinterested spectator, Foucault identified ways in which truth was often monopolized "in such a manner that whatever surpassed its official limits was categorised as a form of deviancy" (Kearney 1986: 291). So, in Foucualt's study of madness we see the development of the psychiatry and institutional responses to madness as an expression of new power relationships based on the formulation of new forms of knowledge about what is and is not to be classified as insanity. And power/knowledge relationships act across all of society. Foucault, Turner claims, saw that power and knowledge were "always inevitably and inextricably interconnected so that any extension of knowledge and every elaboration of knowledge involved an increase in power" (Turner 1997: xiii). Knowledge, is not a resource in the struggle for power. What we know is fundamentally shaped by relationships of power and cannot be separated from them.

Some commentators have mistakenly assumed that the intimacy of

power/knowledge implies some conspiracy against the wider public. That, for example, a cabal of psychiatrists became powerful by consciously wielding their power to construct institutions that they knew would reinforce their status. There is no conspiracy. Institutions are not constructed to some overarching plan, they are moulded by the interaction of power held by the actors involved in their creation and maintenance – patients, doctors, campaigners, civil servants, politicians, organisations, governments and others. While there is agency in the decisions taken by individuals, the shape of an institution is created by the interplay of interacting forces and they may be reshaped if the forces on them change.

Problematisation

The ways in which phenomena are problematised and made subject to specializations such as medicine or psychiatry forms a key process by which individuals become enmeshed in power relationships and by which governance, in the widest sense, is extended to cover an ever greater range of issues. Government is no longer just concerned with the desires of the prince or the nature of the state but has become more interested in "how to introduce economy and order (i.e. government) from the top of the state down through all aspects of social life" (Rabinow 1984: 15). It contributes to the creation of categories into which "difficult" social phenomena can be placed and then provides the mechanisms and institutions by which these phenomena can be contained and controlled. Government has become the provider of solutions to problems constructed through the society-wide action of power/knowledge – such as illness or insanity or criminal behaviour.

However, while the state's 'institutions of normative coercion' (Turner 1997: xiv) are significant social actors, they do not simply impose their will on the populace. They are not coercive in the violent or authoritarian sense. They are readily accepted as

legitimate and normative at the every day level and they: "exercise a moral authority over the individual by explaining the individual's 'problems' and providing solutions for them... They are coercive, normative and also voluntary" (Turner 1997: xiv). Individuals and societies do more than simply surrender power to these institutions, they construct them through their needs, desires, actions and expectations. The medical profession did not become "powerful" through the actions of doctors and administrators alone, it grew in strength because people demanded diseases be cured, to live healthier lives, and for better health care to be widely available.

The idea of problematisation has lead some writers to claim that Foucault has hopelessly enmeshed individuals in a power web from which escape is impossible and resistance futile. However, to some degree, the continued ability of any institution to exercise power over individuals relies upon society's continuing tacit support.

Governmentality

The result of the success of problematisation in creating categories by which our lives are dealt with has helped to expand governance into the daily and private lives of every person. Government becomes increasingly important in ensuring the biological well-being of the population. The state is expected to be responsible for disease control and prevention, adequate food and water supply, sanitary shelter, education, the protection of our bodies and the punishment of those who would harm us. And as the state develops these responsibilities it is itself changed as the fostering of health becomes central to the state it develops a regime of 'bio-power' (Rabinow 1984: 17).

This is not done by force. Usually the expansion of governance is welcomed, even demanded, by the population. Demand, for example, that children be protected from the threat of abuse, requires government action through the institutions and

professionals of the social work system and allows further intrusion into individual's private lives. Governmentality, as Moss notes, describes both how: "power guides the conduct of individuals and the modern rationality which demands that everything and everyone be *managed*" (Moss 1998: 3).

Poster (1995) addresses an interesting application of governmentality in the information age in his discussion of databases as a Foucauldian discourse. Taking issue with Marxist conceptions of information control as a means of subjugating the individual, Poster sees the creation of databases in the light of Foucault's work on governmentality. Databases, Poster argues, represent a discourse that amplify the owner's power over individuals in the same way as the panopticon amplifies the power of the prison governor over the prisoner (Foucault 1991). On one level people willingly submit to this surveillance – through our application and use of credit cards, for example. Yet we also suffer from "database anxiety" (Poster 1995: 86) and, because everyone is aware of the power of surveillance represented by the database, Poster argues, they resist it by demanding greater controls on the use of information and thus the collection and use of databases has become politicised. The outcome is that laws restricting the uses of databases are passed, rules are made and means of policing these rules are put in place. Databases and the information they hold are made subject to governance, and surveillance enters another part of the life of society.

Governmentality, though, does not just extend down into private lives. Increasingly "someone" is expected to be responsible for managing other areas of society. Food should be safe, so organisations are created to monitor food producers and retailers. Children should be safe so those who work with them should be scrutinized and "someone" should ensure the maintenance of good standards.

Foucault's conception of power spreads both inward into our very bodies and

outward into the body of society, into institutions and commercial organisations. Governance becomes an increasingly diverse and complex job conducted by traditional forms of government, consumer groups, medical professionals, monitors and by individuals themselves in the expression of their desires and preferences.

Criticisms of Foucault

Having briefly set out the key elements of Foucault's theory of power this chapter will now to consider three areas of criticisms of Foucault's approach made by writers from a realist perspective. The realist perspective broadly matches the attitude of the techno-liberal social entrepreneurs and resisters towards power and its use in society. In seeking to establish that there exists the possibility of a viable alternative to the three schools' one-dimensional view of power, it is therefore important to demonstrate that Foucault's work can respond effectively to a realist critique.

Realists make three claims about Foucault's notion of power. They argue that he stresses the fragmentary, heterogenous and plural character of reality, that he denies human thought the ability to arrive at an objective account of that reality and that he reduced the bearer of human thoughts to an incoherent welter of sub and trans-individual drives and desires (Callinicos 1999: 2). To put it more concisely, the realists argue that Foucault has three problems: the problem of reality, the problem of resistance and the problem of the subject.

Furthermore, these issues go to the heart of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools response to the second crisis of democracy, the issue of "fundamentalist identities" which cannot be contained by existing social and political institutions. The concept of how power is used by social actors, how the use of power

creates resistance rather than stamps it out and the way in which the individual is constituted by the use of power fundamentally contradict the shallow vision of power and social relations contained within the writing of the three schools. If it can be established that Foucault's alternative conception of power is at least as effective an explanation for social phenomena as the realist position, then it significantly expands the range of policy options available in response to the *new politics*. If power implies resistance, as Foucault argues, then there is no simple way in which power can be used to force compliance. And if society is constituted by the interplay of power in a network of relations, then the shape of social institutions, technologies and the state itself are not simply imposed but the product of a process of social construction and subject to the exercise of power.

The problem of reality

Foucault's genealogical approach to the study of institutions and his conception of power/knowledge does not simply accept common sense notions about reality or reason. Furthermore, the way in which problematisation places emphasis on the social construction of 'real' problems such as illness or mental health has led many commentators to accuse Foucault of extreme relativism.

For realists such as Trigg (2001) and Norris (1998), Foucault's theory of power leaves him incapable of making judgements between right and wrong and incapable of supporting a forward-looking critique of society. So, Trigg argues, without objective reality individuals have no reason to struggle against the way in which they have been conditioned, there is nothing to measure their conditioned view of the world against. Foucault becomes: "a mere mouthpiece of a particular kind of society, subject to

domination by various forms of power. There is then no more need to take his views seriously than those of anyone else" (Trigg 2001: 247-8).

Foucault's "denial of reality" renders his theories inherently unstable. If reality is as malleable as Foucault suggests, then his genealogical studies become simply one view of the world amongst an infinite number of possible views and, crucially, there is no means by which to judge whether Foucault's point of view is any more valuable than the opinion of anyone else. Foucault must: "assume what he wishes to repudiate" (Trigg 2001: 247). He has to suggest that it is possible to understand the way society works, and the way people are historically conditioned, but at the same time insist that this understanding cannot itself be historically conditioned, if it is not to be worthless.

It is a point which is also made forcefully by Norris who attacks poststructuralists such as Foucault because: "...they assert the non-availablity of trans-paradigm or inter-linguistic criteria of meaning and truth while also purporting to locate the points at which such problems arise or to treat them in a manner that somehow allows for meaningful comparison between rival paradigms" (Norris 1998: 133-4). Foucault must claim either to have an anchor point in reality that he denies to others, or deny any special place for his theory of power and abandon it as just one possible explanation amongst many. In either case, both Norris and Trigg argue, Foucault's theory of power is undermined.

In response to this attack, those who support Foucault have argued that his theory of power does not require the abandonment of reality. Foucault was not a relativist in the same way as many postmodernists, in that he was unwilling to entirely dislocate our activities of social construction from 'reality' or from 'reason.'

As Hoy notes, while Foucault refuses to separate reality from its context he does not abandon it entirely. The point is not to show that historical ideas of reality are in

fact irrational. Instead, the goal is to demonstrate that since these forms of reality have been made, they can be unmade (Hoy 1998: 24). It is a crucial distinction. There has been a tendency to view the argument about reality in polarised terms as if one can be either 'for' or 'against' it. Foucault, however, is better seen as an agnostic about this question and blurs the lines between the two camps.

And yet the problem of Foucault's apparent relativism remains. If Foucault can argue that sickness is actually a social construct, then surely he must be relativist?

This is based on a misunderstanding of what Foucault meant by the process of problematisation. As Osborne makes clear problematisation is not the construction of a problem but of ways of the ways we experience and categorise them: "It is not that there is nothing 'out there' but constructions, but that policy cannot get to work without first problematising its territory. And if this means that policy is fundamentally a creative rather than a reactive endeavour, it also means that policy can never be about just anything" (Osborne 1997: 174/5). A society constructs the ways in which it understands and cope with 'the real world' through categorisation and bureaucratisation. Foucault's concern is not with what is 'real' but how a society reacts to problems and what this reveals about the flow of power within that society.

Foucault's theory of power/knowledge does not contradict realist accounts of the world, nor, for that matter does it support them. Rather it seeks to understand them in the context of their history. To those who see the world and society as having a "truth" waiting to be discovered, this may devalue Foucault's work. But if we recognise that all the institutions in our society have been constructed and continue to evolve then only a theory of power which allows for competing and contradictory views of the world can properly explain the constant battle to "perfect" these institutions. In the same terms we can only understand the difference between Aristotle's notion of what is "rational" and

that of, for example, Foucault's realist critics idea of "rationality" if we understand that even concepts as apparently fundamental as "rationality" are, in fact, historically constructed and shaped by the power relations in society. Foucault does not need to know what rationality "really is" to establish a critique of the "rationality" that is used in modern society. Nor does he need to concede that reality cannot or does not exist.

The problem of resistance

Foucault lived his own life as an active and outspoken campaigner for political causes. Yet one of the criticisms of Foucault has been that his conception of power is so all encompassing that there remains little room for individuals or groups to exercise any resistance to the prevailing powers in their society.

So, for example, Potter argues that while postmodernism may be presented as a politically radical idea it in fact undermines the possibility of radicalism. Using the example of feminism, Potter argues that while postmodernism's emphasis on difference rather than shared experience can appear radical: "Yet it can just as easily be seen to uphold the status quo if it undermines the possibility of collective action based on sisterhood" (Potter 2000: 158). Norris too argues that, while writers like Foucault may place themselves in a radical and even leftist context their ideas have fallen in "...all too readily with the wider trend towards revisionist (often right-wing revisionist) views on the relation between historical 'truth' and present day social values. At any rate, they could offer no resistance to such views" (Norris 1998: 8).

For Norris, Foucault's notion of the power removes any possibility that there may be a "wider public good" or that decision making or "moral responsibility" could be viewed as matters of shared interest (Norris 1998: 159). Instead, he argues, what

freedom exists is reduced to the private individual seeking private goals. The private and public spheres are separated so that people may shape themselves but may not intervene in collective concerns.

However despite the claims to the contrary Foucault's theory of power does not rule out resistance. Nor does it isolate individuals from collective action. The critics of Foucault have confused power with 'power over' and domination. Foucault makes clear that while power constitutes all our social interactions, domination is only a very small subset of the action of power. "Only when the possibility of effective resistance has been removed does the power relation between two subjects of power become unilateral and one-sided... In such cases, we have something more than the exercise of power, namely the establishment of a state of domination" (Patton 1998: 67-8). So, the exercise of power does not always, or even predominantly, imply domination. All exercises of power are contested and in most cases there remains the possibility of resistance even in uneven contests. To understand what power relations mean "we should investigate forms of resistance and attempts made to dissociate these relations" (Foucault 1982: 212).

The presence of resistance in the exercise of power also provides the basis for political activity supposedly denied Foucault and makes sense of the supposed discontinuity between Foucault's philosophy and his life. The study of power in Foucault and the study of social institutions are intimately linked. "The point of engaging in political struggles – and Foucault thinks we are engaged in them all the time, hence his disdain for questions about the importance of politics – is to alter power relations" (Rabinow 1984: 6). Foucault's empirical, genealogical, studies of the institutions of medicine, insanity and incarceration are not abstract. By making power relations obvious they help us understand how such institutions might be made to serve

our needs better. By revealing the categorisations of problematisation they make clear the political and the power structures beneath 'common sense' understandings of the issues involved and raise questions about how such structures might be altered. This is not a politically disengaged act.

The problem of the subject

> One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that's to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework (Foucault 1980: 180).

It is certainly true, as the quotation above demonstrates, that Foucault could be dismissive of the independence of the individual subject from their historical context – especially in his earlier works. For Trigg this attack on the subject, combined with Foucault's vision of an all embracing web of power/knowledge means: "We are no longer to be seen as autonomous agents trying to understand an objective world. Instead, we must be viewed as in the grip of domination through power" (Trigg 2001: 246). As a result, the subject can only act and think in ways formed by society's dominant powers. If the subject is not independent, if we do not have a reality outside our social construction, then there is no space in which we can be free from the domination of those who are powerful in that society. It becomes impossible for the individual to develop points of view that are not shaped by the powerful and impossible for us to judge whether what they are doing is "good" or "bad".

However, as this discussion demonstrates, Trigg has conflated the ideas of power and domination and this has lead him to underestimate the importance of

Foucault's concept of resistance. Resistance allows that the subject need not be imagined as a powerless puppet and its implications required Foucault to amend his portrayal of the subject in his later work. Foucault came to see the subject as much more than a powerless automaton. Power, he concludes, is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free: "By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized" (Foucault 1982: 221). Foucault's subjects come to be actors able to play a positive role in shaping their own lives and reshaping societal power relations.

But the idea of a subject with greater freedom has also been attacked. Norris argues that: "there seems little sense that reality may impose limits – sometimes (if not always) non-negotiable limits – on the human freedom to redescribe nature in terms that answer to present conceptions of what is 'good in the way of belief'" (Norris 1998: 158). And Callinicos has responded furiously to Foucault's idea that individuals might have the freedom to shape their own lives. Attacking Foucault's rhetorical question: "But could not everyone's life become a work of art?" (Foucault 1984: 350), Callinicos argues that it is impossible for most people because their lives are still: "shaped by their lack of access to productive resources and their consequent need to sell their labour power in order to live. To invite a hospital porter in Birmingham… to make a work of art of their lives would be an insult" (Callinicos 1999: 91). Such a conception of freedom would be meaningful only if linked to precisely the kind of strategy for global social change which, Callinicos believes, Foucault reject.

It seems contradictory that those who accuse Foucault of making the subject too much the product of power relations are precisely those who have also been most critical of his conception that the same subject can exercise resistance. Moreover, it can

be argued that Callinicos underestimates Foucault's awareness of the physical constrictions on people's lives. As Moss points out, Foucault knew that the freedom that subjects have to shape their own identities is born out of interaction with relations of power. "Foucault saw the freedom that subjects have to work on themselves not as an abstract freedom, but as dependent on the resources they had at their disposal, both in terms of their own capacities and the structures of society" (Moss, 1998, p5).

The realist critics miss the point that Foucualt's conception of freedom applies to all actors in society. The individual is not free to make their lives in any way they please because the other actors in their society are also struggling to "make their lives a work of art". Subjects act freely in pursuit of their own choices and, in the web of interaction between sometimes competing and sometimes coinciding desires, the individual is both to some degree free and to some degree restricted. Callinicos's downtrodden hospital porter does not have the same choices as a multi-millionaire and, of course, Foucault was aware of restrictions on such an individual's freedom to act compared to others. But by the same token, the hospital porter does have freedom in his own life, his hobbies, his involvement in social and political institutions, his past-times, his family life. And, while these might seem like petty things to some critics, they will remain important freedoms for the hospital porter.

Being aware of these restrictions on the freedom of individual action, Foucault's call for the maximisation of the subjects ability to make choices for themselves can be seen as a call for the kind of social change necessary to give them that freedom.

Indeed, the degree to which individuals can exercise their resistance to power and alter the power relations around them becomes, for Foucault, a centrally defining feature of social institutions. It is clear from Foucault's work that his preference is for institutions that maximise the freedom of individuals and that he is critical of those that

seek to limit this freedom. To that extent, therefore, there is in Foucualt's work a means to make decisions about what kind of society and social structures we should be aiming to create. As Patton notes: "...we can see that Foucault's conception of human beings in terms of power enables us to distinguish between those modes of exercise of power which inhibit and those which allow the self-directed use and development of human capacities" (Patton 1998: 72). Foucault's clear preference is for those institutions that allow the individual to exercise the "self-directed use" of their capabilities and, for those institutions which allowed such capabilities to be expanded. As groups and individuals exercise power and come to appreciate its use, they will resist those institutions that seek to stop them using their freedom to act. So, for Foucault, even from the exercise of small freedoms – such as those left to Callinicos's hospital porter by modern capitalism – will grow the demand for greater freedom to act and choose.

By these means, Foucault develops a source of human freedom that is not tied to modern notions of humanism, which he sees as little more than the imposition of one historically created set of values on other histories and spaces. This is not the freedom to do as one pleases, regardless of worldly restrictions, but neither is it the negation of freedom to think for oneself as an independent subject. It is, however, a freedom which can be nurtured, which can be extended by use and which can be offered to others as a model for collective and co-operative action against those institutions that would seek to restrict or remove this freedom.

It is also a freedom that, as should be expected from Foucault, will be expressed in historically and socially specific forms that have to be judged against criteria specific to the landscape in which it flourishes and in the era in which it appears. Assessments of the level of freedom afforded to subjects have to be made in organisational, social and historical context. Foucault instinctively rejects claims to normative criteria outside

their context and does not seek to provide universal moral norms or criteria of evaluation, instead he offers "a cautious recommendation of the Greek practice of an 'ethics of existence.'... a 'practice of freedom' which enhances the feeling of power in a way which other liberated lifestyles do not" (Patton 1998: 76). Freedom is not found in the imposition of universal moral norms or, rather – as must always be the case – through the imposition of historically and culturally specific moral norms given the status of universality. Since power is always contested and the exercise of power always implies resistance there can be no endpoint in the search for freedom.

Foucault's notion of the subject is difficult. He changed his view of the ability of the individual to exercise freedom of choice and thought during his career and even his final position is complex. This freedom is intimately (indivisibly) tied to the exercise of power upon the subject and by attempts by the subject to exercise power over others. In the end, the subject is neither wholly free nor wholly enslaved and social institutions may be judged in relation to the degree to which they allow individuals to explore and expand their personal capabilities and exercise their ability to make choices.

The exercise of resistance

Foucault's work is uncomfortable. It does not give us easy answers. He never presents us with generalized conclusions or a map towards a better society. Instead, Foucault can seem to offer only more problems and more uncertainty. He side-steps questions of rationality and reality, and looks instead at the historical and social context of everything. He sees power in every interaction, but also sees resistance. The subject is both a social construct and an individual capable of reshaping power relations.

For some – Fiske (1989) and de Certeau (1984) – Foucault provides the basis

for a theory of individual freedom that characterises people as magpies. They make their lives as they please from the shiny things that consumer society provided without significant regard to the pressures of the real world. For others – Trigg (2001) and Norris (1998) – Foucault opens the door to a dark world where we live totally at the mercy of all encompassing power relationships that deny us freedom.

Which is the real Foucault? It may be that both images are wrong. Foucault's work does not map out a single route to a better society. "Foucault is highly suspicious of claims to universal truths. He does not refute them; instead his constant response is to historicize grand abstractions" (Rabinow 1984: 4). This is both constraining and liberating. It is constraining because there is no longer a utopia to aim for, only incremental steps in the search for greater freedom. But it is also liberating because it means that the 'struggle' for such improvements is in our own hands.

Without universal truths, are we left with nothing to believe in and with no reason to seek to change our world? If, as his realist critics have argued, Foucault leaves us in a world where everything is relative, where one viewpoint can never be judged "better" or "worse" from others but only as "different", then what is the point of trying to change anything. However, while Foucault refuses to provide us with simple prescriptions to make the world better, neither does he leave each of us without a social, even moral, imperative to act. We are the masters of our own small portion of power and we have both the means to play an individual's part in shaping a better world and the motivation to find ways of using that power collectively to its best effect. "Power, then, is not essentially repressive; it is not possessed, but is practised. Power is not the perogative of 'masters', but passes through every force… For Foucault, resistance to power is part of the exercise of power (part of how it works)" (Kendall and Wickham 1999: 50).

In this context the assumption by techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers that power is being stripped from some people and institutions and accumulated by others to be wielded by them without consequences hardly makes sense. That power cannot be used exercised without creating resistance appears consistent with the events of recent decades. Eastern Europe, to take one example, witnessed the decline of apparently impregnable repositories of state power through the mass mobilization of its people. In the West supposedly powerful companies like Monsanto and Shell have been forced into expensive changes of policy by the actions of the many. Such effects are only explicable by the existence in society of diverse and diffuse sources of power and resistance. And there are examples that show that this pattern can be repeated in the *new economy*. Barbrook (1998) notes that, in the mid-nineties, Microsoft was struggling with Netscape to gain a foothold in the Internet browser market. When Mircosoft executive Ben Slivka "suggested that Microsoft consider giving away its browser, à la Netscape, Gates exploded and called him a communist" (Barbrook 1998). Yet, within eighteen months, the most "powerful" corporation in the new economy and the most "powerful" man in that corporation were forced to concede defeat and give Microsoft Explorer away for free. Despite Microsoft's undoubted resources, they were not able to simply impose their will on masses of individuals who refused to do as they were told.

Such cases demonstrate that attempts at domination even by those with enormous resources, whether state military power (the former Communist nations), financial and political influence (Shell and Monsanto) or control of technology (Microsoft) can find their position undermined by the exercise of resistance by large numbers of the supposedly powerless.

Other forms of resistance can be less confrontational. As Microsoft's power has

grown in the operating systems market, so resistance has risen – to the degree that thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of computer literate people have donated time and expertise to create a free operating system, Linux, to rival Microsoft's Windows. This is particularly interesting because it represents a large number of people working together, pooling their individual power in a collective act of resistance. Less constructively, but no less an expression of resistance, perhaps an even greater number of people have devoted even more time to the creation of worm, trojans and viruses and other means of targeting Microsoft products to disable or damage them. The phenomenon of "file-sharing" on the Internet – by which large numbers of people flout copyright laws to share music, movies and software is another example of resistance. Corporations may have many resources but, as fast as they act to close one outlet there seems to be another software platform –Napster then Kazaa then BitTorrent – to foil their attempts to clamp down. Resistance is stubborn and widespread and attempts to stamp it out seem only to succeed in publicising it and making it more popular.

Foucault, power and the *new politics*

Foucault's notions of power can be used to assess the qualities of the social models constructed by the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters. Do they, as Foucault would demand, propose ways of proceeding which will maximise an individual's capabilities and do they allow the individual to exercise their ability to make choices for themselves?

The techno-liberal case most obviously fails by this criterion. The exercise of consumer power cannot lead to an ever greater exercise of power by individuals because it is fundamentally bounded by the restrictions of market capitalism. The end

result cannot be the ability to exercise one's own capabilities as fully as possible because the options available only include those that are already, or that might conceivably, be provided at a profit in a market system. These might, as the techno-liberals contend, provide very wide boundaries but the limits remain and where the individual or a collective's desires conflict with the principle of profit, freedom will be limited. This need not imply any sort of "capitalist conspiracy", though it does not rule out the action of cartels or industry bodies acting to prevent people doing as the please in protection of profits or copyright. It may simply be that certain goods cannot be produced at a profit, as the market demands, or that certain forms or type of organisation are rendered economically unviable by competition in a liberalized market economy. It may also be the case that, for all but the super-rich, there are things that money cannot buy – like space or clean air and water or unspoiled countryside – when the exploitation of such resources come into conflict with the needs of a market system to make a profit.

For the resisters the limitations on freedom may, at first glance, appear more difficult to define. The resister ideal of localization in "sustainable" small communities seems to promise individuals the enhanced ability to exercise real choices about their future by promising such communities control of the decisions which affect their every day life. However, especially in the very small scale communities suggested by Sale (2000) and Starr (2000) these writers concede that there would be the need for a degree of homogeneity within the society to ensure its stability. At the most basic level, everyone would be forced to agree to the basic rules of subsistence living – those who longed for life in a metropolis would be denied by the environmental imperative that such cities are "logically untenable" (Sale 2000: 116). Further problems arise when one considers the nature of such societies – for Sale they should shun change and novelty

and, though he concedes that there could be a very wide variety of political system and that such diversity should be cherished – even when it "could be at quite some variance from the Western Enlightenment-inspired ideal" (2000: 108). He believes that a degree of conformity within the society will be essential. Such demands will immediately put limits on the liberty of those who dissent. While this may be unproblematic in Sale's preferred "libertarian, non-coercive, open and more-or-less-democratic" (2000: 108) anarchies, the same may not be true in those bioregions who adopt political systems not inspired by the Western Enlightenment ideal.

Goldsmith (1996b) goes further, arguing that the greatest threat posed to communities is the rise of "social aberrations" such as crime, delinquency and drug addiction and that these are conspicuous by their absence in more homogenous, localized communities. In protecting the homogeneity of bio-regions, communities we should not be afraid to utilize the powerful force of public opinion that, in Goldsmith's view, "reflects traditional values and is fed by local gossip – a key force for ensuring adherence to community values and hence for preventing crime and other social problems" (1996b: 505). It takes only a small leap of the imagination to see how such pressure "fed by local gossip" could be used to limit the ability of some individuals or groups to maximise their own freedom and exercise their own power to choose lifestyles that do not conform to the expectations of the majority.

But, even where resisters do not aspire to such extreme solutions, they are wedded to the notion that the institutions of capitalism are overwhelmingly powerful and that direct action is a necessary and justified means of undermining a dangerous and damaging social system. So, for example, Kingsnorth (2003) is unapologetic about demanding revolution, Monbiot (2003) argues for a new international political system based on the threat by developing nations to bankrupt the rich nation's banking system

and a host of other resisters such as Klein (2001, 2002), Bello (1990, 2000, 2004) and Wainwright (2003) support a movement constructed around demonstrations, direct action and, in many instances, the use of force. But a social system built on the idea of direct action cannot be the basis for a society that extends individual freedom to the greatest possible degree. Resister "mass movements" are organisationally opaque and their mandate is, at best, fuzzy (Clark 2001) and – even if we allow that all the actors in the social movement against globalisation are all benign and accurately reflect the mass will – they establish a precedent which places the use of force as a legitimate means of achieving one's goals. While Kingsnorth and the others may applaud the activities of protesters in Seattle and elsewhere, it is at least arguable that the success of such protests has given rise to the use of similar tactics by less socially progressive movements, such as the pro-fox hunt lobby, the anti-petrol tax demonstrators or the Countryside Alliance in the United Kingdom.

The resisters' new society would be built on the ability of those who oppose globalisation to dominate their opponents and it must be likely that, in the future, someone would be tempted to get their way by exercising their right to demonstrate and impose their will on others. Once the precedent has been set, after all, how could the founders of a society created by direct action and protest reasonably argue against the continued use of the very methods they used to attain positions of power.

Between the power of the market and the threat of direct action sit the social entrepreneurs, placing their faith in new institutions of community responsibility. In arguing that the purpose of these reformed institutions is to empower the individual, to protect them from the use of power against them by the excesses of a globalized market and also to prepare them with the tools they will need to exercise their own portion of power in the arena of the new politics, the social entrepreneurs might seem to come

closest to matching a Foucauldian conception of freedom. After all, the ideology of the social entrepreneurs stresses the preservation of individual freedom within a network of support from oppression.

However the exploitation of this freedom can only be achieved through the imposition of responsibilities, and in practice, these could be quite onerous. Rather than allowing for increased freedom of action and thought the increasing responsibilities placed on individuals could quickly become intimately connected with the exercise of control, of demands for conformity and of attempts to limit what is perceived as possible. Social entrepreneur's protection must always come at a price. Leadbeater's networks designed to deliver personalized services entangles the individual in a more intimate relationship with experts and professionals. The responsibilities of individuals to these networks, and the role of networks in policing the behaviour of individuals, places the subject further within the remit of governance. There are a strong echo of Foucault's notion of governmentality in Leadbeater's assertion that "government has to become molecular: it has to get into the bloodstream of society" (2004: 89) and in his desire for people to enter into relationships of regulation and control on issues like health care. Leadbeater's vision of government goals achieved by the influence of "teachers, experts, advisers, parents, volunteers and peers" (2004: 89) delineating the limits of responsible behaviour within society does not suggest an increase in individual liberty. Indeed it seems deliberately designed to encroach not just on freedom of action but also on freedom of thought.

In practice the prescriptions of the social entrepreneurs may extend governance as they enmesh individuals more tightly into networks of service provision and mutual responsibility. The relationships with government and service provides could become even more intimate and intrusive.

So, it appears, that none of the visions offered by the three schools here under consideration meet the standards set by Foucault's analysis of power. All three are inherently limiting. Techno-liberals cannot transcend the limitations of the market, resisters may be socially restrictive and rely on domination as a means of achieving their end while social entrepreneurs offer protection at the expense of allowing ever more intimate intrusions into the individual's life.

Conclusion

Section One set out how, in response to the rise of fundamentalist identities, the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister authors constructed a range of responses that were apparently quite diverse. For the techno-liberals such identities were welcomed as proof that the old state was incapable and should be replaced by a networked society that met citizen's demands according to market forces. For social entrepreneurs the traditional solutions of social democracy were revealed to be inadequate by the increasing individuality of citizen demands. The solution was to replace communal solutions based on state provision with more individualized services delivered via forms of mutual cooperation. Resisters see the anti-globalisation movement as proof that fundamentalist identities are undermining the corrupt traditional state. For resisters, the end of the globalized economy will end the dislocation that causes discontent and the realignment of social, political and economic institutions to the demands of localization will accommodate fundamentalist identities within the community.

This chapter has sought to explore how, underlying these apparently diverse responses is a shared assumption about the way power is formulated and used in society. The three schools share a common, realist, one-dimensional view of power,

which not only fails to properly describe the world as we see it but also serves to limit the apparent options available in the face of the crises of democracy.

Foucault's conception of power raises the possibility that there are alternatives to the one-dimensional view of power that are capable of resisting criticisms from a realist perspective and which may offer a superior tool for explaining social phenomena. Foucault's conception of power is difficult and sometimes uncomfortable but, in the way he characterises the relationship of power/knowledge, problematisation and governmentality offers an alternative to the realist idea of power.

By challenging the simplistic view that knowledge gives power and positing, instead, that what we know is shaped by our position in networks of power Foucault states that no single group shapes the form of institutions or relationships, they are the result of a discourse between the parties involved. Power/knowledge makes clear that no single group – global corporations or technologically empowered elite – is shaping the institutions of the *new politics* without engaging in a transforming discourse with other sources of power within the society. Taken together problematisation and governmentality demonstrate how individuals' desires are intimately intertwined with the processes that extend governance through society. It is not solely (or even predominantly) through the use of techniques of coercion that power is exercised over the individual subject but through the actions of institutions and rules created in response to the problematisation of social phenomena and the subsequent demands for action to address these problems – crucially, these are processes in which the subject pays an intimate part. There is rarely a one-way exercise of power, no imposition of solutions, but only the outcome of social interactions and the flow of power through wider networks. Rather than the powerful being able to act on the weak without repercussions, Foucault's sees resistance implicit in every exercise of power.

There appear to be good reasons to believe that Foucault's conception of power can withstand its realist critics who accuse it of extreme relativism. Far from denying the agency of the subject or leaving them incapable of making judgements in the face of competing claims, Foucault offers both a model for the active citizen and a means of balancing the claims of social institutions and political prescriptions. In applying these models to the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister responses to the second crisis of democracy all three schools have been found wanting. In each case they place significant limits on the freedom of the individual to exercise their portion of power to the fullest possible extent.

Power is not the simplistic tool of oppression in the hands of the powerful, nor is it a resource that can be brought to bear without implying resistance to its action. Individuals, groups, communities, classes and nations continue to have resources of power at their disposal – and as Shell or Microsoft can attest, these resources can deliver a considerable sting to those who might seek to get their way by force.

Chapter 2.4
Democracy

Introduction

The previous two chapters have explored the responses of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools to the first two crises of democracy as summarised by Castells (2000a) and identified how their apparently diverse positions have, in fact, been underpinned by shared assumptions that limit the choices available to societies.

This chapter addresses the final crisis of democracy – the direct threat to the legitimacy of the existing political system. The party system has become discredited by its dependency on a media controlled by corporate interests, incapable of escaping from a politics based on personality and hooked on manipulation of the news: "the party system has lost its appeal and trustworthiness, and for all practical purposes is a bureaucratic remainder deprived of public confidence" (Castells 2000a: 343).

The three schools take apparently diverse positions responding to this crisis. For the techno-liberals the corruption of the present political system is taken for granted – and even if it were capable of acting in the interests of its citizens, it is too hidebound

by ideology, too bureaucratic and simply too stupid to do any good. For writers like Dyson (1998) and Hewitt (2005) government must be reduced to a rump and citizens' decisions should be expressed through the their choices in the market. For Ohmae governments "most often just get in the way" (1995: 4) and in a *borderless world* they should simply allow the market to provide for the development of economies. The traditional forms of government may still have limited roles – in providing the legal basis for business and educating workers – but on the big policy decisions it will be the actions of technologically empowered consumers in a liberalized, globalized market that will make decisions.

In relation to democratic institutions, social entrepreneurs see a limited though declining role for representative democracy (Leadbeater 1999, 2002) but also make the case for a move towards more direct and deliberative forms of technologically-enabled democracy located in regions and cities that become the locus of real power as the state declines (Mulgan 1997).

For the resisters the corruption of the democracy and in particular its dependency on corporate funding means that, for most, the traditional institutions – including the party system – should be abandoned. With most resisters advocating a form of localization, the favoured replacement for existing democratic institutions is a form of face-to-face direct and deliberative democracy that addresses the feelings of dislocation and apathy amongst citizens and delivers a radical democratic state.

However, as has been the pattern in the previous two chapters, beneath these apparently diverse viewpoints are a set of shared assumptions about the nature of democracy which are common to all three of these responses to the *new politics.*

In this case the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters assume that only a form of more-or-less direct and deliberative democracy can meet the challenges faced by liberal democracy. This broad assumption is based on three further beliefs:

1. That better communications between citizens will enable more rational decision-making;

2. That in the process of deliberation over decisions people will agree upon and adhere to reasonable standards of behaviour; and

3. That as a result the decisions taken by these polities will be demonstrably fair and encourage equality.

The three schools are by no means alone in sharing these assumptions about the future of democracy and the benefits of direct and deliberative forms of governance in the face of a crumbling liberal democracy. The assumptions of the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters on the rationality, reasonableness and equality of deliberative democracy are no means unique to them – they find a reflection in some of the leading writers on the theory of deliberative democracy: Habermas (1984, 1990, 1996), Rawls (1996, 1999) and Barber (1996, 1998). In examining whether the common assumptions about deliberative democracy of the three responses to the *new politics* are valid it will be enlightening to explore how these issues have been dealt with both in the work of democratic theorists and what their critics have made of them.

A shared vision of democracy

Although there are differences in how they see the future shape of their respective alternatives to liberal democracy democracy, the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters share the belief that reforms should lead toward deliberative and direct forms of government. Such changes, they argue, will result in decisions that are more

rational, that encourage reasonable debate amongst citizens and that result in fairer outcomes for all citizens.

For the techno-liberals, Katz (1997) elucidates most clearly their assumptions about the empowering effect of technology in creating a new democratic order to replace the empty shell of liberal democracy. Unleashing what Katz believes is the unprecedented capability of individuals to speak directly to one another, the Internet democratises the flow of information around the world. The resultant prospects for "a new rationalism" most excite Katz. Gone is the old political obsession with ideology, replaced by a new obsession with facts as "the new Digital society points the way to a more rational, less dogmatic approach to politics" (Katz 1997: 50). As this new technology, designed to serve the academic and scientific communities, fuses with politics it will create a new civil society. Katz believes that the methodology of the scientists who create the Internet will rub off on the conduct of politics. He sees the availability of information on the Internet as providing the foundation for a revolution in the quality of public policy debate. With ideology no longer constricting the decision-making process, Katz sees "the possibility that we could end up with a media and political culture in which people could amass factual material, voice their perspectives, confront other points of view and discuss issues in a rational way" (Katz 1997: 190). Indeed it is not just political ideology that Katz sees as giving way to the power of the Internet. His hope is that the new era will "elevate truth over faith, rationality of rhetoric, and fact over argument" (Katz 1997a: 84) forcing individuals to succumb to "relentless doses of truth" and confront their irrational beliefs.

People will have a real say in the decisions that affect their lives and use the information resources of the Internet to allow them to make informed decisions. The young, wealthy, technologically savvy digital elite will lead the way, Katz

acknowledges, but ultimately this democratic revolution can benefit everyone who "steps across the threshold" into the virtual world and is willing to offer the "patience, commitment and determination – and investment of time and energy" (Katz 1997: 18) necessary to participate in this new world.

Even the very idea of the nation-state is under threat. Katz rejects the idea that the Internet will create some sort of globalized government and, instead, argues that the boundaries of nations will be reshaped into ad hoc communities built around common interests. The nation state may continue to exist, but it will have to "cede its claim as the sole repository of power and the primary focus of our political allegiance" (Katz 1997a: 79). But the new communities that emerge to take over the role of the state will not look like those of the liberal democratic state. One of the chief differences is likely to be the undermining of the role of geographic location as a unifying factor amongst the communities members. The new communications technologies make "presence" relatively unimportant in the forming of relationships – so the new communities could be geographically scattered. For Dyson this "decentralization" is likely to be the most important structural impact of the Internet, with people no longer dependent on locality or central government to remain connected, the idea of majority rule in a nation-state becomes meaningless. Decentralization will allow society to separate into small groups and, if there are disputes: "On the Net at least: people who do not like the rules can leave" (Dyson 1998: 19). Dyson suggests that politics itself will be subsumed by the Internet and by the cultural changes it will bring. She argues that, as the world becomes more connected, the need to discuss politics will give way and socieies will increasingly be directed by the ways service providers respond to the choices we make as consumers in cyberspace. Consumers, free to make what choices they wish on the

net, unencumbered by the restrictions of the real world, will through their behaviour help create the tone of the communities they live in (Dyson 1998: 339).

For resisters, the power of corporations and the pressure of globalisation have made existing liberal democratic institutions unviable. They have been compromised by their relationship with business and if they ever did act in the interests of their citizens they are certainly no longer capable of providing the necessary protection from corporate exploitation.

The resisters response to this crisis of democratic legitimacy is to retrench democratic and economic organisation at a much smaller scale. One important modern take on the idea of localization has come from the environmental economist Hines (2000) who, under the slogan "protect the local, globally" has argued that economic and political localization much be protected by an international structure of trade laws.[1] Hines's starting position is that trade should take place, so far as possible, only over short distances and long-distance trade should only occur where items cannot be provided within a region's own borders (primarily raw materials and cash crops).

The benefits, Hines argues, would not only be felt in terms of trade and the environment, he argues that localization can help build and foster sustainable local communities and rebuild social cohesion. In particular, the emphasis localized communities would have to place on investment in labour intensive tasks such as infrastructure renewal, maintenance and face-to-face caring, would change the way people live.

[1] It is perhaps worth noting that another resister, Monbiot (2003), has been critical of the contradiction he sees at the heart of Hines's project. One criticism is that the retreat to local organisation and protectionism hardly forms a firm basis for meaningful international cooperation. Others, for example Goldsmith (1996) or Sale (2000), would regard the application of any global laws on local communities as an anathema, regarding the imposition of rules from above as a fundamental betrayal of the principles of their self-sufficient, self-regarding communities.

For localization to be effective, Hines argues, political institutions must be remodelled to recognise the new emphasis on small-scale organisation. Political institutions would require active democracy and the everyday involvement of citizens to ensure the continued focus on local production and the widest possible distribution of the ensuing benefits. Citizens will be encouraged to undertake the maximum possible participation in the setting of priorities and the planning of local initiatives. For Hines localization takes place within the structure of the existing, though transformed, nation-state.

Others, however, are willing to go much further. For Goldsmith (1996) government can only be "made by the people" if it renounces both the national and global level and instead is founded on the basis of participation that "can only occur at the local level, among those of us who know each other, see each other regularly, and share the same interests and world view" (Goldsmith 1996: 506). Under Goldsmith's "real democracy" society becomes the loose association of self-governing small communities controlling their political and economic destinies and built on a strong common identity. No technology is necessary to allow increased communication and communities on such a scale would take "rational" decisions in the sense that they would be forced (by the need for self-preservation if nothing else) to pursue sustainable and long-term policies for the protection of their people and their environment.

This localized model of communities, democracy and economics has generally formed the basis for debates at events such as the World Social Forums (Parameswaran 2003). Monbiot (2003) has severe reservations about the viability of such communities. He notes the historic propensity of men to seek to control and acquire new resources and asks how such isolated, relatively powerless and ultimately fragile societies could survive in the real world. One response comes from Starr (2000) who suggests that

Ghandi's vision of *swadeshi* (home economy) development or Rousseau's vision of subsistence economies may form the basis for a community that was "small, poor, agrarian and self-sufficient, attributes that would minimize its own expansionist ambitions and be unattractive to predatory neighbours" (Starr 2000: 179). As Monbiot notes, however, this could only work if somehow all nations could be broken down to this state in one instant but the practicalities of how this might be achieve is never addressed.[2]

Social entrepreneurs are less likely than either techno-liberals or resisters to give up entirely on the role of the nation-state – they prefer to look for ways in which existing institutions can adapt to the pressures of the *new politics*. Like the techno-liberals they put forward a vision of a technologically enabled form of direct democracy. Like the resisters, however, their vision of the communities in which this new form of democracy will be practiced retains a strong geographical focus. Indeed for Leadbeater (1999) the new technologies make geography more important than ever – he cites the importance of location in Silicon Valley – as the concentration of skills, knowledge and human resources in a region come to represent an area's true wealth. Typically the social entrepreneur community will be more cosmopolitan than the resisters – a number of social entrepreneur writers describe the community in terms of a city or region. Where the resisters have a rural idyll as the foundation for their

[2] Indeed this highlights something of a weakness in much resister writing – which is often strong on identifying problem and constructing plans for alternative communities but less clear on the outlining how one gets from the present situation to their preferred future. Amongst Marxists like Frank (2000) and Kingsnorth (2003) there are well mapped out more-or-less revolutionary paths to power but Marxists are very much in the minority amongst resister writers. Klein (2001) seems to be relying on a radicalisation of the wider citizenship through protest, though the precise mechanism remains uncertain. Nor is it clear, even in principle, how campaigns based on the centrality of consumerism (Hertz 2001, Lasn 1999) might overcome a corporate state. Monbiot (2003) sets out a complex plan for a world parliament with 600 seats each with 10 million constituents and elections held in secret, if necessary to avoid the censure of existing governments. Even if that were possible and one could ensure a fair result, Monbiot gives no serious consideration how such parliament might escape the control big business and dependence on the media (surely crucial if a candidate is to reach 10 million constituents) that have blighted, in his own view, much smaller national parliaments.

alternative society, the social entrepreneurs are more metropolitan and in the case of Sassen (1998), Beck (2000) and Leadbeater their ideal society would be built upon one of the world's great cities, such as London, New York or Tokyo: "Dense knowledge-rich regions are the basic building blocks of the new economy. Increasingly the global economy is a mosaic of regions, overlaid by increasingly unproductive national and international organisations." (Leadbeater 1999: 145)

Social entrepreneur communities would be too big for the face-to-face communication preferred by the resisters so, typically, they offer a wider range of possible settings for the deliberation necessary to enhance democratic institutions. For example Mulgan (1997) suggests deliberative forums, advisory juries, chambers chosen by lot and the use of new communications technologies to enhance the conduct of democratic debates and reduce the reliance on full-time representatives. Mulgan's goal is for "much more intensive communication between decision-makers and those on the receiving end of decisions" which would turn politics into a "continuing dialogue of discussion, explanation and decision" (Mulgan 1997: 16).

Leadbeater (2002) is convinced of the importance of new technologies, and in particular the Internet, for fostering greater democratic involvement and making possible local "self-rule". For Leadbeater the Internet is "the perfect medium for spreading change through analysis, education, argument and rationality. Ubiquitous information technology and communications systems amplify human brainpower and rationality" (Leadbeater 2002: 127). While initially these technologies (and the benefits they bring) may be used simply to make the traditional machinery of liberal democracies work more efficiently, Leadbeater remains convinced that, in the long run, their effect on the nation-state will be to "break it up and allow more self-governing solutions to emerge." (Leadbeater 2002: 137)

Communications technologies create a more informed citizenry by providing immediate access to a range of information that, in the past, has been available only to a handful of insiders and middlemen. In addition, however, it allows the opportunity for citizens to communicate their wishes directly to service providers. In these circumstances the role of politicians and political parties as advocates, representatives and intermediaries are undermined. In addition, the Internet makes possible the combination of growing direct democracy, citizens' self-service and the localized communities and: "could in turn pave the way for more self-government: people finding their own shared solutions to problems rather than turning to the state" (Leadbeater 2002: 138). Leadbeater does not, however, wish to see the state wither entirely. He speaks approvingly of the Scandanavian countries and Holland, for combining openness to new technologies and the ability to adapt to global markets with a continued concern to provide the necessary support to allow their citizens to function in the newly uncertain world. However, it is also true that Leadbeater (2004) sees the pressures on the traditional state continuing to build and, ultimately, he imagines a society in which service users, experts and providers come together with the intermediation of government and build services to meet their own needs.

The idea of direct or deliberative democratic institutions has been the subject of considerable controversy amongst democratic theorists in recent years and the remainder of this chapter will seek to use that debate to cast new light on the assumptions made by the *new politics*. In particular it will look at the difficulties that have been identified in the attempts by Habermas (1984, 1990, 1996), Rawls (1996, 1999) and Barber (1996, 1998) (and those who have followed them) to construct a deliberative democratic order built upon ideas of rationality, reason and equality.

Deliberative democrats

Though ideas about man being separated from the beast by his "power of reasoned speech" and the centrality of discussion in the polis can be traced back to ancient Athens and Aristotle's *The Politics*, the modern expansion in the importance of issues of deliberation in democratic theory can probably be traced to the work of Rawls and Habermas. They begin from very different conceptions of the nature of society and of the purpose of political institutions. Rawls, a committed promoter of the liberal tradition, is primarily interested in defining a form of social justice that will robustly underpin his conception of the liberal democratic state. Habermas comes from the Critical Theory tradition of the Frankfurt School. His programme has been to set out a means by which the public sphere might be repoliticised despite the resistance of modern capitalism. However, as Dryzek (2000) points out, Habermas has also come to an accommodation with the institutions of the liberal state in his later work.

There are identifiable areas of overlap in the Rawlsian and Habermasian analysis of the best way to address the shortcomings of existing political structures. They share:

1. A recognition of the importance of discourse and deliberation in making a better political order and, by extension, a better society;
2. The development of a theory of the ideal environment in which such communication can take place; and
3. Within that model an emphasis on rational actors behaving reasonably and making choices in an environment in which they are both free and equal.

As Benhabib (1996) notes, the differences in the methodologies of Rawls and Habermas are less significant that their assumption that liberal democratic institutions embody the idealized content of a form of political reason. She characterizes Rawls's "Kantian constructivism" and Habermas's theory of "reconstruction" as fundamentally sharing a conception of the practice of practical rationality. The task of "a philosophical political theory of democracy" becomes, for both Rawls and Habermas, "the clarification and articulation of the form of practical rationality represented by democratic rule" (Benhabib, 1996: 69).

When Rawls puts forward his idea of public reason he demands of the citizen that they give up their freedom to pursue to the full extent their beliefs about "constitutional essentials". He demands that, in forming their preferences they pursue only those that can be supported by reasons that might be acceptable to all those involved in the discussion. Famously he demands that they step behind the so-called *veil of ignorance* adopting an *original position* in which they divest themselves of all considerations of their own needs and desires and consider which outcomes would best serve the interests of justice. Rawls recognises that this is problematic. Why should citizens allow themselves to be limited by public reason on precisely those issues that are most important? Rawls identifies two important features of the political relationships between democratic citizens, which, he hopes, will help dissolve that problem:

1. These relations form part of the basic structure of the society in which citizens are born;

2. In a democracy the exercise of political power is the power of the public and, in a democracy, the public consists of free and equal citizens as a collective body.

Since diversity of belief is a permanent feature of democratic societies and the exercise of political power must be legitimate, citizenship imposes a moral duty on citizens to engage in a process of communications that allows the possibility of mutual understanding and the discovery of common ground. Rawls calls this the *duty of civility* and it requires citizens to be able to explain to one another on "those fundamental questions how the principles and policies they advocate and vote for can be supported by the political values of public reason" (Rawls 1996: 215). The duty also involves a willingness to listen to others and to be fair-minded in deciding when to make accommodations to their reasonable demands.

Democracy implies, therefore, that citizens are willing to explain their actions or preferences and willing to listen to and be swayed by the words of others. Rationality is central to this vision of democracy and citizenship – it is through rational deliberation that these citizens co-exist. The balances struck between citizens in their deliberations are not the result of political bargaining. Public reason demands that citizens put forward arguments that they sincerely believe that others will consider both reasonable and convincing and that they hope others will listen to and reasonably accept. Rawls describes this as his *criterion of reciprocity* without which, there is no legitimate exercise of political power.

Where reason fails, or when reasonable political conceptions of justice do not lead citizens to the same conclusions, consensus is not achieved and citizens must vote on the question at hand. However, the procedure of pursuing a reasonable outcome, even when it fails, adds legitimacy to the choice made by ballot which is absent from current decision-making processes. So, "the outcome of the vote is to be seen as reasonable provided all citizens of a reasonably just constitutional regime sincerely vote in accordance with the idea of public reason. This does not mean that the outcome is

true or correct, but it is for the moment reasonable and binding on citizens by the majority principle" (Rawls 1996: xlvii). For Rawls, the development of public reason and the setting of preferences is conducted by the individual prior to entering a policy discourse. This has led some commentators – Saward (2001), for example – to argue that he is not actually constructing a theory of deliberative democracy because choices have been made in private before the debate begins.

Habermas, by contrast, sees public reason as arising out of the fact of public debate. For Habermas, communicative rationality ultimately arises from discourse in the public sphere, it comes from the "unconstrained, unifying, consensus bringing force of argumentative speech, in which different participants overcome their merely subjective views and, owing to the mutuality of rationally motivated conviction, assure themselves of both the unity of the objective world and the intersubjectivity of their lifeworld" (Habermas 1984: 10). Like Rawls he demands that the citizen be capable of offering public reasons (that is those reasons that might reasonably be accepted by all those affected by the issue under discussion) for their expressions of preference. But it is the sharing and the testing of these reasons in the public sphere that creates the communicatively rational outcomes necessary to legitimise decision-making.

In the context of communicative action, someone is rational only if "he is able to put forward an assertion and, when criticized, to provide grounds for it by pointing to appropriate evidence" (Habermas 1984: 15). Similarly if the individual is following an established norm, expresses a feeling or makes known a desire, they must, to be considered rational in the public sphere, be able to justify their actions or emotions by reference to "legitimate expectations" and "practical consequences".

Habermas's vision of a deliberative democracy rests upon a collectively "rationalized lifeworld and a population accustomed to freedom" – minimum criteria

which themselves may be far from unproblematic. It differs most significantly from Rawls's liberal vision in that it "replaces the expectation of virtue with a supposition of rationality" (Habermas 1996: 386). That is to say, the choices made by the individuals are less important in assuring the public reason and legitimate decision-making than the details of the procedure followed. At its logical conclusion this can seem nonsensical – as Rostbøll notes, Habermas sometimes seems to be claiming that if we make "rationality procedural we can almost suspend the need for individual rationality" (Rostbøll 2000).

Political talk in a strong democracy

In response to Rawls' liberal vision of democracy based on rational political talk a number of authors have proposed a republican alternative. These authors do not want to destroy the structures of liberal democracy but wish to see them rebuilt around a new ideal of active citizenship and participation.

Barber defines "strong democracy" as a political system where conflict is resolved "through a participatory process of ongoing, proximate self-legislation and the creation of a political community capable of transforming dependent, private individuals into free citizens and partial and private interests into public goods" (Barber 1986: 132).

Barber attempts to clarify the practical implications of this definition by looking at its relation to seven "conditions of politics": action; publicness; necessity; choice; reason; conflict; and absence of independent ground.

Barber's strong democracy echoes Aristotle's conclusion in *The Politics* that man is defined by his *actions*. In Barber's strongly democratic society: "Activity is its chief virtue, and involvement, commitment, obligation and service... are its hallmarks" Barber 1986: 133). From this social activity, strong democracy develops a notion of

publicness. A strongly democratic society will create a public capable of reasonable public deliberation and decision which takes citizens beyond traditional reductive views of individuals defined solely in terms of their class, race, gender or, fundamentally, as more than atomic entities with only market forces tying them to others.

Politics is not simply about action but about *necessary* action. Non-decision is not an option – Barber states that the first law of *inertial politics* means that even inaction has political consequences. "Action implies *choice* and strong democracy creates citizens capable of making choices which are both meaningful and autonomous. The choices made are also *reasonable* – a vision of common sense decision-making" (Barber 1986: 127).

Politics is about *conflict* between contrasting interests and opposing powers. Barber's strong democracy, he claims, can "transform conflict into cooperation through citizen participation, public deliberation and civic education" (Barber 1986: 135). To achieve this transformation strong democracies greatest virtue is the absence of independent ground. By this Barber means that strong democracy favours no conviction or belief with a preferred status. The legitimacy of any view is decided only by what happens during the course of a public process of deliberation. Legitimacy comes from the participation of citizens in a process of public deliberation and public judgement that forces preferences to "earn" their legitimacy.

Problems facing political deliberation

Though they share very different conceptions of what deliberative democracy will mean in practice, the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools have demonstrated similar expectations of deliberative democratic reforms Rawls, Habermas

and Barber. They expect that, in replacing the flawed and failing structures of liberal democracy, they will achieve a system based on rational decision-making made by citizens behaving in a reasonable fashion and delivering answers to social problems that ensure fairness and equality.

The remainder of this chapter looks at some of the criticisms that have been made of these assumptions and explore whether they really do form a firm foundation for preferring forms of democracy predicated upon deliberation over the institutions of existing liberal democracy.

The proponents of the new politics believe that existing representative forms of liberal democratic government are corrupt and untrustworthy. Crucially, they also believe that they are incapable – they are too slow, to hidebound by ideology and just too incompetent to deal with the globalised, individualised, technologically empowered demands of their citizens in the era of the new politics. Each school, assuming that liberal democracy has failed, attempts to construct and alternative form of democracy that can survive the demands of the new era. Each school builds a form of direct and deliberative democracy that aims to produce rational decisions based on debate amongst reasonable participants delivering equitable results. With these superior forms of democracy within reach, they argue, existing liberal democratic institutions can be abandoned (they are soon to be overwhelmed by progress in any case) and the new era can begin with a new politics. Unfortunately for the three schools, the benefits of deliberative and direct democracy may not be as easily achieved as they hope.

The problem of rationality

Rationality is of central importance to the theoretical models of deliberative democracy constructed by Rawls, Habermas and Barber. Rationality is also claimed to be an

important advantage of deliberative and participative forms of democracy favoured by those constructing responses to the *new politics*. Its chief virtue, for all these writers, is the way in which it promises to bolster the legitimacy of democratic decision-making. At its strongest it promises unanimity in democracy – by uncovering the rational solution to a problem through the process of deliberation the outcome can be convincing to all those involved in the process. Even in weaker forms, where unanimity is not arrived at and a ballot is necessary, rationality allows deliberative democrats to assure those in the minority that their position is not due to interest or bias but, because deliberation must lead to the rational to the victory of the best argument.

The centrality of rationality to deliberative democracy's claims for greater legitimacy in comparison with existing liberal democracies is emphasised by Miller who states plainly that if "the rationality claim falls, so does the legitimacy claim, for why should the disadvantaged accept as legitimate a procedure that relies upon methods of argument and reasons they cannot share" (Miller 2002: 204). Choices made irrationally or to different rules from those assumed by some citizens must, Miller argues, appear less legitimate (and may even appear illegitimate) to those who do not get their way in the deliberative process.

In the ideal procedure, proposed by authors such as Rawls and Cohen, deliberation is characterised as free from coercion and reasoned in that it is the force of argument that is the only factor in the decision. It takes place between equal parties with equal say in framing and contributing to the debate. Finally deliberation will seek to arrive at "a rationally motivated consensus" with decisions taken on the basis of reasons which are persuasive to all (Cohen 1998: 187).[3]

[3] It is worth comparing this point to the discussion of power in the previous chapter. Once again power is conceived only in terms of the public exercise of force and domination – the ideal structure is constructed of equals who deal with each other in only one-dimension of power. There is no space for the possibility that power might be exercised at deeper and more complex forms.

However, these appeals to this form of rationality have attracted considerable criticism. Manin attacks this conception of deliberation as nothing but "the calculations of the classic economic agent" (Manin 1997: 348). Manin is concerned that in political decision-making we never have all the facts and we are always facing limits on our time. Political decision-making is always, Manin notes, "a choice under uncertainty." Gerald Gaus (1997) describes Rawlsian rational actors as "demigods" and argues that what would be done by fully rational, fully informed people with an unlimited ability to process information is inappropriate and unachievable model of individual behaviour and is not a firm basis for the construction of real democratic institutions. Real humans will always lack the cognitive resources and total understanding necessary for "rational" decision-making: "the pursuit of minimal rationality is challenging enough, without seeking to model our practices on what we would do if we had such semi-divine status" (Gaus 1997: 214)

Certainly there appears to be strong evidence from within economics that this model of rational man is suspect. For Keynes decisions about the future – whether personal, political or economic – cannot depend on "mathematical" rules since we rarely have enough information. He says that in making decisions we are "calculating where we can, but often falling back for our motive on whim or sentiment or chance" (Keynes 1978:46). More recently the application of psychological techniques to the actual behaviour of individuals when faced with choices has confirmed that the model of a rational, goal-oriented actor is a fiction. Nobel prize winners Kahneman and Tversky (1979) developed prospect theory, highlighting the great importance of risk and loss aversion (especially of items imbued with emotional importance) in market choices. The field of "behavioural economics" replaces the theoretical model building of classical approaches with observation, games and simulations of economic

behaviour. Shefrin (2002) identifies three key themes of behavioural economics: that people make decisions by "rules of thumb" rather than rational analysis; that people's solutions to problems are "frame dependent" – that is they do different things when faced with the same problem in different contexts; and market inefficiencies –contrary to classical and neo-classical economic models, the market is a poor means of communicating the information people need to make choices, often because it is poor at providing the necessary feedback to regulate poor choices.

The idea of the rational actor in politics has also been the subject of criticism. As Benhabib (1996) notes, the development of political theory under the influence of this economic model of reasoning has proceeded under the "methodological fiction" of an individual entering the political arena with an ordered and coherent set of preferences – a fiction that has no relevance in the political world. On complex issues, individuals may have views but they will rarely have an ordered set of preferences, "since the latter would imply that they would be enlightened not only about preference, but about the consequence and relative merits of each of their preferred choices in advance." (Benhabib 1996: 71) This is a crucially important point – if individuals could enter the deliberative arena with a rationally ordered set of preferences, then deliberation would be superfluous. If the individual is already in possession of all the facts, knows the outcomes of their choices and can choose precisely which outcome they prefer, then they do not need to share information with their fellow citizens.

Even if citizens come together with their rational preferences, there is no guarantee that it will lead to a better decision-making process. Elster is critical of "hyperrationality" – the inability to recognise the limits and failures of rationality – such as ignoring the importance of uncertainty, ambiguity and the lack of information while demanding or promising rational political decisions. Some deliberators "fail to

acknowledge the limits of reason and thus fail to apply self-critical capacities of reason to public reason itself" (in Bohman 2000: 157). The result, for Elster is that there are no right answer to all questions. Rather than an overarching rationality he proposes "local theories of rationality, which apply to special problems". Such forms of rationality may be robust, with strong, shared assumptions but they could, necessarily, only support very narrow ranges of discussion. Even under this narrow definition of reality, Elster argues, unanimity is unlikely and "full consensus is not expected. It might be obtained by accident, but would soon disintegrate" (Elster 1993: 181).

Increasingly economists have abandoned theories based on the idea of rigid individual rationality preferring, instead, a "theory of rational expectations", in which the expectation of rational behaviour is shifted from the individual to the collective or the process of the market. That is, that while individuals may seem to act randomly or without reason in the market place, this anomalous behaviour is eventually either priced out or averaged out by the market. Such theories built on collective rationality demand that the collective process of decision-making be capable of greater reliability than the individuals who are part of the process. This collective rationality relies on a process of adaptation to the feedback on the consequences of our decisions, "on average, outcomes prove to be rational because we are in a continual state of adaptation" (Hutton 1995: 230). However, the effectiveness of this feedback has long been called into question, not least because in complex societies, the impact of some elements of our decision making process may never be visible to us. As Keynes notes we cannot always be sure, even if we restrict our choices narrowly to the economic sphere, what the results of our action (or inaction) may be: "We have only the vaguest idea of any but the most direct consequences of our acts... our knowledge of the future is fluctuating, vague and uncertain" (Keynes 1978: 213). Manin (1997) argues that the imperfections of the

theory of rational expectations make it difficult to justify in economics and wholly unsuitable for a theory of rational democratic decision-making because the feedback for individual choices in the political system is both too diffuse and too slow to have a proper regulatory effect on citizens. He argues that the political application of the model of economically rational actor would lead to wild fluctuation of decision-making.

The controversy over the feasibility and desirability of rational models of decision-making has encouraged a number of deliberative democrats to look for alternative forms of rationality. These approaches have tended to build upon Habermas's construction of a "communicative rationality."

Dryzek (1990), for example, rejects the "instrumental rationality" of models based on the economic model of rational decision-making and constructs instead a model of "communicative rationality" which can "resurrect authentic and reasonable public discourse" (Dryzek 1990: 13). Communicative rationality relies on the absence of domination, strategizing and deception in the communicative process, that there are no restrictions on actor participation, and that all actors are communicatively competent. Under these conditions "the only remaining authority is that of good argument." (Dryzek 1990: 15) Still, Dryzek insists that contributions to deliberative political institutions are useful and valid only insofar as the "standards to which they are held are rational ones" (Dryzek 2000: 167) and insists that forms of communication that rely on emotion or rhetoric, though socially significant should be strictly controlled in the political arena, where rational argument should remain sovereign.

Bohman (2000) has undertaken a similar project. He also emphasises the importance of the idea of rationality in deliberative models of democracy but recognises that existing models are unsustainable. Like Dryzek, Bohman dismisses

instrumental rationality, arguing for a form of democracy, and especially a form of deliberation, constructed on the reality of the plurality of interest and plurality of conception in modern societies. A pluralist model of public reason: "denies a single *public standpoint* for working out the reasonable moral compromises needed to resolve deep conflicts in pluralist democracies" (Bohman 2000: 75). Implicit in Bohman's pluralist model is the rejection of the "original position" or the idea that polities with deep moral divisions are unsuitable locations for deliberative forms of deliberation. Such screening off of sensitive issues is too restrictive. "Almost every issue in the public agenda today, including affirmative action, abortion and welfare policy, involves questions of value and principle for most people" (Bohman 2000: 31) and the exclusion of such matters from the remit of deliberation would leave a deliberative democracy with nothing substantive to discuss. Bohman hopes that his conception of a plurality of public reasons can command unanimity amongst the citizens of a modern democracy, but it is of a much weaker kind to that proposed by earlier, ideal models of deliberation. Bohman argues that the success of deliberative processes should be judged "not by the strong requirement that all can agree with the outcome but by the weaker requirement that agents are sufficiently convinced to continue their ongoing cooperation" (Bohman 2000: 33).

But Bohman's model of deliberative democracy, while ridding itself of the burden of instrumental rationality in deliberative democracy does pay a considerable price. Bohman, for example, must concede that without the prospect of individuals coalescing around the rational solution to problems, there is no guarantee that deliberation will deliver practical government able to respond quickly to issues or a means of decision-making guaranteed to reach the best solutions to problems.

Decisions taken by deliberative means "will not necessarily be more efficient or always promote better overall consequences or social utility" (Bohman 2000: 27).

Partly because rationality can no longer be relied upon to deliver unanimity amongst deliberators, and partly because sometimes modern states will require that decisions are taken promptly, majoritarian decision making process will have to be applied in many instances. Bohman hopes that decisions taken by ballot can be compatible with the ideals of rational decision-making because the deliberative process which preceded the vote will have been informed by the arguments that "*would* eventually lead to full consensus under ideal conditions" (Rehg and Bohman 2002: 40) and that such arguments are more likely to have been those that would sway the citizens decision.

There is no way to be sure that Bohman's hope will be realised and, most crucially, no way the minority who find their interests voted down could be persuaded of it. Even Bohman concedes that incomplete deliberation "even if open and inclusive, does not necessarily increase the chances that the better argument will prevail" (Rehg and Bohman 2002: 45). There is no guarantee that under the less than ideal conditions of real deliberation – where time and information are limited – that the majority of citizens will converge upon a single solution and, even if such convergence takes place, no certainty that their choice will be the "correct" one. "Moreover, such convergence still does not follow even under the further counterfactual assumption that the public discourse is ideology free, that is free of all undirected restrictions in communication" (Rehg and Bohman 2002: 45). More damaging still, the hoped for transformation of diverse opinions in the deliberative process may actually work against convergence. The process of deliberation may act to further entrench antagonistic positions instead of bringing citizens closer together. After discourse "it may be that people retain their

original views, only now supported by even better and hence more reasonable arguments that only sharpen existing conflicts" (Rehg and Bohman 2002: 47).

Without a rigid conception of rationality, Bohman deliberative democracy seems to offer few advantages, especially to minority groups. His response is to emphasise the importance of deliberation as an ongoing process – deliberation can be judged legitimate if the parties involved continue to use the deliberative process to debate their point. All Bohman can offer groups who may regularly find themselves on the losing side in such a deliberative process is the prospect of more deliberation. But is even this minimal promise worth anything?

As with Bohman, Chambers (1999) argues that the defining feature of deliberative forms of decision-making is that there is no privileged and binding moment of promise that ties all parties into the choices made. Democratic decisions taken via deliberative processes "must be understood as open ended and fallible. This means that discourse is ongoing and conclusions and agreements reached by means of discourse are always open to revision" (Chambers 1999: 248). If this sounds reasonable at first, a moment's reflection reveals it to be deeply problematic. First, any conceivable democratic state resources are always going to be finite and the allocation of such resources is often going to be irreversible, particularly in regard to capital projects. The choice to build a new road or hospital in one district cannot simply be undone by a later vote. Those who lose the debate at the first attempt cannot easily hope to revise the decision once it is taken. Second, the impact of some decisions is decisive and irreversible for some individuals. Abortion may be banned and reintroduced and banned and reintroduced as decisions are revised but so far as the fate of the mother and baby are concerned it matters only what the law states at their moment of crisis. More prosaically decisions about the emphasis of education policy may change but the

children involved have only one education and they will be permanently influenced by the policies in place at that time. Finally, governments do not take decisions in isolation. They are often bound by contract or treaty that, once signed, are agreements that cannot be walked away from without penalty.

Ultimately, however, the idea that citizens in minority groups should continue to deliberate even when they are not seeing any benefits depends on trust. They must believe that the deliberative process of democracy offers them some prospect in the future that they will be able to persuade their fellow citizens of the rightness of their case. In a rational system, of course, the best argument could be guaranteed to prevail, so only the irrational could object if their point of view was defeated. But Bohman has conceded that the better argument may not prevail in his system and that there is no guarantee that deliberation will deliver the best decision. He concedes too that decisions may be made on the basis of ideology or narrow self interest by the majority and finally he concedes that deliberation may increase the conflicts between groups by entrenching their positions.

Economic models of rational decision-making have been heavily criticized and may not offer a robust foundation for new democratic institutions. Without them, however, Bohman's model of deliberative democracy could look unappealing, especially to those who belong to minority groups who are being asked to lend legitimacy to a new political system without any guarantee that it can offer them more chance of having decisions made in their favour. To meet even the lesser demands of "communicative rationality" they are asked to set aside the active pursuit of their own interests with no guarantee that the political system will not simply further entrench its bias against them.

The problem of reasonableness

If participants in a deliberative democracy cannot act rationally, then a lesser expectation placed upon them by a number of commentators is that in the deliberative arena they will at least behave reasonably. The risk to deliberation from the obsessive, stubborn or mad is that they can, through provocation, filibustering and disruption, delay and perhaps derail the reaching of a decision. The problem led Aristotle to conclude that politics was "that which might be deliberated by a reasonable person, not by a fool or a madman" (Aristotle 1976: 118). In a more modern context, Barber describes citizens as those people in society who are "by definition reasonable – non-impulsive, thoughtful and fair" (Barber 1986: 127). His idea of reason is, he says, a common sense notion that does not rely on rationality at all but does presuppose that actors treat each other as equals and are willing to persuade and be persuaded.

The demand of reasonableness placed upon citizens enables the participants in deliberative democracy to make two crucial decisions. First it allows them to decide which arguments are considered appropriate for discussion in the deliberative arena. And second it allows them to make a decision as to when reasonable arguments have been exhausted and it is acceptable to close the debate, where necessary with a vote.

For Gutmann and Thompson reasonableness requires reciprocity, a commitment to co-operate and find solutions that are mutually acceptable to other actors. They argue that when citizens have moral disagreements they should continue to reason together to reach mutually acceptable agreements, but they recognise that there are limits to this process. When someone argues for something that is judged non-deliberative (they use the example of proposals for discrimination on the grounds of race or gender) they have behaved unreasonably and in these circumstances "citizens do not have any obligations of mutual respect towards their opponents" (Gutmann and

Thompson 1996: 3). More strikingly, they say that: "A deliberative perspective sometimes justifies bargaining, negotiation, force and even violence" (Gutmann and Thompson 1996: 4) towards those who fail to meet the standards of reasonable behaviour.

Although bluntly stated by Gutmann and Thompson, similar assumptions underlie other ideas of reason in deliberative democracy. In a democracy of political talk citizens have a duty to ignore those they consider unreasonable. If they allow them to contribute freely the whole process of deliberation may be polluted and practical decision-making rendered impossible.

Such a position is highly problematic. First, it has important implications for equality, to which I shall return below. Second, it raises questions about the long-term stability and legitimacy of a state built upon deliberative institutions. As d'Entrèves notes, while most theories take for granted that reasonable behaviour is self-evident, the notion of what it means to be reasonable remains controversial since its varies in accordance with conceptions of what is right and wrong, just and unjust, good and bad: "Reasonableness thus remains a contested and contestable notion" (d'Entrèves 1997: 385).

Deliberative theory demands that those who persist in arguing from an unreasonable point of view are ostracised. But, at the same time, it demands that no one enters the deliberative forum believing one set of ideas is especially privileged. In serious debate people rarely put forward arguments that they themselves consider to be unreasonable. Unable to appeal to a privileged idea of right and wrong it seems impossible, therefore for the "reasonable" society to persuade those that they have excluded from debate that they have been guilty of unreasonable argument. The result is likely to be an excluded group that believes that it has been treated unfairly. While

those remaining in the deliberative process will believe they have excluded an unreasonable element, those that have been excluded will feel that they have themselves been treated unreasonably. According to Gutmann and Thompson (1996), in circumstances where groups behave unreasonably, deliberators have no duty of respect for their unreasonable position and, in certain circumstances, may be justified in using force. In this instance, both sides might feel justified in pursuing extra-political means to ensure that their opinion prevails. This model of deliberation seems unlikely to reduce conflict and stalemate appears like to be the consequence of the duty of "reason" in polarised debate.

An example of how deliberation could lead to such stalemate is (unintentionally) presented by O'Neill (2002), who explores how deliberation could be applied to deep-rooted conflicts to provide policy solutions. His chosen area of difficulty was the conflict on the Gervaghy Road in Portadown, Northern Ireland. Loyalist members of the Orange Order insist it is their "right" to march through a predominantly nationalist area while the local residents believe the march is inflammatory and wish to prevent its passage. The problem for deliberation, O'Neill argues, is that "this dispute cannot be resolved rationally, or impartially, if we are to take as a given the incommensurability of [each sides'] claims" (O'Neill 2002: 179). To make the problem more malleable to the rules of deliberation O'Neill applies the criteria of Habermas's discourse theory to both sides' cases and judges that the Orange Order's argument cannot be judged to be reasonable and so should be dismissed. This solves the problem for deliberative democracy because it means that discussion can now resolve any outstanding problem, though what the value of such deliberation might be is not clear as an effective decision about the outcome of the process has already

been made since only one side remain to debate the issue at hand. However, while the procedure survives, it does nothing for the actual problem in the real world.

It hardly seems likely that, on being informed their argument has been ruled unreasonable, the loyalist demonstrators would abandon their protests, since from their point of view, nothing material has changed. Nor does it seem likely that, by excluding these "unreasonable" demonstrators from the processes of negotiation, a peaceful resolution to the problem can be achieved. Excluded from any "political" solution, it seems at least possible that such demonstrators would pursue extra-political means to express their demands.

Excluding people for being "unreasonable" may preserve the processes of deliberation but it risks exacerbating the problems that democratic government is supposed to solve.

As Gaus points out (1997: 231), any effort to give what we believe to be reasonable arguments must draw on an individual's own understanding of what it means to be reasonable. In a deliberative democracy opponents need never debate because they may never meet each others' criteria or reasonableness. This may prevent a bitter argument, but it does little to solve the social conflict between those who owe no respect to their opponents.

Such divisions may exist in any democracy. As Miller notes on the topic of issues such as abortion, if we try to apply the rules of reasonableness then "both sides are reduced to silence because they know that the arguments they want to make will not be compelling to those who disagree" (Miller 2002: 211). In such debates it is likely the contributions of those who feel most strongly about an issue are going to be judged unreasonable by some part of the audience. Habermas concludes that "culturally sensitive issues" (the official language, the education curriculum, the status of churches,

laws on issues such as abortion and the status of the family) are areas that are not suitable for deliberation as they are "merely a reflection of the ethical-political self-understanding of majority culture" (Habermas 1998: 409). But the list of topics in which people might find other people's views unreasonable could be very lengthy. Gaus lists Freudianism, Marxism, eco-feminism, deconstructionism, libertarianism and fascism as just a random selection of doctrines which a large number of citizens firmly believe "are more than a little crazy; they are not just wrong, but unreasonably so" (Gaus 1997: 215). It begins to look like the actual scope of deliberation might not be very large, and that it may not be appropriate for precisely those divisive issues that are at the heart of the supposed disillusionment with existing liberal democratic institutions – such as the discontent of those with fundamentalist identities.

One hope of deliberators is that the process of deliberation will act to bring people together – that communication with will create greater understanding of the others opinion and that both sides will emerge with their positions somewhat changed. As Phillips puts it: "The common core that characterizes theories of deliberative or communicative or discursive democracy is that political engagement can change initial statements of preference and interest" (Phillips 1998: 149). What this assumes is that the movement created by deliberative processes will lead to greater agreement. This need not be the case. Mouffe (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, Mouffe 1993, 2000) has convincingly argued that conflict, not consensus, is at the heart of democracy and that deliberative models that seek to ignore conflict or, which, through exclusion, seek to prevent the debate amongst "adversaries" could see it replaced by a war among "enemies" and as such "far from being conducive to a more reconciled society, this type of approach ends up jeopardizing democracy" (Mouffe 2000: 31).

Sunstein (2001) argues that "enclave deliberation" – the tendency of like-minded people to come together to air their opinions – combined with the effects of "group polarization" mean that the outcome of deliberation may be greater division and increased sectarianism in politics. Based on a study of Internet use, Sunstein's research shows that political websites overwhelmingly provide links to sites that can be classified as "like-minded" (2001: 59) and finds this particularly true of the most extreme "hate group" sites. Citing a range of research (including Spears et al (1990) and Wallace (1999) on group psychology and the use of communications technology, he also points to the tendency of groups to become increasingly strident in their common views. After deliberation, Sunstein argues, people are likely to move to more extreme positions than those they originally held and to communicate only with those that agree with them.

Although new technology has not created enclave deliberation, technologies such as the Internet and the increased "balkanisation" of the media makes it easier for people "to isolate themselves from competing views" (Sunstein 2001: 67). The outcome, Sunstein fears, is not just the reinforcement of existing ideas but a shift towards extremism and factionalism. There are two mechanisms within the behaviour of factions likely to increase their isolation. First, if the members of an isolated group are already inclined towards a certain point of view, then the "argument pool" within such a group will offer a disproportionately large number of arguments in one direction and disproportionaly fewer arguments going the other way. "As a result, the consequence of discussion will be to move people further in the direction of their initial inclinations" (Sunstein, 2001: 67). Secondly, Sunstein supposes that it is reasonable to suggest that people will want to be perceived favourably by their peers. Once debate starts within an already biased and isolated group, Sunstein expects the desire for

others' approval will mean that people will tend to "adjust their position in the direction of the dominant position" (Sunstein 2001: 68).

These mechanisms make it likely that the direction of movement in factions is likely to be away from accommodation with those holding other opinions. The consequences for democracy could be a high degree of fragmentation. Individuals, not originally fixed in their views and perhaps not so far apart, end up in extremely different places, simply because of what they are reading and viewing. Polarization leads to bad decision-making as groups fail to share information that would allow the group to make "an objective decision" – and Sunstein notes that though experiments find this tendency in polarized groups in a variety of forums, it was particularly common in online groups. Sunstein is particularly critical of new technologies capability to spread apparently credible information capable of inducing fear, error and confusion and threatening social and democratic goals. The danger is particularly high in a "balkanised speech market" where: "local cascades lead people in dramatically different directions. When this happens, correctives, even via the Internet, may not work, simply because people are not listening to one another" (Sunstein 2001: 84).

In attempting, as he sees it, to save deliberation from the problems of enclave deliberation and polarization, Sunstein proposes a thought experiment in which a deliberative group consists of 12 members – six of one view, six of another – so the group is balanced. He hopes that, with "artful design" deliberating groups might be able to create *depolarisation* – shifts within groups towards a middle ground: "The persuasive arguments view helps explain why this is so. By hypothesis, the 'argument pool' includes an equal number of claims both ways" (Sunstein 2001: 83). There are a number of problems with this "solution." The most obvious question is who would be responsible for the selection of members in this deliberating group and how could

members of the group ever be sure that the selection process really was representative of all views in the argument? Secondly, as Sunstein points out elsewhere (2003: 92), there is no guarantee that moves away from extreme positions towards more centralist positions are going to deliver better or more desirable outcome. Thirdly, there does not appear to be any reason why Sunstein's balanced deliberative groups would not fragment into polarized groups as he supposes is likely in practice. Finally, and most importantly, if deliberative groups are being designed towards creating specific outcomes (centralist policies) what is the point of deliberation? There is a sense in Sunstein's construction that the designers of the groups, not the deliberators, are determining the outcomes.

So, Sunstein's work suggests that "reasonable" agreement, or even the common ground for "reasonable" debate may be increasingly difficult to achieve in the real world of a non-ideal communication sphere. And the widening of perceived distances between groups has the potential to undermine the basis of democratic societies. Echoing Gutman and Thompson's (1996) idea that deliberators do not have a duty to treat with respect those who they consider unreasonable, Miller (2002) points out that increasing fragmentation of society may weaken each group's commitment to deal justly with others "the boundaries of the moral community within which people are willing to apply principles of justice to fellow members are affected by perceptions of similarity and common identity" (Miller 2002: 219). Miller is forced to conclude that for deliberation to serve the cause of social justice it requires a community whose members share a common identity that transcends their group-specific identities. Miller believes that this requires, in practice a shared national identity, but there can be deep dividing lines even within the boundaries of modern states that may make common identities difficult to create and maintain.

What is reasonable is, as d'Entrèves (2001) notes, a contested and controversial notion, not least because its application to democratic theory implies that the "unreasonable" must be excluded. Unless the scope of deliberative debate is limited to only the most mundane problems there seems to be no avoiding the danger that the application of an expectation of "reasonable" behaviour could increase the polarization of democratic societies. As Gaus (1997) notes, a person's efforts to sincerely give what they believe are good arguments that will not be rejected on reasonable grounds inevitably calls upon their own understanding of what constitutes reasonableness. That understanding will be affected by the epistemic, moral and religious commitments that each individual carries with them. As a result "there is little prospect of a consensus emerging on what is politically reasonable in a society that disagrees on what is religiously, morally and epistemically reasonable" (Gaus 1997: 222).

The problem of equality

Models of deliberative democracy, whether they draw their inspiration from the visions of the Internet as a vast marketplace of ideas, or of metropolitan technocracies or participative villages, share the basic assumption of equality. This is even more true of the constructions of democratic theorists, whose various complex constructions (the "original position", communicative rationality, or "strong democracy") can all be seen as means of attempting to create ideal models of democracy that offer a level playing field for all those taking part. Cohen (1998), for example, is aware that citizens must be "substantively equal" at the outset of deliberation if the distribution of power and resources is not to determine the outcome of debate. Deliberation will offer wider guarantees of basic liberties because it requires majorities to justify their preferences using reasons acceptable to all but Cohen is aware that deliberative democrats begin

from a position in which power is not equally distributed. Cohen makes a number of recommendations for how a deliberative democracy might address present imbalances – including the provision of publicly funded communication resources for the resource poor. Such an approach seems unconvincing. It is impossible to imagine that such public-funded resources could approach the communicative power of entrenched interests and media barons and it is difficult to believe that it could appeal to a mass audience.

Young has criticised deliberative democrats, such as Cohen, for failing to adequately address existing social, economic and political inequality in their attempts to construct their models of democracy. Young (1993) argues that the limitations of the expectation of reasonableness (discussed above) on individual and group modes of expression act to favour a male, white and bourgeois view of the world. She views, correctly I believe, the ideology of rational speech as an expression of power within society.

Young believes that the deliberative model will disadvantage those the already oppressed in two ways. First those who are socially and economically disadvantaged will have fewer resources to invest in communication, "the social and economic disadvantages that some groups suffer usually translates into a lack of political resources" (Young 1993: 133). These resources do not simply apply to access to technology – which has surely improved in the decade since Young wrote these words – but a gulf remains between the social and cultural resources available to the affluent and those available to the poorest in society. Secondly the action of cultural imperialism within society tends to stigmatise those patterns of behaviour that do not conform to the social norms of the privileged and the powerful: "in relation to which

the cultures of the oppressed are silenced or stigmatised deviant or inferior" (Young 1993: 135).

More recently Young (2003) has attacked the way in which proposed deliberative processes and structures reinforce biases and social advantage. The starting premises of deliberative democrats are unacceptable, because many seem to find no problem with structures and institutional restraints that limit policy alternatives. Deliberative democrats imagine they are beginning with a clean slate but their deliberative structures are being built on the foundations of "a society with longstanding and multiple structural inequalities" (Young 2003: 116). In such circumstances some discourses are, Young argues, likely to be hegemonic. Some opinions will hold sway over the way people think about their social relations, whatever their position in the social hierarchy and these hegemonic ideas will tend to reflect the interests of the already powerful.[4] When discursive systems frame a deliberative process, people may come to an agreement that is at least partly conditioned by unjust power relations, and for that reason should not be considered genuinely free consent. To place a duty on citizens to take part in such a system, as republican conceptions of deliberative democracy do, is to force citizens to give them a legitimacy they do not deserve. While Habermas guarantees that no citizen should be coerced into deliberation, this freedom to walk away from the political system hardly benefits those who may already feel excluded from society's sources of decision-making.

Alternatively, Young proposes, democratic theory (including theories of deliberative democracy) should cast itself primarily as a critical theory, with the goal of exposing exclusions and constraints in the supposedly fair processes of decision-

[4] Once again the models of the deliberative democrats are revealed to be constructed on the basis of an insufficiently complex model of power. In seeking to address the balance of power in the deliberative system in just one dimension, Young reveals that they are incapable of dealing with Lukes other dimensions of power.

making. Further, deliberative democrats should see the process of communication and decision-making as more vibrant and "far more rowdy, disorderly and decentred" (Young 2003: 119). This would, however, concede a number of goals of ideal models of deliberative democracy – including appeals to rationality as a bulwark of legitimacy and the notion of deliberative democracy as a way of creating common ground in modern states.

Some deliberative democrats are aware of the potential for discourse to reinforce existing power relations. Dryzek (2000), for example, contrasts conceptions of discourse in the works of Habermas and Foucault. For Habermas discourse represents "pure freedom", the ability to raise and challenge arguments in an unconstrained arena and to make judgements based only on reason. For Foucault, however, discourse is fundamentally linked to the exercise of power within society and as such, Dryzek believes, constrains and conditions what might be said. Dryzek chooses to emphasise the freedom that Habermasian discourse offers though he concedes: "discourses in the Foucauldian sense do exist, so discourse in the Habermasian sense cannot wish them away" (Dryzek 2000: vi). The previous chapter discussed at length Foucault's theory of power, which is more sophisticated than Dryzek allows. Dryzek's own theory of "communicative rationality" seeks to placate some postmodern concerns by allowing a plurality of discourse in deliberation in the public sphere but he continues to demand that "rational argument" be included at the core of his theory – and that means excluding or restricting the applicability of other forms of communication.

The problem for Dryzek is that such a demand does not simply exclude forms of debate, it also excludes the people who are most likely to communicate using those forms. Despite his attempts to accommodate critiques of instrumental rationality, Dryzek still fails to fully appreciate what Phillips calls "the power play at work inside

what passes for rational discussion" and to account for "the way that a certain culture of deliberation can privilege some resolutions and make others seem beyond the pale" (Phillips 1998: 163). As Young notes, deliberation when understood as "disciplined and unemotional" requires deliberative man to rise above his impulses and feelings to consider an issue on its "objective merits". However, those who cannot meet such demands, who cannot "adopt a position of detachment or who are unwilling because they doubt its value will not be respected as equal citizens in the deliberative public" (Young 1993: 128).

Bohman has attempted to address these criticisms of deliberative democracy stressing that deliberative democracy has a duty to correct some social conditions rather than ignore or adapt to them if it wishes to reach its potential: "large social inequalities are inconsistent with public forms of deliberation in egalitarian institutions" (Bohman 2000: 21). Unless such inequalities are addressed and deliberation finds ways to deal with "the problems of pluralism" then it may simply become a tool to legitimise pre-existing relationships of power. Without corrections for inequalities, deliberative forms of democracy will always have "elitist tendencies in practice, favouring those who have greater cultural resources (such as knowledge and information) and those who are more capable of imposing their own interests and values on others in the public arena" (Bohman 2000: 112). It is not enough to ensure equality of resources – even if both material and cultural goods are included – deliberation also requires "equality of political capacities" to make it fully democratic. Only under such circumstances can deliberators benefit from the diversity of opinions and viewpoints that enables the epistemic quality of decisions to improve and reinforces the legitimacy of decisions taken under deliberative democracy.

However, it is by no means clear how deliberative theory can help us reach Bohman's ideal democracy. Starting from a position of entrenched inequality, the introduction of deliberative procedures may, as Bohman notes, simply reinforce the existing social relations by adding an appearance of greater legitimacy to the biased decisions being taken. It seems impossible that the equality of political capacity necessary for deliberative democracy to offer truly legitimate decision-making can be achieved without very significant steps towards achieving equality of material and cultural resources. However, the point of deliberative democracy is then surely in question. If radical democrats must achieve a social revolution resulting in a vastly more equal society *before* deliberative democracy begins to work as intended, then what purpose does it serve? Deliberative democracy as characterised by Bohman and others cannot be a tool for incremental change towards a more equal society as it will tend to reinforce existing relationships.

Phillips observes that deliberative theorists "seem to inhabit a world of romanticized dreams, when they invoke the supposedly common concerns that are going to transcend the politics of faction" (Phillips 1998: 146). Ensuring better representation of all groups in a deliberative assembly may help but it cannot solve all these problems. It is impossible to imagine a political body representing all shades of opinion – especially where debate is most polarised. As Rättlia notes, the deliberative model is unable to account for "those democratic struggles that have not (yet) become regarded as worthy of being deliberated in public, and that are not (yet, or ever) presented in terms of a rational-critical discourse" (Rättlia 1999: 6). A century ago homosexuality was not just illegal but considered an illness and an assembly in which those of differing sexualities were openly and proportionately represented would have seemed impossible. Today we might be said to face the same problem with drug users

or those who practice euthanasia or create human clones or a myriad of other activities that are currently illegal and that we cannot ever imagine coming within the political pale.

Conclusion

The third crisis of democracy claims that the traditional institutions of liberal democracy have become irredeemably corrupted by their reliance on the media and corporate financing so that they appear neither trustworthy nor appealing to the citizens those institutions were supposed to represent.

As we have seen over the course of this chapter, the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resisters imagine quite different new democratic institutions to replace liberal democracy but they do share a set of common assumptions. They suppose that a deliberative and more direct form of democratic organisation will deliver decisions that are more rational, taken by reasonable citizens that result in outcomes that are fairer in the sense that they encourage equality.

For the techno-liberals the push-button electronic democracy will work like a market, delivering what individuals want through the rational choices of traditional market actors. The result, they argue, will be a form of governance that reflects what people "really" want without the interference of political ideology. And yet, as we have seen, the "rationality" of markets is far from straightforward and the possibility of such systems of government being dominated by wealth and vested interest seems unacceptably high.

For resisters localization will deliver more democracy at face-to-face levels – whether that is through the decentralization of power in traditional nation states or, more radically, in self-contained, self-sustaining communities. These communities are

presented as capable of taking more rational decisions about meeting the people's needs and preserving sustainable environments because they offer participation in both decision-making and policy implementation. However, such communities would be constructed on very narrow interests and may be prone to the processes of polarization and enclave deliberation discussed by Sunstein, leading to the possibility of isolation or conflict.

For the social entrepreneurs a combination of technologically enabled democracy and a focus on regional/city-based decision-making allows greater discussion between citizens. This enables the replacement of representative democracy with a direct form of government that more directly represents the wishes of all citizens. Such a government seems prone to media manipulation by the already powerful and the promises of greater equality seem difficult to sustain.

The delivery of a more rational, reasonable and equal democracy may not be as straightforward as the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs or resisters have hoped. At the very least there is enough evidence to suggest the somewhat naïve models of a new democracy constructed in response to the crises of democracy require significant further thought in the light of the debate conducted in democratic theory. At a deeper level it may be (and this should hardly come as a surprise) that there is no magical cure for the problems of democracy and, whatever institutions are put in place, it is possible that they could be corrupted or co-opted or undermined.

These are not arguments against democracy, nor for that matter are they arguments against greater debate and discussion within democracy. It is difficult to imagine a democracy that would not be improved by better communication between citizens. Existing liberal democracies are clearly not as effective as they should be in engaging their citizenry and allowing them to contribute to the practicalities of

government. However, in both the rather naïve models of democracy built upon the *new politics* and in the more complex constructions of democratic theorists there exist what Susan Stokes (1998) has called "pathologies of deliberation" that threaten the deliberative project.

The burden of proof is surely with the proponents of radical change to demonstrate that their alternative system is at least as robust as the democracy they want to replace. Techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters assume that there is no choice and that proposals for sweeping away liberal democracy will deliver immediate advantages. However, as this chapter has demonstrated, there remains significant potential for problems in a deliberative democracy, including exclusion, frustration and inequality.

As with the previous chapters' discussion of globalisation and power, the apparently limited options offered by the three responses to the *new politics* might not be as narrowly defined as techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters want us to believe. At the very least, the case for dumping existing liberal democratic institutions in favour their proposed alternatives is far less clear-cut than they the three schools imagine.

Chapter 2.5
Conclusion

Three crises of democracy have been identified. Although they are by no means unique to Castells, he usefully summarizes them as follows (2000a):

- Faced with the globalisation of the economy, nation states are no longer capable of delivering on the promises they make to their citizens;
- There are increasing demands for individual treatment amongst citizens creating unsustainable pressure upon the liberal democratic state;
- Democracy has become corrupted by business and distanced from its citizens and traditional democratic institutions are no longer trusted.

Whether these crises are real or not remains contested and it has not been the goal of this section to address that question. What is undeniable is they have attracted a very wide range of responses. This section has sought to demonstrate that despite the apparent diversity in the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister positions, they also share a number of underlying common assumptions.

Section One set out to define the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools as they see themselves in opposition to each other and focussed on the apparent diversity of opinion between these three schools. The techno-liberals emphasise the benefits of new technology and a global economy while playing down potential threats. The resisters condemn the impact of globalisation on the social, political and economic life of communities and pursue a shift towards the localization of economic and political decision-making. Social entrepreneurs seek to combine what they consider to be the dynamism of a global market economy with a social system that ameliorates the most damaging outcomes.

This section has had two goals.

First, it has sought to demonstrate that, despite the three schools' surface diversity, they share a number of assumptions around their concepts of power, democracy and the nature of globalisation. These assumptions appear to limit the number of viable alternative strategies available to communities and individuals faced with three crises of democracy.

The second aim of this section has been to subject these assumption to critical analysis and to explore whether there were alternatives means of conceptualising these issues that did not place such narrow limits on the range of apparently viable responses.

Chapter 2.2 addressed the three schools' conception of globalisation and noted that despite apparently diverse attitudes they shared three common assumptions:

1. That globalisation is novel phenomenon, unique to the modern era.
2. That, in terms of existing social, democratic and economic institutions, globalisation is irresistible.
3. That globalisation leads to the homogenisation of culture and politics.

None of these assumptions appear wholly justified. Globalisation appears to have significant historical roots and many of the features claimed as proof of its novelty have considerable antecedents or are not the global-scale phenomena normally supposed. At the same time there is evidence that global markets and multinational corporations, do not wield quite as much power as attributed to them by the most extreme globalizers. Finally, far from encouraging homogenisation of culture, globalisation may act to encourage diversity while, in politics, there remains strong evidence that the choices made by the governments of nations still retain a very real influence of their citizens' environment and opportunities.

Chapter 2.3 dealt with the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister responses to the second crisis of democracy, the growth of "fundamentalist identities" which cannot be contained by traditional liberal democratic institutions. It became clear that all three schools share a one-dimensional definition of power, seeing it as a tool that can be wielded by one group or person against others. As a result, in the *new politics* power becomes a weapon possessed by new, technologically empowered elites or global business to be used against others rendered helpless by the changes in the economy and society. However, power may be conceptualised in other ways that provides a more accurate explanation of the continued exercise of resistance to the powerful in modern society. Foucault's conception of power opens up the possibility of other strategic responses to the crises of democracy.

Chapter 2.4 examined the three schools' response to the third crisis of democracy, the loss of legitimacy in democratic institutions. Despite apparently diverse responses, the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools again share a very similar set of underlying assumptions. In this case, their proposals for radical reform of

the democratic system shared the same belief that such a system would offer rational decisions taken amongst reasonable citizens to deliver greater equality.

These goals may be much harder to achieve than the three schools imagine. While liberal democracy is certainly flawed, there may also be the potential for pathologies of deliberation that are unique to forms of government built only around forms of political talk. Worse still, for those writers who seek to present such forms of governance as a means of circumventing entrenched interests, it is not obvious how a more deliberative system could bring about the social revolution of equality required to allow it to deliver its promises. Indeed there is a danger that it may further bolster those already in a position of strength.

In setting out to the common assumptions within the apparently diverse positions of the three schools the goal has been to establish at least the potential for viable alternatives to the narrow policy prescriptions proposed by the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters. This is important for two reasons. First, and more broadly, the discussion of power in Chapter 2.3 suggests that the visions of the future presented by the three schools have severe limitations when it comes to protecting the freedom of citizens to exercise the powers at their disposal and reach their full potential. The three schools argue that there is no choice but to pick one of their options because the changes they predict are both imminent and inevitable. In establishing that there are alternatives to the way they characterise globalisation, power and democracy we also establish that there may be other policy alternatives.

The second reason why it was important to establish that there were alternatives to the assumptions of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister viewpoints is more narrowly related to this project.

New communications technology plays a particularly important role for each of the three schools as a privileged tool in the struggle to create a new society. The techno-liberals social entrepreneurs and resisters agree that the new communications technologies, and in particular the new media, represent a particularly important locus of control and source of power. Writers on all sides make claims about the transformative nature of this technology and its role in the crises facing democracy. In particular, as the next section explores more fully, they make the claim that the Internet represents a source of power for what Katz (1997) has christened the Digital Nation.As such, and given the nature of the crises of democracy, there are a number of phenomena that should be visible in the conduct of political debates.

If the assumptions of the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters had proven incontestable there would be little point testing such claims. However, having established that the range of policy options available to individuals and states may not be as narrowly proscribed as the three schools believe and that the alternative options that do exist may include the option of significant resistance, the search for proof about the claims of the new technologies unique powers and transformative nature becomes crucial.

Section Two established that alternatives to the visions of the *new politics* might exist, but it has not proven the assumptions of the three schools wrong. It might still be the case that, when the actual conduct of a political debate is examined in Section Three that their predictions are vindicated and that the alternatives imagined in this section were misleading.

Section Three will examine whether the assumed crises of the *new politics* are instantiated in an actual political debate. In looking for evidence of the crises of power, globalisation and democracy the study will look for significant differences between the

content of discussion conducted using the key technologies of the new media, seen as a prime force in aiding the spread of economic globalisation and in advancing the *new politics*, and the traditional media, considered by most commentators in the three schools to be part of the apparatus of the traditional liberal state. As Section Three argues, evidence for the (irresistible and homogenizing) ideology of the *new politics* should be found in a pro-globalisation, neo-liberal bias in the new media as opposed to traditional outlets. If there is really pressure on the traditional political system from "fundamentalist identities" these should be more visible in the new media than the old. Finally, if the traditional political parties have really been discredited then the new media should be expected to follow a distinct agenda that better represents the interests of the digital nation.

In moving from a theoretical discussion of the assumptions of the *new politics* to an attempt to find empirical evidence for the existence of the predicted crises in an actual political debate there are a number of important challenges to overcome. In the process of moving from the very general to the very specific it must be conceded that the empirical study which follows can offer comment only on a specific debate conducted at a certain time and under particular circumstances, yet there remains a desire to develop results that could have a more general applicability. In addition, the questions which can be asked by the empirical side of this research are limited to those which might reasonably be answered by the methodology chosen to conduct this study – content analysis.

Neither the construction of this study nor its methodology can be said to be unproblematic. It might, for example, reasonably be argued that the process of narrowing the scope of the issues under discussion to allow them to be located within a particular discourse necessarily abandons the aspiration of drawing conclusions that can

be broadly generalised and applied in a wider context. Similarly there are a number of well-rehearsed criticisms of content analysis as a methodology – including fundamental questions about whether the imposition of a grid of meaning on a text as part of a research project reveals more about the interests of researcher than it does any putative, intrinsic content of the text itself – that must be addressed before any simple conclusions about the findings of this study can be examined. Section Three, therefore, begins by attempting to develop a methodology for content analysis which seeks to address some of these potential shortcomings while accepting the inevitability of the mutability of meanings. It progresses by attempting to develop the specific research questions studied as part of the empirical analysis in a way that is consistent with the more general debate conducted in the opening sections of this thesis.

It must inevitably be conceded that there is some disjunction between the very broad debate conducted in the opening sections of this thesis and the very specific study which follows. Nevertheless it remains preferable to attempt to bring the rigour of an empirical analysis to the study of the impact of the *new politics* than to cede to the alternative: continued reliance on the diffuse and often poorly documented claims of "proof" offered by techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters. In proceeding to an empirical search for evidence for the theories of crisis caused by the *new politics* the acceptance of a disjunction between the general and the specific does not invalidate the process of research or the findings. It should, rather, be seen as a necessary price in constructing a firmer foundation upon which a more complete understanding of the changes being wrought by shifting social, economic and political relationships can be constructed.

Section 3
Looking for evidence of the *new politics*.

Chapter 3.1
Introduction

As Section One demonstrated, the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister models appear to offer a diversity of approaches to the impact of new technologies, new forms of economic organisation and the global economy that come together in the *new politics,* and the three crises said to be facing democracy. While these groups do not exhaust the variety of responses generated by these commonly identified threats they do, respectively, represent the attitudes of neo-conservatives, new Labour's form of social democracy and the anti-globalisation movement.

Section Two demonstrated that, beneath the apparent diversity of their positions, these three responses to the *new politics* share a core of common assumptions.

In response to the first crisis of democracy – that modern states and their social, political and economic institutions are being rendered impotent by the growing force of globalized capitalism – the three schools make assumptions about the novelty, overwhelming force and homogenizing effects of globalisation. Closer inspection

suggested that these assumptions may not be as watertight as the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers insist. Globalisation is an historically situated process with identifiable antecedents and precedents, on comparable scales, for much of the behaviour identified as uniquely modern. The supposedly irresistible power of global economic markets and the multinational corporations identified by the three schools as its vanguard are not quite as overwhelming as they initially appear. Genuine worldwide markets and corporations are very rare, with the great majority of trade locked within the "triad" (Ohmae 1995) of Europe, North America and Japan and the newly developed countries of South East Asia. Nor do the claims for globalisation as an homogenizing force appear wholly justified with recent history of increasing ethnic and religious tensions and the growing fragmentation of nations suggesting that cultural and political identities remain diverse.

Section two demonstrated that there was space in which alternative theoretical conceptions of the way in which society is changing (or staying the same) could be envisaged. The goal of this section is to find evidence of whether the common techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister visions of the way society, and in particular politics, is changing can be found in the content of an actual political debate conducted during the 2001 British General Election. While the three schools make frequent claims about the inevitability of their proposed changes, these are rarely supported by evidence. Anecdotes tend to be common (Rheingold 2002; Leadbeater 2002; Klein 2001) and though some authors use data gathered by governments and international institutions to support their case (Cherny 2000; Ohmae 1995; Bello 2004) such data is always subject to contestation and varying interpretation. This study is unusual in taking the *new politics* as a starting point and specifically designing to test whether the

assumptions made about the way society is changing are supported by a study of an actual debate.

The starting point for this research is the preferential role the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers give to the new communication technologies, and most particularly the Internet, in the shaping of a modern society. For techno-liberals and social entrepreneurs they represent the essential tools that will reform society allowing consumers, businesses and markets to stretch effortlessly across borders, setting free untapped creative potential and undermining the foundations of geographically based government. For resisters they are more ambiguous, representing both the means in which the worldwide anti-capitalist movement is connected but also a central tool in allowing the escape of business from local and regional responsibilities.

The idea that the new media will favour the neo-liberal agenda of a new political elite is shared by the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister responses to the *new politics*. It is not, it should be noted, that this favouritism suggests that the new media are necessarily supportive of particular parties. The consensus is that they are independent of political parties who are in any case regarded, on all sides, as on the road to obsolescence. Rather, the interests of the "digital nation" or "virtual class" sometimes coincide with policies put forward by representatives of the traditional political class and that this will be reflected in the political debate .

This new class does possess resources that make it formidable in the traditional arenas of politics. As Katz (1997) argues: money, information and communication have historically equalled power and his "digital nation" have a surplus of all three key resources. The result is that his "digital elite will rule much of the world" (Katz 1997, 64).

The question then becomes how this "Digital Nation" will exercise their new powers, what do they believe in and what do they want. Katz calls them post-political arguing that they are free of the restrictive dogmas that have constricted the thinking of "liberals" and "conservatives" in recent American history. However, their "post-political philosophy" retains the best of these "tired old dogmas – the humanism of liberalism, the economic opportunity of conservatism, plus a strong sense of personal responsibility and a passion for freedom" (Katz 1997: 49)

Despite Katz's claim that this new digital elite possesses unique and novel characteristics, the values of the Digital Nation are familiar. This mix of "do what you will" liberalism without the concomitant commitment to communal responsibility is the familiar theme of the post-Reagan/Thatcher of the neo-liberal right. Katz's elite consider themselves "libertarian, tolerant, rational, technologically adept, disconnected from conventional political organizations." (Katz 1997: 52). Their instincts, however, from their desire to pursue profit without restriction to their focus with the need for "smaller government" mean that their agenda is shared by sections of rightwing parties across the world.

As Wheeler (1998) notes, the techno-liberals may claim that their digital elite somehow exist outside the world of traditional politics, but they are adept at manipulating their resources to deliver the outcomes that suit their needs. Indeed they have become a driving force in changing the political system. Their libertarian values are: "being realized through public policies designed to establish a private information market-place" (Wheeler 1998: 230). The result, Wheeler argues, is the creation of a "technocratic-elite virtual ruling class" who, through their influence in the media, and in particular because of their peculiar position of power over the new media, are able to influence public policy.

Katz claims that his Digital Nation are not bound by dogma and are incapable of being bound by ideology. However, according to Barsook (1996) their "post-political philosophy" is nothing of the sort. If they have convinced themselves that they have created some new worldview it is only because, as Barsook notes, they know so little about the world beyond their technological niche. For Barsook the coming together of a narrow libertarianism and new technology has "created the true revenge of the nerds. Those whose greatest strengths have not been the comprehension of social systems, appreciation of the humanities, or acquaintance with history, politics and economics have started shaping public policy" (Barsook 1996).

While the social entrepreneurs are less likely to lionise the digital elite they are, nevertheless, aware that a new and powerful class is emerging. So, Leadbeater notes the digital elite: "make up the most powerful and affluent emergent social class being created by economic change" (Leadbeater 1999: 19). And concedes that this group have a significant say in the control and direction of the new media and the society it creates.

In a later work, Leadbeater (2002) notes how his attendance at one meeting of this digital elite was like addressing a "religious cult" (Leadbeater 2002: 129). Leadbeater's goal is to be deliberately upbeat in face of what he sees as an overwhelming and unnecessary gloom about the future prospects of humanity. Even so, he is aware that the "digitopia" and "marketopia" of the Digital Nation could lead to a "Pop Idol democracy" in which the relationships created by individuals as citizens are subsumed beneath the relationships created by individuals acting as consumers.

For some, as Axford (2001) notes, cyberspace is "liminal zones where only the counter-cultures of libertarianism and anarchism can flourish" (Axford 2001: 5) Here, the technologically-savvy, conservative elite are able to impose their ideological baggage on others in part through their privileged positions of control over these new

technologies. These technologies do not demand that users think socially. They have no interest, incentive or mechanism to consider anything beyond their narrow self-interest.

Despite these difficulties, social entrepreneurs remain optimistic that we can take advantage of the potential benefits of the new technologies. Not surprisingly, the resisters do not share this optimism.

Kroker and Weinstein, for example, argue that the overriding feature of the "pro-tech utopia" currently under construction is "cyber-authoritarianism" which implies "a consistent and very deliberate attempt to shut down, silence, and exclude any perspectives critical of techtopia. Not a wired culture, but a virtual culture wired shut" (Kroker and Weinstein 1994: 4) For Kroker and Weinstein this techtopia's ideological underpinnings are a too-familiar neo-liberal, libertarian ideology. In common with the general position of resisters, Kroker and Weinstein are roundly critical of the technological elite's use of their power. The virtual class, they argue, blocks economic justice through the deployment of a mixture of predatory capitalism and gung-ho technocratic rationalisations. They prevent open and fruitful democratic discourse by the use of a cyber-authoritarian mind-set which, while projecting their own class interests into cyberspace, effectively also blocks the ability of others to use the technology for alternative or competing ends. Finally any hope that it might be possible to bring social solidarity to bear on the problems of the modern state are washed away by the virtual class's promotion of "a grisly form of social materialism" (Kroker and Weinstein 1994: 6).

Leon (2003) also argues that the power concentrated in the new class controlling the media and cultural industries is acting to "emasculate democracies". This new class is pursuing an agenda governed exclusively by commercial criteria – placing profitability over the public good – and constraining democratic aspirations by

a "neoliberal hegemony". And the control of media technologies is a key element in this dynamic: "so much so that, with the accelerated development of technologies and techniques, the powers-that-be aim to transform it into a paradigm of the future under the formula of the 'information society'" (Leon 2003: 196) There is a touch of the conspiracy theorist in Leon's claims that an elite have, without our notice and "under the cover of neoliberal dogma" (2003: 197) created a media industry that places the pursuit of profit above the public interest and consumerism in the place of citizenship but his broader point is widely accepted amongst writers of the resister school.

There are three points to be made about the claims of the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters that a new digitally-empowered, neo-liberal elite is rising to a position of economic, political and cultural domination. The first is that few of the claims are supported by evidence that substantiates their claims and even fewer make a rigorous attempt to test their claims, drawing instead on anecdote and selected, contestable, general statistics. Second, is that the very great majority of the writers here have based their predictions on the future by looking at America and applying what they imagine to be happening there to the rest of the world as if differences in political systems and culture were irrelevant. Finally, these claims tend to be based on extrapolating the evidence of a few decades (at the very most) and assuming that the same changes will continue, and continue at the same (or every greater) pace for the imaginable future. It is rather like opening the door to notice the first sign of a rain shower and then proclaiming that this will go on and on until the whole world is drowned. The extrapolation of global change from such a relatively small sample and over a limited timescale is methodologically suspect.

The purpose of this section, is to determine whether the claims about a radical and different new media heralding the *new politics* can be supported by evidence from

actual political debate in the British 2001 General Election. This study thus addresses two failures of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister claims about the new media by seeking evidence in a non-American setting. On the final problem, extrapolating from too small a sample, this research makes no grand claims for universal application – restricting itself to noting that, at the time the research was conducted, within the setting of a British General Election the findings were as set out in Chapter 3.4.

Chapter 3.2
Issues in content analysis

The introduction to this section has outlined the ways in which techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters all expect the new media to favour the agenda of a new digitally-empowered elite. The assumption of each of the three responses to the *new politics* has been that this new digital class will seek to develop neo-liberal policies in line with their assumed characteristics as young, mobile, rich and independent. In seeking to find out whether such assumptions are accurate, and whether the changes they predict can be found in actual political debates, the obvious question becomes how could the existence or absence of such favouritism be verified.

There is a considerable history in the social sciences of seeking to identify "bias" in media. The most famous British study into news bias is the Glasgow University Media Group's "Bad News" studies (1982a, 1982b, 1985; Philo 1999). While pioneering in many ways – including their application of Barthes' deconstruction of imagery to television news broadcasts – the Glasgow Group's work has been heavily criticised for inconsistencies in methodology. The most important criticism levelled at

the Bad News studies is that, in revealing a "hidden code" in news broadcasts, what the authors are alleged to have actually revealed were their own biases and assumptions (Harrison 1985; Hetherington 1986; Negrine 1991) about journalists and the press.

The next section will explore some of the complexities of latency of meaning in a text. For now it is enough to note that Barthes (1967, 1973), whose early work influenced the Glasgow Media Group, ultimately abandoned the idea that texts contained "preferred" or "true" meanings. Barthes would finally (1993) conclude that the author was "dead" and that meaning rested with the reader or viewer.

In line with Barthes view, Negrine (1991) points out, that a person's perception and interpretation of an event can differ for a wide variety of reasons. It may vary according to physical factors such as where a person stands and what they can see, but also according to social and cultural factors such as class and education. "This makes it even more difficult to identify and justify claims that content is biased since individuals will vary in their interpretation of any one event or report" (Negrine 1991: 151). This is a crucial point. If individuals "read" the news in different ways, then bias (at least of the semantic kind supposed by the Glasgow Group) must, to some extent, always be in the eye of the beholder.

So, in looking at specific television broadcasts, newspaper stories and web pages, the goal is not to try and reveal what a journalist "really" meant or to reveal evidence that they are part of some larger conspiracy to misinform their readers. It is not the object of this study to make value judgements about the quality of the news coverage from different outlets.

Bias is inherent in all reporting. Even if it were possible simply to write down "all the facts" without bias (which seems unlikely) it is hard to imagine anyone reading it or tuning into television to watch the reporting. This is not to say that, in a

democracy, there aren't certain duties upon news providers to provide a reasonably accurate picture of events, but the interpretation of those events must, inevitably, be down to the application of personal biases. This is something that, as "consumers" of news, we play a tacit part – choosing the television broadcasts, newspapers and web sites that offer us the kind of news we like – most often the kind of news that most closely matches our pre-existing interests and preferences.

So, having argued that bias is inherent, does this mean that the study of bias is a waste of time?

It is the contention of this study, at least in relation to this project, is that it is not. The techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters have made some quite specific claims about the way they believe the new politics will shape the content of the new media. Their prediction is that the new media will reflect a distinct set of preferences – those of a digital nation – for neo-liberal policies.

In this instance the study of bias is not being done for its own sake – as if to argue that the presence of bias is somehow surprising or indicative of a deliberate plot – but as a phenomenon that should indicate the veracity, or otherwise, of claims about the differences between the contents of a limited set of texts. In this study, bias should not be thought, as commonly perceived, as a synonym for prejudice, but, in the statistical derivation, as an extraneous element in the content of a sample that skews it so that it is not representative of the wider population. Beginning with the assumption that, for all practical purposes, *everything* is biased, what then becomes interesting, and potentially informative, is the comparison between sources of texts. In the case of this study, the comparison between coverage in the traditional media and the new media should reveal whether there is evidence for the claims made by the three schools for the *new politics*.

It is precisely for this task that the methodology of content analysis, considered below, is designed, though as with all social science methodology, there are areas of contestation. In setting out to analyse whether there is evidence that the new media favours a particular political agenda it is necessary first to explore what, exactly, is meant by content analysis in this context.

What is content analysis?

Stated simply, content analysis is the breaking down of a text into measurable units to allow analysis and comparison. However, there are considerable disagreements amongst those who conduct content analysis about the details of the methodology and its proponents often find it is necessary to clarify their position before proceeding.

Shapiro and Markoff (1997) list four classic definitions of content analysis.

- Berelson: "Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Berelson 1954: 489).
- Cartwright: "the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of any symbolic behaviour" (Cartwright 1953: 424).
- Stone: "Content analysis is any research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics within text" (Stone, Dunphy, Smith and Ogilvie 1966: 5).
- Krippendorff: "...content analysis be restricted to the use of replicable and valid methods for making specific inferences from text to other states or properties of its source" (Krippendorf 1969: 70).

To these they add their own:

- "We regard content analysis as best defined (today) as any methodical measurement applied to text (or other symbolic material) for social science

purposes. Put otherwise (and we believe that we are saying the same thing again), the term refers to any systematic reduction of a flow of text (or other symbols) to a standard set of statistically manipulable symbols representing the presence, the intensity, or the frequency of some characteristics relevant to social sciences" (Shapiro and Markoff 1997, 14).

In addition, I would add another two:

- Weber: "Content analysis is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text" (Weber 1990: 9).
- Neuendorf: "Content analysis may be briefly defined as the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics" (Neuendorf 2002: 1).

These seven definitions agree, at least, on the fact that content analysis involves the analysis of the content of communications. But from that departing point there is considerable disagreement. The most fundamental dividing line is between those who regard content analysis as a scientific endeavour that seeks to return "objective" measurement of the content of a definitive meaning of any communication and those who seek validity based on a replicable methodology. That is to say, the difference is between those who seek the objectively reliable "true meaning" of a text and those who recognise that texts may contain multiple meanings. This second group seek to design studies that aim for internal consistency and transparent methodology and practices. The aim is to make the project replicable. That is to set out the process of study in such a way that future researchers could take the same texts, apply the same rules of analysis and achieve broadly similar results[1] even though they might question the categories

[1] Their results are highly unlikely to be identical because different readers will note different items. See the discussion on reader reliability in chapter 3.3 for more on this.

used to break down the text or draw quite different understandings of what the findings of such research might mean.

Objectivity was particularly important for earlier writers whose work concentrated on the "effects" of the media identifiable through their reading of the message. Berelson (1954), for example, was particularly insistent that content analysis concern itself only with the solidity of "manifest" meanings in texts and not become bogged down in the more subjective enterprise of studying "latent" meanings. We shall return to the debate on manifest and latent meanings below, but for now it is enough to note that many modern writers in the content analysis tradition do not claim objectivity as their goal. Krippendorf (1980) concedes that messages do not have a single meaning and that meanings need not be shared amongst readers or researchers (Krippendorff 1980: 22). For these modern authors the concern has been to construct a robust methodology that, even allowing for the essential slipperiness of meaning in a text, can set out its procedure precisely enough to claim both replicablity and validity for its findings.

One notable exception to this trend is Neuendorf (the most recent of the authors quoted here) who continues to characterise content analysis as a search for objective analysis of the characteristics of text. So, he argues, it is a major goal of research "to provide a description or explanation of a phenomenon in a way that avoids the biases of the observer" (Neuendorf 2002: 11). Yet even Neuendorf concedes that there is no such thing as "true objectivity" and that "knowledge and facts are what are socially agreed on... all human inquiry is inherently subjective, but still we must strive for consistency among inquiries" (Neuendorf 2002: 11). For Neuendorf such consistency is found in claims to "intersubjectivity" – so the question becomes not whether a piece of research is "true" but whether we can "agree that it is true." In the end, then, Neuendorf, is not

claiming "objectivity" in the way that Berelson would have understood it – that the text contains meanings that are "manifestly" obvious to all readers – rather his definition is closer to Krippendorff and the other modern writers who seek some degree of shared understanding in the construction of a clearly defined methodology. This is the essential difference in the use of "reliability" and "replicability" in this study. Any "objective" researcher would uncover reliable findings as they emerge from the text as the "true" meaning. Reliability is inherent in the object under study. Replicable findings emerge from the application to the text of rules that have been recorded and can be reconstructed by other researchers, even though they may regard the rules as subjective or even flawed. Replicability is a product of a robust methodological design.

It is this latter approach that informs this research. There is no claim for objectivity here either in the research or the findings. The validity of this research rests in precisely defining the methods used to collect the data, in building into the methodology rigorous checks for reliability and consistency and through precise definition of the categories in which text is analysed. These practices cannot deliver objectivity, but they should enable other researchers to replicate the findings presented here and make explicit the subjective terms under which the research was undertaken.

This section has touched on some of the methodological difficulties raised by content analysis, so before proceeding to outline the details of the way this research project was conducted, it may be useful to spend some time exploring these issues further.

Issues in content analysis

The theory behind the methodology of content analysis remains a contested area. The same is true for the practice of content analysis, with practitioners working along a continuum that encompasses very strictly quantitative studies to the exclusively qualitative and from those concerned only with the most "manifest" meanings to those pursuing layers of "latent" meaning that even a text's author or the intended audience may not recognise. In this section, I wish to study some of the questions raised about the nature of content analysis and to clarify the approach taken in this research.

Latency versus manifest meaning

The very earliest definition of content analysis quoted above, that by Berelson (1954), stresses that the methodology is concerned with the "quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" The emphasis on "manifest" content reveals that, even this early in the history of the methodology there was a division between those using techniques of content analysis. For Berelson content analysis was a scientific study identifying meanings that were "obvious" within the text. He was specifically excluding from the methodological canon those studies which sought to identify "latent" meanings in text – that is those meanings that might be hidden or implicit and which the researcher "reads between the lines" of the text.

This debate continues into modern times. Riffe et al, for example, note that the analysis of latent meaning demands that we accept individual interpretations of the meaning that may be idiosyncratic and that this is at odds with the "requirements of scientific objectivity" by which quantitative content analysis should be judged. So, Riffe concludes: "Quantitative content analysis deals with manifest content, by definition, and makes no claims beyond that" (Riffe et al 1998: 30).

Krippendorff, however, argues that concentration on manifest aspects of the text is, if not impossible then, extremely difficult. Texts do not have a single meaning – it is not just the case that multiple readers may read texts in different ways, but that the text itself may have multiple meanings to the same reader. "Under such circumstances, the claim to have analysed **the** content of communication reflects an untenable position" (Krippendorff 1980: 22). Nor can basing "manifest" meanings on the idea that some understandings are shared by everyone rescue the notion, as it would require limiting the validity of the research conducted with content analysis to a very narrow set of circumstances. Such shared meanings are likely only to apply to the most banal aspects of a text's content or, for more interesting areas of study, to the few people who happened to share the identical cultural and socio-political perspective of the researcher. "Generally neither condition is interesting. Thus, sharing can hardly serve as a presupposition for content analysis... meanings are always relative to the communicator" (Krippendorff 1980: 23)

Furthermore, Krippendorff argues that the very nature of the content analyst's role as the examiner of texts for meanings makes them radically different from ordinary readers and therefore their analysis of the meaning of texts is likely to differ radically from those meanings assigned "routinely, unconsciously and without empirical justification" (Krippendorff 1980: 23) by the majority involved in the communication process.

In attempting to reconcile the gap between the distinct camps in the manifest/latency debate, Neuendorf has suggested that it is perhaps more useful to think of: "a continuum from "highly manifest" to "highly latent" and to address issues of subtlety of measurement for those messages that are very latent (and therefore a challenge for objective and reliable measurement)" (Neuendorf 2002: 23).

The approach followed in this research is similar to Neuendorf's. However, rather than assuming that the continuum runs from the highly manifest to the highly latent, I have assumed that all meaning is latent but that some meanings are more latent than others. It seems to me that Krippendorff is right when he argues that: "Data can always be looked at from numerous perspectives, especially when they are symbolic in nature" (Krippendorff 1980: 22). Language is symbolic and the relationship between the sign and the signifier has long been recognised as both arbitrary and complex. Some meanings, in some contexts, may be shared by all (or at least almost all) of those involved in the communication process but, outside a few narrow cases, all meanings derived from texts are more or less latent and the search for useful manifest meaning is largely fruitless.

The meaning of a text relies on the understanding of the reader and the context within which the text is read. Some meanings are likely to be more widely understood that others. At the far end of the "latency" scale researchers may impugn meanings to a text that would not be recognised by either the author of a text or a very great majority of the audience outside the researchers own specialty. This does not mean that such readings of the text are invalid, but there would be a very great pressure on such researchers to demonstrate the validity of the variables they have constructed and the relevance of the meanings they have imputed to the text.

Even within the standard methodological advice for conducting research projects using content analysis techniques, allowances are made for the unreliability of understanding and the latency of meanings. The process for calculating "coder reliability" – that is the level of agreement between individuals whose job it is to code text according to the categories set out in the project design[2] – demonstrates that even

[2] For a fuller discussion of coder reliability, see Chapter 3.3.

when following rules designed to create consistency of reading, understanding of the text can vary quite dramatically. Neuendorf (2002: 143) sets out the result of a survey into the levels of coder reliability that researchers in content analysis have found acceptable to use in their work. He notes that some researchers have accepted as valid a level of agreement between coders their coders below 70% and that findings based on levels of coder reliability as low as 70 or 80 per cent are not uncommon.

In theory, the conduct of content analysis – texts considered in a precisely defined context and with pre-agreed and more-or-less precisely defined categories already set out by which the text can be judged by coders – should provide an environment on which high levels of agreement can be reached. But even here, where the conditions for identifying meanings should be better than in the "real world", researchers are sometimes forced to accept that coders' understanding of meaning overlap only three times out of every four. Even if one accepts, as Neuendorf does, that the "relatively high standards" of 80 to 90 percent agreement amongst coders is the minimum requirement for drawing reliable inferences about content, that still assumes a significant degree of latency in the understanding of the text.

My contention is that, within reasonable methodological limits, this is not problematic. It reveals only that, even in controlled circumstances, the idea that any meaning is manifest to all those involved in the communication process is difficult, perhaps impossible, to sustain. It must be assumed, therefore, that attempts to reveal objective meanings in the texts studied here would be likely to flounder.

However, there are those who have argued that if we accept that texts are subject to a wide variety of meaning, then the point of content analysis is fundamentally undermined (Philo 1999). If texts can mean anything, then their analysis reveals only the preconceptions and prejudices of those conducting the research.

That does not necessarily make the findings of content analysis invalid. In the first instance, what is important is not the discovery of "true meanings" in texts but the way in which they can serve to enlighten research questions formed with strong theoretical foundations. Even if there were no other factors in the research's favour, one could argue that, *ceteris paribus*, the "peculiarities" of one person's reading of the texts may still deliver meaningful comparisons between texts – as long as the measurement of that reading was consistent across all the texts.

This, it seems to me, is the fundamental strength of content analysis. It cannot remove the influence of the reader on the meaning of the text, but it can help to insure that (if the methodology is consistently and rigourously applied) a number of texts are read in the same way so that meaningful comparisons can be made between them. By forcing the reader to prepare a set of criteria in advance and by putting in place the means to test that the criteria are being adhered to, the methodology of content analysis allows texts from different sources and read at different times to be compared on a fixed set of criteria. This does not make the reading "objective" – the rules put in place by the researchers must themselves be subjective – but it does form the basis for making valid and replicable claims about the content based on those rules.

Quantitative versus qualitative content analysis

The distinction between quantitative and qualitative forms of content analysis has led some authors to adopt quite polarised positions in regard to the worth of one approach over the other. So, for example, Neuendorf argues that qualitative content analysis is not feasible, defining the methodology quite specifically as a tool that fits the positivist paradigm through its attempt to "meet the standards of the scientific method" and which has "as its goal a numerically based summary of a chosen message set. It is neither the

gestalt impression nor a fully detailed description of a message or message set" (Neuendorf 2002: 14).

Krippendorff compares the differences between quantitative research and the qualitative understanding of texts to the difference between scientific study of material and the "idiosyncratic world view" we apply to our understanding of what we read in the daily newspaper. Researchers, he argues, should do their best to avoid biases and individual interpretations of text. They should make explicit what they do, share findings so that others may examine and replicate them and above all be aware of the difference between: "a methodology that provides us with a platform from which we can talk about data and scientific procedures and what these phenomena mean to us individually" (Krippendorff 1980: 11).

On the other hand, Silverman (2001) accuses the theory and conclusions of quantitative content analysis of triteness, finding only what the author set out to find. Quantitative content analysis is particularly prone to this weakness because, being based on a given set of categories it furnishes a "powerful conceptual grid from which it is difficult to escape. While this 'grid' is very helpful in organising the data analysis, it also deflects attention away from uncategorized activities" (Silverman 2001: 123).

The polarisation of this debate in these stark terms is unnecessary. The quantitative and qualitative approaches to text analysis offer quite different sets of tools suitable for quite different types of research – both of which may be valid in their own circumstances. For this study, the decision to follow a quantitative as opposed to a qualitative methodology was made on the basis of the nature of the research questions and the material under scrutiny. There were three key reasons why quantitative analysis was preferable in this instance.

First, because of the very detailed nature of the research necessary for a qualitative study, it is not suitable for the analysis of very large bodies of text. It became obvious very quickly that this study was producing very large amounts of material and that, as a result, the application of qualitative techniques would have allowed only a tiny fraction of the collected material to have been studied.

Second, while it would have been possible to sample a selection of the texts collected in this study and conduct a qualitative analysis on these texts, that would not have provided the information necessary to answer some of the research questions posed by this work. The purpose of this research was to examine whether different trends were apparent in different media in the material over a consecutive period of study. A study based on a random sample could not have provided a definitive answer as to whether these trends existed. Other forms of sampling, for example thematic sampling, were also available but these seem to increase the risk of imposing, as Silverman suggests, too rigid a conceptual grid on the data and missing uncategorized activities. Only by conducting a quantitative study and by looking at all the material gathered could a reliable picture be assembled.

Thirdly, and finally, quantitative studies provide greater scope for generalization of the findings. Section One criticised the use of anecdotal material and selected statistics some authors put forward as evidence of the "facts" of the *new politics*. This study has sought to use methods that provided results that offered the opportunity for the creation of more generalizable results. As Roberts (1997) notes, the choice between probabilistic sampling and strategically selected case studies offer both advantages and disadvantages. "Whereas the probabilistic inferences of quantitative analyses yield conclusions about the generalizability of one's findings, the logical inferences of qualitative analyses yield conclusions about the universality of one's theories" (Roberts

(1997: 3). And while a quantitative study could draw probabilistic inferences from a sample of paragraphs to the text as a whole, a qualitative study, which requires repeated exploration of the text, is more likely to reflect any peculiarities in a sample. In addition quantitative research deduces hypotheses from theory, setting its measures and tests in advance and then tests them, while qualitative research tends to explore the text, applying different classification schemes before settling on the favoured interpretation. Since this research begins from a desire to test the hypotheses drawn from the work of the three responses to the *new politics* and seeks to develop findings that could be generalized, the use of quantitative methods seems to be indicated.

While conducting this study has unavoidably involved the selection of some items at the expense of others I have, nevertheless, chosen to sacrifice the in-depth analysis of qualitative studies in the hope of revealing trends that might have a generalizable applicability.

Fragmentation versus holism

As Riffe, Lacy and Fico (1998) note, quantitative content analysis is essentially a reductionist methodology that breaks up the text in order to study it. Content analysis procedures "reduce communication phenomena to manageable data (e.g. numbers), from which inferences may be drawn about the phenomena themselves" (Riffe *et al* 1998: 19). They regard the reductive nature of the methodology as necessary and problematic only insofar as poor research fails to make clear the theoretical assumptions behind the reduction of text to numbers. Others, most notably those from a qualitative background, accuse quantitative content analysis of casting aside meaning in the rush to reduce texts to numbers and of losing subtlety and precision in analysis.

Weber (1990) identifies three potentially problematic ways in which content analysis is reductive.

Measurement: In constructing the dictionaries necessary to categorise text and conduct a content analysis, the methodology assumes that each word has the same "value" in its category but Weber notes two potential problems. First, he says: "Each word in a particular category need not equally represent the category content" (Weber 1990: 72) That is to say, different words may carry differing weights within the categories constructed by a content analysis researcher. The second problem Weber identifies is that through repetition items in a category may require greater effort to carry the same weight. As he notes: "the 25th occurrence of an entry in the category AFFECTION is given the same weight or importance as the 5th or 125th" (Weber 1990: 72). Weber argues that while content analysts believe that this "practical simplification" works well in most cases, reality is probably more complex.

In the end, Weber concedes that counting each entry equally is necessary, not least because there is no reliable procedure or tool that might validly assign weight to the particular meaning. In any case, as the discussion of latency versus manifest meaning above has suggested, the weight of meaning within a text may largely lie with the individual reader and their context as much as it lies within the text itself. A tool that could assign weight to a text might simply codify the reading of one particular reader or type of reader, at the expense of other possible approaches to the text.

Weber's conclusion, that content analysis is done like this because no one has come up with a better way of doing it, is hardly a ringing endorsement for the methodology. However, the problem of measurement need not fundamentally undermine the use of content analysis so long as researchers limit their claims to those

that can realistically be supported by the methodology. The use of content analysis to categorise and reduce a single text to numbers to demonstrate what it "really" means, in the light of Weber's concerns about the problem of measurement, would be fatally flawed.

However, if content analysis is used as a tool to compare texts then the problem of measurement seems to be significantly reduced. True it is still possible that by assigning the same value to each instance of a category within the text the study is misrepresenting the value of each recurrence of the elements within that category, but the distortion should be the same for all the texts.

If the same categorisations are applied consistently across the different texts then even if there is some distortion of understanding in the individual texts, the comparison should remain valid.

Representation: As Weber notes, critics often call attention to the fact that both human-based coding procedures and the computer systems "do not encode or represent the richness of language or of specific texts" (Weber 1990: 76). Such criticism seems wholly fair, but also wholly besides the point. It seems absolutely inevitable that in extracting from a text specific elements of information that we should have to disregard other elements of the text but it must also be true that any study of any phenomenon in the physical or social sciences must be guilty of the same fault. An astronomer studying one star or galaxy or the pattern of radio waves that mark the remnants of the big bang, is necessarily excluding from their study the "richness" of the whole universe. A sociologist studying prevalence of suicide or the power relationships within families or employee worker relations, is necessarily excluding from their work the "richness" of

all social interactions. Such a loss of richness may be regrettable but it hardly invalidates the process of study.

As Stone notes, however, these concerns have deep roots: "Plato was suspect of written texts, for how, he argued, could readers surmise the intentions and context from which they were generated?" (Stone 1997: 37). Of course any text under analysis, whether they are articles from newspapers or conversations amongst family members, has already been removed from context. At the most basic level one might argue that the very act of writing or speaking the words fails to properly convey the richness of thought in the mind that "gave birth" to them.

Such criticism of content analysis seems to be based on the false assumption that the role of such studies is to reveal the "true" meaning of a text. This is by no means the intention in this study and studies that have attempted to undertake such a task have been roundly criticised (for example, the work of the Glasgow University Media Group in Harrison 1985, Goodwin 1990) and must surely be flawed. As already discussed, the meaning of texts must, to some degree, always be the outcome of a process of "negotiation" between the sender, receiver and the context in which the message exists – so that a single "true" meaning is never available.

Rather than attempting to "decode" the truth of a text, the content analysis applied here will seek to answer a set of specific research questions through the creation of verifiable variables matching the concepts under scrutiny. By making clear the specific elements of the text which concern the study and by performing the study using methods which can be both verified and replicated, the content analysis as conducted here need not be invalidated by the loss of richness from the surrounding, discarded, elements of the text. As Weber himself notes: "In assigning meaning units to categories, not all connotations or nuances of meaning are pertinent" (Weber 1990: 76).

Interpretation: When a sentence of French is interpreted into English the outcome should be capable of being reinterpreted back into French and deliver recognisably the same meaning as the original message. As Weber notes, this is not the case when content analysis translates texts into the categories used for study. In this case the process of translation is irreversible and unidirectional as it transforms words and phrases into abstract theoretical structures used by the researchers to create the categories necessary to reduce the text into a form suitable for analysis. Unlike the translation from one language to another, the translation required by content analysis does not map one word or phrase onto another word or phrase but from many words to fewer and fewer categories. Nor is the translation from text to theory is reversible. "One could generate virtually an infinite number of excerpts whose interpretation is as an instance of integrative theme... Thus the strategy of back-translation is not available to us as a means of validating the mapping from text to theory" (Weber 1990: 79).

So the problem here is essentially one of validation. How can other researchers be sure that the results of a content analysis do indeed represent the original text?

This problem becomes more complex when one considers that the number of theoretical structures which may be applied to the same text are practically limitless. And each structure could, potentially, deliver an entirely different translation of the original text.

Weber offers two observations on this problem. The first is that the search for a "true" interpretation of a text is a fruitless quest. Even in translations from one language to another, where the mapping of one word directly to another might theoretically be feasible, the truth is that there are often many options and that in all but the most simplistic of cases a precise overlap of the nuances of meaning is likely to be

impossible. So the question becomes not how "true" an interpretation is "but rather the salience of an interpretation given one or another theory" (Weber 1990: 80). Does the translation of the text using content analysis categories deliver something that is relevant to the theoretical structures used to create those categories? And does the translated text allow a meaningful exploration of the research questions that prompted the study in the first place? If, "in relationship with other variables it 'behaves' as it is expected to" (Weber 1990: 20) then the researcher has gone some way to establishing what Weber calls "hypothesis" validity.

Weber's second point is that: "it is true that quantitative data do not speak for themselves (i.e. that the doctrine of radical empiricism is false), so is it true that texts do not speak for themselves either. The investigator must do the speaking and the language of that speech is the language of theory" (Weber 1990: 80). So a translation's validity can only be as strong as the theoretical basis of the construction of the categories applied to the text and the researcher must ensure that these are robust and meaningful. Fundamental disagreements about theory amongst researchers, Weber highlights the disagreements amongst those who work in the traditions of Karl Marx and Max Weber, may lead to different analyses of the same texts but this does not invalidate the methodology of content analysis – which can serve both approaches equally well. If the content analysis is properly conducted then the debate about the validity of the research findings must focus on the theoretical approaches that have informed the construction of categories not the methodology of content analysis, which becomes "transparent"

There is a third and more prosaic way in which a researcher can strengthen their translation's claim to be valid – through the clear definition of the way in which texts were categorised and the way in which those categories were constructed. As Titscher *et al* (2000) note, every observation or interpretation should be recorded in a way that

allows other investigators to reconstruct and verify them. "The clearer the relationship between the selected theoretical approach, the research strategy, and the method and procedures employed in a piece of research, the easier it will be for other researchers to reconstruct and even repeat an investigation and the conclusions derived from it" (Titscher *et al* 2000: 11). By setting out precisely how the content analysis was undertaken – how the text was translated into numbers -- the researcher allows others the chance to retrace his steps and, effectively provides others with the manual necessary to "back-translate" their work.

It is to providing this manual for the conduct of the content analysis as part of this study that is the chief concern of the next chapter.

Chapter 3.3
Conducting the research

The content anaylsis methodology in this research follows the approach set out by Neuendorf (2002). While considering the issues identified as shortcomings in the content analysis methodology (in Chapter 3.2) it became clear that the replicability and viability of this research would very largely depend on the precise definition of theoretical assumptions and the accurate recording of the practical steps taken while conducting the project. As such, it was Neuendorf's detailed model, which presents the steps involved in the conduct of a content analysis project in a flowchart-style process of clearly defined actions, seemed to offer an obvious means by which the structuring and recording of the empirical parts of this research could be formalised. The process by which this research was carried out is laid out over the rest of this chapter.

1. Theory and rationale

A clear theoretical foundation for the research helps define what material is to be studied and why it is important. Without such a foundation quantitative content analysis

is open to accusations of triteness and banality. This thesis has explored the responses of three groups of writers whose responses to three crises said to be facing modern democratic societies have formed what I have called the *new politics*. Those crises have most succinctly been set out by Castells (2000a):

> *i. That the liberal democratic state is being undermined by the growing power of liberalised global markets and multinational corporations made powerful by the neo-liberal "Washington consensus" leaving it unable to meet its promises to deliver generous welfare state provisions to its citizens;*
>
> *ii. That liberal democratic institutions are increasingly unable to meet the demands for individual treatment from increasingly powerful fundamentalist identities amongst their citizens;*
>
> *iii. That the political institutions of liberal democracies, and in particular political parties, have lost the trust of their citizens because of their reliance on business donations and the mass media.*

Building upon the foundation provided by these crises the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister groups of writers have made further assumptions about the nature of globalisation, the way in which power is used within society and the future shape of democracy (see Section Two). From these assumptions, they argue that rapid and overwhelming social change is the only viable option available to Western democracies.

The goal of this study is to test whether there is evidence for these crises in the conduct of an actual political debate, and in particular to examine whether the shared assumptions about the nature and likely outcome of these crises presented by the three schools are supported. Chapter 3.1 demonstrated the way in which each of the three

responses to the *new politics* place particular emphasis on the importance of the new media acting as a catalyst for the crises of democracy. It acts as an example of the potential benefits offered by the networked society and as a propaganda tool, spreading the ideology of the new politics.

It is this second form of influence that will be explored throughout the rest of this chapter. The techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters all place particular emphasis on the new media and all expect it to act in significantly different ways from traditional media outlets, which they regard as part of the institutions of state democracy. If the changes predicted by proponents of the *new politics* are correct then the evidence should be visible in the different output from the new and old media.

It is possible therefore, based on the three crises of democracy and the claims made about it by the three schools, to make three predictions of how the output from the new media should differ from that of television and newspaper. If their claims are to be sustained then the comparative study of material from the new and traditional media should reveal:

> *1. That the new media will favour the interests of global markets and multinational corporations over and above the traditional media and therefore will favour policies that move national policy in the direction of neo-liberalism.*
>
> *2. That the new media will contain a greater range of opinions, making room for those "fundamentalist identities" that the traditional institutions of liberal democracies cannot contain.*
>
> *3. That the new media will pursue a significantly different agenda from the traditional media which remain tied to the failing institutions of liberal democracy.*

Having established these testable hypotheses, the next step is to consider how these might be measured in the actual conduct of a political debate.

2. Conceptualizations

Having defined what is to be studied, the conceptualization of variables sets out *how* the questions are to be examined. Variables may be constructed in many ways but they must be justified in relation to the theoretical concerns raised in step one. To study the hypotheses set out above, it was necessary first to find material that allowed comparison between the different media – to examine whether there were really disparities in terms of the political actors taking part, the bias of reporting or the agenda being pursued. The 2001 General Election campaign seemed to offer a good opportunity to collect the necessary material for a number of reasons:

1. It guaranteed a period of relatively intense political debate. This meant that it was likely that sufficient material for meaningful study would be available for collection.

2. The debate would exist within relatively discrete boundaries. This not only helped with the practical planning of the project, but also meant that in, comparing the content of debates, they could be pursued from "beginning" to "end" within the campaign. As one of the objects of this study is to compare the agendas of the different media, the ability to compare the output over time, to explore whether or not there were significant differences in the timing and scale of such coverage was necessary.

3. The General Election campaign provides the opportunity to study media output at a time when the public are most engaged in politics. As such, it was hoped that this was the moment at which contributions from the widest variety of source, in particular from outside the traditional party system, could most easily be measured.

There are also potential drawbacks in choosing the General Election as a period of study. Rather than encouraging widespread political debate the period leading up to a General Election, the focus only the main parties that are likely to form a government. Or, rather than allowing for a larger variety of topics to be discussed, the General Election period sees debate narrowed to the range of options contained within the mainstream party manifestos. These potential weaknesses will be considered more fully to later in this chapter. However, though such criticisms may have their merits, they do not undermine the validity of this research. Even if such restrictions to the debate over the General Election period did apply (though I will demonstrate that there is evidence to suggest they do not) the claims of the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters are so emphatic that the differences between old and new media are epoch-making, that they should still remain significant even in unfavourable circumstances.

Focus on tax

Although it was useful that the General Election campaign provided an intense debate with the guarantee of significant quantity of material to study, it quickly became clear that it would be impractical to attempt to include every aspect of the campaign in this study. There would simply have been too much material to examine in a doctoral study of this nature.

The decision was taken early in the project to focus on just one issue amongst the many. Taxation was chosen, partly because it had historically played a significant role in General Election campaigns in the UK. In addition, the radical reduction of tax is a core part of a neo-liberal political agenda – so variations in attitudes towards taxation amongst the different media should help reveal whether some outlets were significantly more likely to support neo-liberal policies than others. Though not everyone who proposes a tax-cut is a neo-liberal, and there may be many motivations for supporting tax cuts, these other reasons are not relevant to this study. This is not a search for reasons but for trends in reportage. The techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers argue that the media favour and help to implement the agenda of a neo-liberal digital elite, if that is the case then it should be possible to detect trends in the difference of media coverage. This study is narrowly interested in whether the evidence to support their claims for a division between media outlets, thus the motivations of individuals are not relevant.

For similar reasons, this study does not include an historical analysis of the parties shifting positions on taxation in recent history. The concern here with taxation as an issue is only to establish whether the different media demonstrated different attitudes towards taxes within the context of the election period. This is not a study of taxation policy, but of attitudes to taxation as expressed in the election campaign and how they varied across different media outlets..

Selecting sources

Given the enormity of the output of both old and new media there was no practical means to monitor every outlet and selection was inevitable. There were a number of criteria in the selection of sources for material to analyse.

1. To enable the comparison of trends in the coverage over the whole period of the election, the news source had to be updated on a daily basis. This ruled out a number of websites and weekly news publications.

2. Outlets should be popular. The techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters claim that the changes heralded by the *new politics* will be felt across society – so the distinction between the new and old media should be visible in populist outlets not just those aimed at the elite.

3. That there was sufficient material to allow meaningful analysis between the texts. To test whether the media outlets were following distinct agendas it was necessary that the chosen outlets cover a broad range of stories.

4. That the material that could be broadly compared across different media.

Early in the project it was intended to include material from newsgroups in the study. Newsgroups have played a particularly important role in shaping a certain vision of the Internet as a means of creating a new form of direct democracy and I began by collecting the data for the period of the General Election campaign from the largest UK newsgroup domain "politics.uk." However, it soon became clear that the newsgroups failed to meet many of the criteria for inclusion. Having isolated relevant material from literally thousands of discussion threads started during the election period, only forty threads were found to contain material on taxation[3] and even here the tangential nature of conversations that take place within newsgroups are such that these rarely remained "on topic" for long. For example, a thread entitled "BBC, ITV and Sky not pushing the IR35 button" – nominally a discussion of proposed changes to the rules around self-employed contractors tax relief – was cross posted into a number of forums, including

[3] Where politics.uk newsgroups discussed policy rather than "reporting" the days events, they tended to be dominated by issues of race and immigration.

several intended to discuss the content of television programmes. The regular contributors objected to the intrusion of a "political" debate into their territory. The result was that the thread became increasingly confused, with an argument about where the debate should be taking place, a continuing discussion about IR35, a debate about the relative worth of contractors and permanent staff, discussion of Sky news presenters appearance, the definitions of the words "decimate", "tautology" and "oxymoron", the quality of drum solos in rock music, as well as the flaming (trading of insults) between contributors. Of the 134 messages posted to the thread during the period of the General Election only 30 could be said to directly address the issue of tax. Other threads had just one post in them ("Bleeding Britain dry – a tale of the unexpected" or "More Stealth Taxes"). The only post in "More Stealth Taxes" reproduces an article from that day's Sunday Times making it impossible to judge whether anyone other than the poster had bothered to read the post (as no one responded) and difficult to categorise as a uniquely "new media" phenomenon.

Analysis of the tax threads revealed that, although it was impossible to judge how many people were "lurking" (reading the messages, but not posting) the actual number of participants was surprisingly low. There were just 183 posters on the forty tax threads throughout the election period making a total of 927 posts. Over one third of all posters (67) made just one post in any relevant thread. Just one eighth of the total posters (27) made over half of all posts in the threads (495 posts, 53%). This left the debate on the newsgroup dominated by a relatively small group of frequent posters.

Technically the most important issue, was the nature of newsgroup conversations. The example from the IR35 thread above reveals how these threads can be disjointed, and wander across many different subjects. Most crucial, however, was the way posts

are commonly made. Below is a typical example of a post from the middle of a thread discussing the tax policies of The Green Party:

From: NAME REMOVED Message 25 in thread
Subject: Re: Are the Green Party economically viable?
Newsgroups: alt.politics.british, uk.politics.misc, uk.politics.electoral, uk.politics.environment, uk.politics.economics
Date: 2001-05-18 02:44:21 PST

```
Author's name removed wrote:

> On Fri, 18 May 2001 10:13:23 +0100, QUOTED AUTHOR'S NAME REMOVED
> email address removed> wrote:
>
> >
> >
> >Authors name removed wrote:
> >
> >> On Fri, 18 May 2001 04:22:27 +0100, AUTHOR'S NAME REMOVED
> >> <email address removed> wrote:
> >>
> >> >Most of their policies look really cool but are they
> >> >practical?
> >>
> >> Who cares?
> >
> >I do.
>
> I voted for them years ago....late '80's I think. I just find it
> hard to believe that they are any different from the rest, not
> subject to the same types of influence (vested interest) even if
> not the same corporations involved.

I don't find that hard to believe.

> >> They don't have a candidate here anyway.
> >
> >But they do where I'm voting.
>
> We had a bigger choice last time; an indication that people are
> more disenchanted with politics perhaps?

Do you think we'll have any more entries before the closing date to
make up the numbers or are nominations usually nearly all in by now?

>
> >> In fact I have the grand choice of Con, NuLab or Lib Demcrap.
> >
> >What's wrong with LibDem?
>
> It's so overtly NuLab or Con here that it would be pointless. (yes
> I know the argument that that is why they will never get power,
> but they don't even have a chance of getting a seat here).

So simply a case of choosing the lesser of two evils?
```

The first point to note is that, as well as the author's own brief comments this mail is almost entirely constructed from quotations from previous messages. Every line

beginning with a ">" indicates that the content of that line is a quotation from a previous post. Second, not only is material quoted, but it contains quotes from a number of other posts that have been quoted by previous posters Where there is more than one ">" it indicates the generation of that quote (i.e. how many other times it has been quoted before this post. The oldest quote here is five generations old, therefore it has four ">" markers). So the bulk of this post has appeared elsewhere, perhaps many times, longer threads can feature quotations seven, eight and more generations old. Finally, as part of an ongoing conversation the author's comments in this post make little or no sense when divorced from the context of the other messages.

On average, half the content of each newsgroup thread was made up of quotes from previous posts. In the "Are the Green Party economically viable?" thread that contained the example post (above) the total words fell from almost 13,000 to just under 6,500 when quotations from earlier posts were removed. Removing all those posts that make no reference to taxation further reduced the content of the thread to just 2,500 words. Even here, some of the posts make only passing reference to tax while discussing other issues (such as the demands placed on plumbers by the Labour government). When other extraneous matter is taken out, some 1,200 words remain – rather less than 10% of the original word count. Most of what remains does not actually discuss the issue addressed in the thread header – the viability or otherwise of Green economic polices. Fewer than 400 words (about 3%) of the material in this thread was actually on this particular topic and though some of the other material is relevant to the debate on taxation, this reveals how difficult it is to categorise and analyse this material. Though the salience of newsgroup discussions can rise in the very short threads (one to three posts) where the discussion remains on topic, this picture of

tangential conversation and off topic discussion represents the norm in the material collected for study here.

And even where the discussion remains salient to the topic under consideration, using such texts remains problematic.

Newsgroup text is not easy to fit into quantitative content analysis. While a qualitative study may be able to take the conversation in context, preserving the wider meaning, a quantitative study seeks to break the material down into its constituent parts. But how should such a message be categorised? The repetition of each statement cannot be classified anew as if it were the author's own words, not least because the meaning of such a long passage saying one thing may then be negated by a single comment ("You're wrong!") tagged onto the end. And yet the full impact of a message cannot be understood by taking those words in isolation. The intended meaning of newsgroup postings can be very difficult to detach without recourse to the whole message.

The unique nature of newsgroup conversations – multi-threaded, disjointed and rambling – has made them a prime subject of study for those conducting sociological studies of the differences between "real life" and online communities. However, the lack of political content (even in political forums), the relatively small number of people involved and the technical complexities of using the text have made their content unsuitable for this study.

It may be that this characteristic newsgroups represents just the break with the past that the *new politics* predicts. If that is so, the overwhelming concern with race and immigration, the angry tone of the debate, the huge preponderance of noise to relatively little signal, and the inability to remain on a particular topic do not suggest that this digital nation will meet the expectations of the techno-liberals or social entrepreneurs in

regard to rational, reasonable and fair democratic problem-solving empowered by the new technologies.

Despite the obviously interesting nature of newsgroup discussions from a variety of perspectives, the decision was made that they did not fit within the remit of this study and its concern with mass media.

Old Media: Television

This study recorded the main evening news broadcasts on ITV (5:45pm and 10:00pm) and BBC1 (6:00pm and 10:00pm) plus Channel Four News (7:00pm) and BBC2's Newsnight (10:30pm). Each programme was broadcast seven days a week (except Newsnight, which was only broadcast from Monday to Saturday). The breakdown for tax stories on television news during the 2001 General Election was as set out in table 3.3.1. The programmes were recorded to video and the stories related to taxation were transcribed onto computer and then the material was coded for use in WordCruncher.

Table 3.3.1. Television stories and word count

News Programme	No. of tax stories	Words about tax (Approx)	Story size (average, approx)
BBC1 News	48	20,000	400
Newsnight	15	14,000	930
ITV News	37	13,000	350
Channel 4 News	19	10,000	530

In comparing these figures it is worth noting first that BBC1 News and ITV News both broadcast twice a day and, thus, tended to run twice as many stories as Newsnight and Channel 4 News. The main news broadcasts on BBC1 and ITV tended to broadcast a larger number of relatively short stories (400 words average on BBC1, 350 words average on ITV) whereas both Newsnight and Channel 4 News tended

towards fewer but longer stories (930 words average on Newsnight, 530 words average on Channel 4 News).

Old Media: Newspapers

Once again I sought to cover as broad a range of the public and as wide a range of opinion as possible within the mainstream media. Five[4] newspapers were collected every day during the campaign, stories on taxation (or containing significant discussions about tax) were identified and material was scanned and converted into computer readable format using optical character recognition software and then coded for use in WordCruncher. Table 3.3.2 summarizes the coverage in each newspaper

Table 3.3.2. Newspaper stories and word count

Newpaper	No. of tax stories	Words about tax (approx)	Story size (average, approx)
The Guardian/Observer	59	39,000	650
The Telegraph	50	27,000	540
The Mail	32	15,400	540
The Sun/ News of the World	22	7,500	340
The Mirror	16	3,800	240

The tabloids tended to publish shorter pieces while the broadsheets published longer articles. Unlike Newsnight and Channel 4 News, however, the broadsheets are able to both publish longer articles and a greater number of stories than the more

[4] Originally nine newspapers were collected. However this produced too much material and it was necessary to reduce the number of papers involved to keep the research manageable.– so four newspapers were subsequently excluded (The Times, The Express, The Independent and The Financial Times). The Express and Independent were left out on grounds of their significantly smaller circulations compared to newspapers aimed at similar audiences (The Mail and The Guardian). The Financial Times was left out because of technical problems with the optical character recognition software reading material from its distinctive pink pages. The choice between The Times and The Telegraph, newspapers with similar audience and broadly similar circulations, was made at random (by the toss of a coin).

populist press. So The Guardian/Observer's ran 59 stories at an average of 650 words while even the most extensive coverage in a tabloid (The Mail) managed barely half that number of stories (32) at an average length of 540 words.

New media: Internet

When choosing which websites to analyse I first selected the country's largest and most frequently visited site, the BBC news website. However, although too large and too popular to be excluded from the study I was aware that the BBC site was produced by a large, traditional news organisation and that, although its organisation differed somewhat, it was clear that if similarities existed between the BBC site and the traditional media (as I expect), these could be dismissed because of its source. Therefore, I also chose to study two smaller, independent Internet sites. Epolitix and YouGov both of which only published news on the Internet.

YouGov is a polling organisation that uses the Internet to sample the population and, since the 2001 has risen to some prominence providing polling data for national newspapers and the Conservative Party. Prior to the 2001 General Election, YouGov's website had a political news section which reported on political events and then ran indicative polls of public opinion, many of which attracted several thousand voters. This practice continued through the election period with news updated every day and polls taken on key issues. Since the election YouGov has ceased to provide news updates and the site focuses solely on promoting the companies polling business.

ePolitix (www.epolitix.com) is a political website, which, in the lead up to the 2001 General Election, ran daily updated news reports on the political debates. The stated aims of ePolitix.com were to improve the flow of political information and communication between elected representatives and the public. At the time of the

election it hosted the largest collection of MPs' websites on the Internet, as well as providing up-to-date information on news and events around the UK. Since 2001, although the epolitix site continues to provide daily news updates, it has become an online political consultancy, acting as a source of information about a range of not-for-profit organisations and businesses. The owners of ePolitix also now publish a range of magazines about political issues.

Table 3.3.3. Internet sites stories and word count

Website	No. of tax stories	Words about tax (approx)	Story size (average, approx)
BBC Website	54	32,500	600
YouGov	34	14,400	423
Epolitix	30	11,700	390

The choice of websites was restricted for a number of reasons. First, many sites that offered election coverage were created by organisations or individuals with their own policy agenda (for example, www.keepthetoriesout.co.uk, www.tacticalvoter.net and www.electoral-reform.org.uk) and, as such, were interested in one or two key issues but did not provide a wide range of coverage. Secondly, the ability to provide daily updates represented a significant stumbling block. Many websites were only occasionally updated (for example, www.voxpolitics.com and www.democracy.org.uk). Other potential targets (such as www.politics.co.uk) did begin a daily updated news service during the election but not until one week into the campaign.. Finally, this study was only interested in websites that represented a British viewpoint rather than being offshoots of larger American sites. As stated earlier, one of the goals of this study is to address the tendency of research to be based on American or Japanese experiences of technology and to apply those lessons regardless of culture.

The study aimed to gather material that was culturally specific. Of the remaining sites that met the necessary criteria the vast majority were run by newspapers and simply reprinted the stories from that day's editions. One site not included in this study was www.annanova.com - at the time the choice about which sites to include, the Annanova site seemed primarily concerned with celebrity news and unlikely to offer enough relevant material to make inclusion worthwhile. Once the election campaign was underway, however, it became obvious that the site was offering more election coverage than was initially anticipated but, as the site had no obvious archive feature, it was too late to include it in the study.

Looking at the output of the media it appears immediately apparent that the outlets across the media fall into two groups across the different media – which might, crudely, be referred to as tabloid and broadsheet, based on the average length of their stories. The Guardian/Observer, Telegraph, The Mail, Newsnight, Channel Four News and the BBC Website all have an average word count in their stories of over 500. The BBC News, ITV News, The Mirror, The Sun/News of the World, ePolitix and YouGov all have a relative story length of around 400 words or less. There may be nothing significant in this, but may be noteworthy that the distinction seems to exist across both new and traditional media outlets and suggests a continuity of journalistic approach regardless of the medium.

3. Operationalizations

Having collected the material for the study and established its scale, the next task was to clarify how the research questions set out above could be addressed given the material available.

1. That the new media will favour the interests of global markets and multinational corporations over and above the traditional media and therefore will favour policies that move national policy in the direction of neo-liberalism.

First, claims that the new media offer more space to those groups/politicians who support policies that advance a neo-liberal agenda than the traditional media should be tested. If, for example, the new media offered more space for views from parties that favoured radical tax-cutting or the removal of bureaucratic burdens on business, then they might be advancing the neo-liberal agenda, even if those individuals were not themselves neo-liberals.

Second, comparing how the different media report the debate on taxation should reveal whether there is a tendency to favour a particular agenda within the debate. If, for example, they report plans to increase taxes in a negative way, while reporting plans to cut taxes positively, they might be seen to have a bias in favour of a neo-liberal agenda. If that is the case, and if the new media significantly favour such an agenda in comparison to the traditional media outlets, then this may be evidence for their support of a neo-liberal political agenda, as the proponents of the *new politics* predict.

2. That the new media will contain a greater range of opinions, making room for those "fundamentalist identities" that the traditional institutions of liberal democracies cannot contain.

Is the new media able to represent opinions and points of view that are outside the scope of mainstream party politics and which cannot be contained within the old media? To explore this within the context of the 2001 General Election debate on taxation requires evidence that the new media provides significantly more room for voices outside the mainstream than older media. By looking at who speaks – examining

whether the new media feature politicians from mainstream parties less often than the traditional media and what space the different media give to parties from the "non-mainstreams" of liberal democracy – the study should reveal whether the new media provide space for voices from beyond the political mainstream.

> *3. That the new media will pursue a significantly different agenda from the traditional media which remain tied to the failing institutions of liberal democracy.*

One way in which such a shift might be visible is if the debates on issues in the old and new media followed a significantly different timescale. Looking at what issues were discussed, when these discussions took place, and at the weight given to the different aspects of the tax debate within the campaign should reveal variations in the pattern of coverage, if they exist. One of the key goals of the political parties is to control the news agenda during the election campaign – to get the press to report the things they are talking about on their schedule rather than that of their opponents. If there are significant differences between the new and old media then it may be possible to conclude that the political parties were not able to influence the debate in the new media as successfully as they did in the old media.

4. Coding schemes

The development of a coding scheme to define the way in which material is coded ensures that those preparing the text for study and those measuring the reliability of that coding are operating from precise and clearly defined schemes. Most of the coding for this research was conducted using the computer program Word Cruncher. The process

of preparing text for Word Cruncher is quite lengthy, text must first be prepared as a basic text file then each part of the text is divided into book, chapter and verse.

Within this structure, Word Cruncher leaves it to the user define how these divisions were identified. In this case the divisions were defined as follows:

BOOKS: The media outlet from which each story was derived – so the material here was divided into 12 books: BBC1 News, BBC Newsnight, ITV News, Channel 4 News, The Guardian/Observer, The Telegraph, The Mail, The Sun/News of the World, The Mirror, BBC News Website, Epolitix and YouGov.

CHAPTER: Each individual news story was defined as a separate chapter within the books.

VERSES: Verses were defined as paragraphs.

Punctuation and paragraphs

While the definition of a paragraph was straightforward enough for printed material and the Internet where paragraphs are clearly marked within the text, a certain amount of judgement was required in identifying paragraphs within the texts transcribed from television programmes. The addition of punctuation to spoken text is sometimes problematic. Judgements about where commas, full-stops and paragraphs should be inserted is not always clear, and even people used to public-speaking rarely talk in ways that easily transform into fluid written prose. It is, of course, possible to change the meaning of a passage entirely through the insertion of punctuation – and through its omission. I have sought to be as accurate as possible, but there is an element of subjectivity in the placing of some punctuation in the transcription process.

Because a number of later analyses use the paragraph as a unit of analysis, it is necessary to spend some time explaining how paragraphs were defined in material transcribed from television programmes. The text below sets out a typical, relatively unproblematic, exchange from a television programme.

|B itvnews
|C1 Tape: 1b Date: Wednesday 9 May Broadcaster: ITV Time: 10:45
|v1 DM: So, John, why didn't Labour mention tax on their pledge card?
|v2 JS: Well the Conservatives reckon they just didn't want the word tax at all on the pledge card. And there may be something in that. Last time, if you remember, they promised not to increase income tax rates but that didn't prevent them raising other taxes. So I think, they got, if you like, very bad publicity for that. Better to put forward what they regard as their vote winning promises so that's what they've done this time. I think they were worried that if they didn't produce a pledge card people like me might say: 'What no pledges? No promises?' So they were caught in that trap and they now have produced their own pledge card.
|v3 DM: And what have the Tories got to say about tax?
|v4 JS: Well, news tonight that in the Conservative manifesto tomorrow another part of their tax jigsaw. If you remember they are promising to cut public spending by eight billion pounds and the final part of their promises is a six pence a litre cut in petrol and diesel. And as so often happens in election campaigns they are asking: How does this effect Mondeo man? Well they calculate that each time Mondeo man fills up his car he will save three pounds and seventy pence.

Note the codes at the start of each paragraph: "**|B** itvnews" identifies the book from which the extract is taken as ITV News.

"**|C1** Tape: 1b Date: Wednesday 9 May Broadcaster: ITV Time: 10:45" Each story is individually numbered within the book, this is the first chapter so the code is "|C1". The chapter heading also identifies the tape used to record it and details of when the story was broadcast.

|v1 DM: So, John, why didn't Labour mention tax on their pledge card?

Within each chapter, each paragraph is also individually numbered. This is the first paragraph within the story, so the code is "|v1". Each speaker is then identified using their initials (where two people shared the same initials they were separated, for example JPa – Jeremy Paxman and JPr – John Prescott).

In this exchange the back and forth of conversation effectively marks out the paragraphs within the text. In most instances within the transcription of this material, it has seemed reasonable to proceed along these lines. However, when the speech is longer, the division of material into paragraphs is not always so straightforward as people do not often speak in clearly defined paragraphs.

|B Newsnight

|C11Tape: 6a, Date: Thursday 24 May 2001, Broadcaster: BBC Newsnight, Time: 10:30
[...]
|v7 KW: Should you have got rid of it earlier?
|v8 GB: We had fiscal objectives and we had environmental objectives as well as having to take into account the needs of lorries, the needs of motorists as well. And I think the important thing is we have a achieved the environmental targets we set out to achieve, the Kyoto targets. I think it is very important to recognise that by 2010 we will have cut carbon dioxide emissions because of the steps we took. We had, of course, to tackle the deficit. There were protests right across Europe because the oil price had gone up from ten dollars to thirty-five dollars. It's hardly surprising there were protests not just in Britain but in other countries. We have now sorted that problem out because what we did was, having removed the escalator, we'd announced that before the fuel protests, we've able to move to ultra-low petrol and diesel, environmentally efficient fuel. We've been able to cut license fees. And I think we've got a more sensible, environmentally-based transport policy that is something that will stand the test of time.

In this exchange the replies from GB (Gordon Brown) to KW's (Kirsty Wark) questions are not so clearly or easily defined as individual paragraphs. Were these written texts then a "|v8" might, grammatically, be divided into three paragraphs:

We had fiscal objectives and we had environmental objectives as well as having to take into account the needs of lorries, the needs of motorists as well. And I think the important thing is we have a achieved the environmental targets we set out to achieve, the Kyoto targets. I think it is very important to recognise that by 2010 we will have cut carbon dioxide emissions because of the steps we took.

We had, of course, to tackle the deficit. There were protests right across Europe because the oil price had gone up from ten dollars to thirty-five dollars. It's hardly surprising there were protests not just in Britain but in other countries.

We have now sorted that problem out because what we did was, having removed the escalator, we'd announced that before the fuel protests, we've able to move to ultra-low petrol and diesel, environmentally efficient fuel. We've been able to cut license fees. And I think we've got a more sensible, environmentally-based transport policy that is something that will stand the test of time.

Generally, however, I have chosen not to divide lengthy answers to questions this way as the "sense" of the text seems to me to be unified as a response to a single point made by the interviewer. Occassionally, however, a speaker will address significantly different points within a speech that is not interrupted by an interviewer. One example is this exchange between JS (Jon Snow) and LH (Liam Halligan) in a Channel 4 News broadcast:

|C3 Tape: 1a, Date: May 10 2001, Broadcaster: Channel Four, Time: 7:00

|v1 JS: Well, as we did last night with Labour's economic record last night, we've been looking in detail at some of the Conservative's arithmetic. Liam Halligan, our economics correspondent is here. Liam, this business of the six pee off petrol.
|v2 LH: Two things about that John. The first thing is that the six pee reduction in fuel duty doesn't necessarily mean a six pee reduction in the price of petrol at the pump. And if Gordon Brown's cuts in fuel duty recently are anything to go by the oil companies could use the opportunity to increase profits rather than pass the price cuts on. So the Tories need to be asked will they duff up the oil companies to pass these cuts on. The other thing, I think, despite the Tories attempts to focus on this government's records on taxing fuel, Labour's record has actually been quite good. And better than the previous Tory administrations.
|v3 LH: If you look at the numbers, I've got the numbers here, the last Conservative government raised taxes on unleaded petrol on average by six point one percent a year, with petrol prices themselves going up by just over three percent annually. Now, under Labour, despite perceptions, the tax component has risen by only three point two percent a year, that's much less than the Tories. Now petrol itself under Labour has gone up by three percent a year, almost the same as the Conservatives, but that is because Labour has had to endure far faster rises in the price of crude oil. These are intriguing numbers because they are very much counter to public perceptions that Labour has unfairly increased the tax burden on fuel.

It might be argued that this speech by Liam Halligan (|v2 and |v3), divides into (at least) two distinct paragraphs dealing with the same issue (fuel tax) but from distinct angles. In cases such as this, I have split single speeches into a number of paragraphs. However in every instance I have chosen to split such speeches into the minimum number of paragraphs as seemed necessary.

Coding variables

Having coded the material under study for use with Word Cruncher, I then proceeded to create the codebooks necessary to define the variables which would be needed to answer the research questions I have set out above. As Neuendorf (2002) notes, even when using computer programs to conduct content analysis you still need a codebook of sorts to allow a full explanation of your dictionaries and of the method used to apply them.

Below I have set out the coding schemes used to define each variable.

1. That the new media will favour the interests of global markets and multinational corporations over and above the traditional media and therefore will favour policies that move national policy in the direction of neo-liberalism.

If there was evidence that the new media gave disproportionate space to those parties campaigning on a tax-cutting agenda – especially those supporting radical tax-cutting plans – it might be possible to draw the conclusion that they did allow more space to a wider neo-liberal approach. This shall be dealt with more fully in the next section's study of who the new media give space to in the campaign debate.

However, by examining only the number of references given to each political party does not, in itself, mean that these parties are biased in favour of neo-liberalism. The extra space devoted to the discussion of such questions could be given over to strident criticism of such claims. There may be many reasons why someone or some group might choose to support a political leader or party even if their political position did not most closely match their own. It therefore becomes necessary to judge not who the media are talking about, but what they are saying.

With almost 7,700 references to each group as defined in table 3.3.6 (below) it was simply impossible to look at every reference. As a sample of the material, I chose to look at how the leaders of the three main political parties were reported in the debate about tax. This involved the categorisation of 1,335 references. First every statement regarding one of the party leaders was put into one of three categories:

1. Direct: The report included a direct quote from the party leader.

2. Recorded: The reported included an indirect report of what was said.

3. About: Editorial comment about the individual's policy on tax.

To judge whether there was a bias towards those proposing tax cuts, or against those proposing tax rises, I then explored the nature of the editorial comments by taking those references in the "about" category (514 references) and placing them in one of four further categories.

> **1. About: pro:** A positive statement about what the party leader has said about tax.
>
> **2. About: anti:** A negative statement about what the party leader has said about tax.
>
> **3. About: balanced:** A statement which was neither positive or negative about what a party leader has said about tax.
>
> **4. Not used:** Material where the meaning was unclear or did not appear related to the study being undertaken.

If there was evidence that the new media favoured those policies which would lead to lower taxation, as the new politics predicts, then differences in the proportion of positive and negative editorial comments made in the different media about the different party leaders may be revealing, even if none of the party leaders or their party policies could themselves be categorized as neo-liberal..

In this instance the stances that the political parties took on taxation during the campaign is relevant to this research and so it is worth setting them out briefly here.

Political parties and tax in the 2001 General Election

> **Labour:** Labour's position on taxation in the General Election was complex, and the party's position was not always presented clearly. The Labour Party's manifesto included promises not to increase the basic or higher rate of taxation and promised "tax cuts" of £1000 for families with children while, at the same time promising to inject large amounts of resources into public services. In the debate in the media, much was made of Labour's record of increasing tax and

the likelihood that public finances meant that there would have to be tax rises to meet Labour's spending plans. Labour politicians, and in particular Gordon Brown, stressed Labour's commitment to "targeted tax cuts" – the use of "tax credits" for working families on low income and pensioners. Whether these tax credit schemes were best understood as tax cuts or as redistributive changes to the welfare system was also a subject of debate. What talk of "targeted tax cuts" did achieve was to potentially make it unclear whether Labour's position was for higher taxation/higher spending, the maintenance of the status quo or for lower taxes. Despite the party's protestations, most of the debate in the media began from the assumption that Labour would continue to raise taxes in a second term, through the use of what their critics called "stealth taxes," as it was claimed they had during its first period in office.

Conservatives: The Conservative Party entered the election campaign with a manifesto commitment to reduce public expenditure by £8 billion during the first half of the subsequent parliament and to "return" that money to the public through a series of tax cuts – the largest being a reduction of taxation on savings, but the most eye-catching was their plan for a substantial cut in fuel duty. The debate in the media focused initially on whether the Conservative's figures added up and whether, if faced with the need to make other cuts in public services the Conservatives would do so to keep their tax-cutting promises. Later in the campaign claims that the Conservatives had plans for much larger cuts in tax and public spending added to the sense that they had a radical agenda but left them open to claims by the other parties that they would severely damage public services. As with the Labour Party, there was the

suggestion that while denying the claims of more ambitious tax-cutting plans publicly, the Conservatives had floated more radical schemes so as to make their tax cutting agenda seem more radical than their manifesto plans.

Liberal Democrats: The Liberal Democrats entered the election campaign with what appeared to be a straightforward tax and spend agenda. They promised investment in the public services paid for by a one pence increase in the basic rate of taxation and a 50% higher rate of taxation on those earning more than £100,000 per annum. In the debate on taxation the Liberal Democrats were criticised by the Conservatives for their tax raising policy while Labour attacked them for both planning to raise taxes and for the modesty of their spending plans, which were claimed to be less than those put forward by Labour. Whether the Liberal Democrats tax rises could actually cover the full scope of their promised spending was also frequently raised as an issue.

Green Party: The Green Party proposed the creation of a "Citizen's Income" paid to everyone at levels dependent on age and paid for by a 7% increase in the basic rate of tax – though the Citizen's Income payments offset this rise for all but the "top 20%-30%". They also proposed a more progressive tax regime targeting the better off and a shift from indirect taxes such as VAT to "eco taxes".

Nationalists: Although distinct parties with distinct wider political agendas, Plaid Cymru and the Scottish Nationalist Party have traditionally shared a similar agenda, and been categorised as tax and spend parties. There were

however differences in their approach at this election. The SNP did promise to increase public expenditure – but claimed this could be done by ensuring that taxation currently raised in Scotland was spent in Scotland. They also proposed an extra 5 pence on the top rate of tax for those earning more than £100,000 but offset this against a reduction in fuel duty. Plaid Cymru called for a higher rate of 50% on those earning over £50,000, a more progressive taxation system and a shift to greener taxes to pay for large increases in public spending. The most serious questions about the Nationalist's taxation plans were raised about the SNP's claim that Scotland contributed more in taxation than it spent and questioning whether their figures for an autonomous Scotland were sustainable.

Socialist left: Although the parties in this category were distinct and their policies differed in specific detail they shared a common agenda of much higher levels of taxation on the well off (the Scottish Socialist Party called for a 63% top rate of income tax plus the removal of the ceiling on National Insurance, the Socialist Alliance called for "steeply progressive income tax") and much higher rates of taxation on businesses and rejected indirect taxation.

Rightwingers: This group contained a number of single issue campaigns – specifically the People's Fuel Lobby and Farmers For Action – both of whom were concerned to get a specific tax (fuel duty) radically reduced. The United Kingdom Independence Part, who shared a number of representatives with these groups, had a wider political agenda and entered the election with a manifesto calling for Britain to withdraw from the European Union and for the money they said that this would save (£22 billion) to be used to deliver both lower taxes and

higher public spending.

Problematic party positions

As the summary above makes clear, making assumptions about the position of the media based on their attitude towards political parties is complex. In searching for different agendas with regard to neo-liberal policies the fact is that none of the parties listed here put forward a purely neo-liberal agenda, so while a neo-liberal supporting medium might be expected to offer greater support to parties that (in the context of this research) proposed large tax cuts, there is no way to be sure that other factors wouldn't intervene to complicate that judgement. For example, a party might support socially conservative policies that would restrict personal liberty enough to make it appear unattractive to neo-liberals no matter how large the offer of tax cuts. By the same token, parties with plans to raise taxation might be expected to find less support for their policies in a medium with a neo-liberal agenda, but other factors – even factors not related to policies, such as leadership image or poll ratings – may influence how the different media outlets reported on the party's plans. Even a *bona fide* neo-liberal party might have a leader without the necessary presentational skills or it may obviously stand no chance of winning so that even a media outlet that was ideologically sympathetic might choose to support a candidate who shares fewer of their policy positions in the hope of retaining influence with the eventual winner.

All of this is made more complicated by the "spinning" of policy positions on taxation that all the parties used to confuse the picture with regard to their plans. So, in this election, Labour called increased welfare payments for poorer families "targeted tax cuts" while the Conservatives (may have) made relatively modest claims about their tax plans in the official manifesto while promising much more in off-the-record briefings and the Liberal Democrats touted as radical changes that the IFS estimate

would increase the amount of tax gathered by 0.7% of national income (Bloom *et al* 2001: 2). The combined effect of these and similar tactics might have been to confuse onlookers as to what each party stood for.

Statements about tax

As an alternative approach to the problematic party-based research set out above, I sought to look at the different media's position on taxation independent of their coverage of the political parties. I wanted to explore how the media reported plans for changes in taxation – so I created two categories of variable: "tax rise" and "tax cut".

Constructing variables

In constructing the variable tax cuts, I looked for paragraphs when a set of key words relating to tax (table 3.3.4 – first word list) coincided with a number of words relating to cuts (table 3.3.4 – second word list) in the same paragraph. The words could be found in any order within the paragraph.

Table 3.3.4 Tax- cutting

First word list	Second word list
National Insurance	Cut/s
NI	Cutting
NIC	Cutters
Tax	Low
Taxation	Lower
Taxed	Lowering
Taxes	Low-tax
VAT	Reduce/d
	Reducing
	Reduction/s
	Refund/s
	Reverse/d
	Reversing
	Slash/ed/es
	Slashing

Similarly, the contruction of the variable for tax-raising involved the creation of two word lists (table 3.3.5) and the recording of paragraphs in which they coincided.

Again, these words could be found in any order within the paragraph.

Table 3.3.5 Tax- raising

First word list	Second word list
National Insurance	High
NI	Higher
NIC	Increase
Tax	Increased
Taxation	Increases
Taxed	Increasing
Taxes	"Put up"
VAT	Raise
	Raised
	Raises
	Raising
	Rise
	Risen
	Rises
	Rising

Having collected the references to tax cutting (some 1100 paragraphs containing unique references) and tax raising (around 800 unique references) from all the media outlets these were then placed into one of four categories:

1. Supportive of tax increase/against tax cutting;
2. Supportive of tax cutting/opposed to tax increases;
3. Balanced
4. Not relevant.

The decision as to whether a reference supported tax-cutting or tax-raising was unavoidably complex and perhaps the most subjective element of this research. Some instances are relatively straightforward:

Example one
|v14 Cheaper petrol, tax cuts for young families, a pension revolution and the pledge to save the Pound are what we have been demanding for ages.
(suntax 2:14).

Example two

|v22 Irresponsible Tory tax cuts followed by interest rates at 15 per cent, three million out of work, the doubling of the national debt, 22 Tory tax rises and massive cuts in public investment. The Tories have learnt nothing.
(suntax 4:22).

It seems straightforward enough to categorise example one (a Sun editorial) as a statement favouring tax cuts and example two (an article credited to Tony Blair published in The Sun) as a statement against tax cuts.

Example three
|v2 Hague: I'd cut tax by £8bn
(suntax 3:2).

Example four
|v9 Economic spokesman Oliver Letwin has leaked plans for up to £20BILLION in tax cuts - two-and-a-half times as much as Mr Hague will admit in public.
(suntax 8:9).

Slightly more complex are examples three and four. William Hague clearly means the promise of tax cuts to be read as a positive statement in their favour. However, though example four makes a similar statement about plans for tax cuts, the Conservatives were somewhat embarrassed by the Letwin "leak" about plans for £20 billion of tax cuts as it allowed opponents to strengthen their claim that they were "irresponsible" and threatening public services. Although, as set out here, the statements look rather similar, they were presented quite differently – with the second one having much more controversy attached to it. Nonetheless, in analysing this material I have chosen to consider both examples three and four as positive statements for tax cuts as far as the Conservative Party are concerned. Whatever the wider context, there is nothing within this reference to suggest that such tax cuts may have negative connotation.

Example five

|v15 An election pledge card issued by Labour last night did not include any promise not to raise tax. It merely spoke of keeping mortgages "as low as possible, low inflation and sound public finances".
(telegtax 46:15).

Example six
|v3 The shadow chancellor, Michael Portillo, last night struggled to turn the Tory tax-and-spend controversy against Labour by publicly thanking Gordon Brown for highlighting Tory plans to slash taxes by more than £8bn in the next five years - if the economy can afford it.
(guartax2 23:3)

Example five is more complex still. It might simply be regarded as a report of Labour's launch of its pledge card, except it isn't reporting what was on the pledge card, rather what is missing from it. What is more the use of the word "merely" suggests that the pledges that were there on mortgages, inflation and public finance were insufficient. The inference that can be drawn is that the promise that is missing, the one "not to raise taxes" is preferable to those that are present. This then, it seems to me is not a balanced piece of reporting but a statement against tax rises. Example six, from The Guardian, also seems to turn on just one or two words. The suggestion that Michael Portillo "struggled" to turn the Tory "controversy" against Labour and that they plan to "slash" taxes suggest that though this can be read as a simple report of the Shadow Chancellor's actions, it actually contains a judgement against his position of tax cuts. However whether that emphasis is strong enough to suggest a negative statement is uncertain. As such, this was classified as a balanced statement.

As these examples demonstrate, choosing which category to place each statement in is not always straightforward and requires a degree of judgement. As discussed earlier, such judgements are unavoidably subjective. Most instances were straightforward but the borderline decisions required considerable thought, testing and checking of reliability, issues to which I shall return later in this chapter.

2. That the new media will contain a greater range of opinions, making room for those "fundamentalist identities" that the traditional institutions of liberal democracies cannot contain.

As set out above, the exploration of this issue required the identification of who spoke and who they represented so as to judge whether the new media did offer greater space to those from outside the political mainstream. I identified seven key groups who were quoted or spoke in the media. Table 3.3.6 (below) sets out the groups and the individual spokespersons identified as speaking on their behalf in the General Election debate on tax.

Table 3.3.6. Named representatives of political groups

Labour	**Conservative**	**Liberal Democrat**	**Green Party**
Tony Blair	William Hague	Charles Kennedy	Mike Wooden
Gordon Brown	Michael Portillo	Matthew Taylor	Margaret Wright
Alistair Darling	David Willets	Lib Dem	Vanessa Hall
Ruth Kelly	Howard Flight	Liberal Democrat	Penny Kemp
Andrew Smith	Oliver Letwin		Green
Helen Liddell	Margaret Thatcher		
Labour	Conservatives		
	Tories		
Nationalists	**"Socialist left"**	**"Rightwingers"**	
John Swinney	Socialist Alliance	People's Fuel Lobby (PFL)	
Scottish National Party	Kambbiz Boomla (Socialist All)	John Coxon (PFL)	
Ieuan Wyn Jones	Dave Nellist (Socialist All)	Brynle Williams (PFL, Farmers for Action)	
Plaid Cymru	Socialist Labour	Andrew Spence (PFL and UKIP)	
	Scottish Socialist Party (SSP)	Farmers for Action (FFA)	
	Tommy Sheridan (SSP)	UK Independence Party (UKIP)	
		Nick Farge (UKIP)	
		David Handley (fuel protestor)	

Categorisation

A number of these groups were self-defined – for example, the main political parties were relatively easy to identify. In the coding for this particular study I chose to record

every mention of the name of that political party (so every time someone spoke about or as a Conservative, Con or Tory) and every spokesperson on behalf of that political party who was reported to have said something in the debate about tax. Similarly the category for "nationalists" – which combined references to members of the Scottish Nationalist Party and Plaid Cymru – was constructed by combining uncontested identities.

The fifth group of speakers is The Green Party. The original intention was to create a group for "environmentalists" but, as it turned out, none of the media quoted any environmentalists outside The Green Party on the debate about tax, so what was intended to be a wider category has been narrowly redefined as a party political one.

The remaining two groups are somewhat problematic and the categorisation has had to include a number of people from a variety of sources. The "socialist left" category includes all those parties (and their spokesmen) that represented themselves as providing a left-wing alternative to Labour. These groups are by no means identical, although, as has previously been noted, they shared certain similarities in relation to the debate on taxes. The level of reporting of these groups made it impractical to deal with them individually as there would not have been enough material to make sustainable claims about trends in coverage.

Most difficult of all were the "Rightwingers". This is a very diverse group, comprising as it includes fuel protesters, a farmers' rights group and the anti-European UK Independence Party. However there is a thread linking all three groups – they share a number of key spokesmen. Brynle Williams is quoted in some stories as speaking on behalf of the People's Fuel Lobby and in others as a representative of Farmers for Action. Similarly, Andrew Spence is quoted as a representative of both the People's Fuel Lobby and the UK Independence Party. While it is clear that these groups

are not identical, there appears to be an overlap between the membership and interest of the groups as, at least in the debate about tax, they share a similar agenda of tax cuts – though of course the UK Independence Party's published manifesto went beyond the goals of the People's Fuel Lobby and Farmers for Action – whose stated aim was to achieve cuts in fuel duty.

Again the amalgamation of these groups (though reductive) was necessary if there was to be enough material to make sustainable claims about trends in coverage. Both the "socialist left" and "rightwingers" received quite small amounts of coverage. Of 8000 total references counted during this research, only 100 were shared between all the non-mainstream parties.

3. That the new media will pursue a significantly different agenda from the traditional media which remain tied to the failing institutions of liberal democracy.

One of the key goals of political parties during election campaigns is to seize control of the agenda, to control the issues that are leading the news coverage and to ensure that the media are talking about issues that are on their agenda.

The predictions of the new politics state that the ability of parties to control the agenda in that way is being undermined by a lack of trust and by the rising influence of competing interests. They also predict that such control cannot apply to the new media because they are not part of the traditional structures of liberal democracy but part of what is going to replace it.

If this is the case, and if the new media are likely to follow a separate agenda then it should be obvious in the timing of the discussion of debates during the election period. By identifying a number of debates that arose during the campaign, it should be

possible to explore the intensity and timing of debates around these issues by measuring the number of times each of them is mentioned by the different media outlets during the campaign.

Choosing a range of issues, rather than focusing on just one, should also allow us to detect whether some issues are more important to the new media than the traditional media, thus perhaps also indicating the presence of a distinct agenda. For example, if the new media were less concerned with payroll taxes than indirect taxation, when compared to the traditional media, it might indicate that they are reflecting the different agenda of a new class of self-employed or fixed-contract "knowledge workers" rather than traditional wage-earners.

Five topics were chosen so the intensity and timing of discussion could be measured over the period of the campaign:

- Income tax
- National insurance
- Fuel tax
- European tax harmonisation
- Value added tax.

A particular concentration on issues such as fuel tax (in particular petrol duty) and European tax harmonisation might also indicate that the new media gave more space to issues that concerned groups and individuals outside the political mainstream as these were issues of prime concern for the fuel protesters and farmers who had taken to the streets in great numbers in September 2000, less than a year before the election.

5. Sampling

The study of the debate in the 2001 General Election has been sampled thematically – that is the issue of tax was singled out as a specific issue to highlight trends that might extend beyond that more narrowly defined discussion. In addition the number and type of media outlet used in the study was subject to a set of selection criteria outlined previously. Within those limits, however, all the text that was identified as contributing to that debate on taxation and collected from the selected media sources was used in the analysis conducted as part of this research and there were no further sampling methods, such as probabilistic sampling, employed.

Had qualitative measures been used to examine the text further sampling would have been essential as such methods require a more detailed exploration of the text. However, since quantitative measures were used, and employing the capability of the software to code the text and produce listings of word occurrences from large quantities of text, it was possible to use the debate on taxation as a whole.

6. Training and pilot reliability

As noted in the chapter 3.2, the meaning of texts can vary from reader to reader. Much of the methodology for the conduct of content analysis set out through the rest of this chapter is designed to reduce those different readings to manageable levels to allow meaningful comparison between texts. Nonetheless different readings of texts persist, even within the narrow definitions of the content analysis study. The process of carrying out a trial coding of the text on a representative sample and of testing and comparing the reliability of coder's categorisation of the text represent a means by which content analysis can further tackle the problem of understanding. The goal here

is not to remove differences entirely but, through the firming up of techniques for coding and the strengthening of the definition of the categories used in creating the variables, to reduce the differences and increase consistency amongst those taking part in the process of conducting the research. This process does not reduce the number and range of potential different meanings for readers of these texts outside the content analysis project, it simply strengthens the consistency of recording within the parameters of the study.

Though only one coder will code the text in this project, it remains important for replicability of the content analysis and the reliability of the findings that the meanings attributed to the variables included here can be understood with a reasonable degree of commonality by other researchers. To test the robustness of the findings of a content analysis, the variables and coding scheme should be trialed on a sample of the text. If problems in creating a commonly understood variable are discovered, the codebook should be revised until, within the limited definitions contained in the codebook, the commonality of understanding is sufficient to allow reliable assumptions to be drawn from the analysis, or the variable discarded.

Since there was to be only one coder on this study there was no need to arrange complex training procedures. However, to test whether the construction of variables was robust and the coding scheme was viable, a second coder (Coder B) was required to conduct a pilot test of the reliability of the findings. Coder B was given the coding material set out above and brief training in how to mark the text consistently. Most of the content analysis in this study is based on simple word/frequency counts based on lists and counts constructed by the WordCruncher software used to prepare the texts. However two variables under analysis here required human coding: looking for differences in the reporting of the party leader's ("leadership"), and looking for

differences in the reporting of issues around raising/lowering taxes ("tax raising/lowering").

The standard method of judging reliability in content analysis is to have two coders examine the same pieces of text and compare their findings to judge whether the variables and coding scheme are delivering stable results. As Neuendorf (2002) notes, there is a wide range of opinions and little agreement as to what level of intercoder reliability constitutes a minimum acceptable level and, even more crucially, over how such reliability might be measured. Neuendorf concludes that a reliability coefficient above .90 would be acceptable to all and .80 acceptable in most situations though the use of different techniques of statistical analysis result in differing findings. The simple or "crude" measure of agreement is most commonly used and simply reports the number of times two coders agree on a percentage basis. For Neuendorf (2002: 149) there are a number of drawbacks to using this approach – such as the failure to account for agreement by chance and the need to precisely match coders' findings. The use of "beyond chance" measures of agreement (that is those statistical methods of analysis which make allowances for agreement by chance) are likely to be judged on more liberal criteria. Such measures set the bar for a agreement considerably higher than the "crude" measure of agreement and can themselves require time-consuming comparisons of data (Krippendorf 1980).

With the two variables that required testing for coder reliability, a sample of the material identified as relevant by WordCruncher had to be taken. The construction of samples to test reliability is another area of content analysis technique on which opinions differ. As Neuendorf (2002: 158-160) notes there are a variety of methods proposed – with subsample sizes ranging from 10% to 100% of the material and questions about how the sample should be taken.

For simplicity I chose to use a subsample ten percent (55 paragraphs for the leadership variable, 190 for the tax raising/cutting variable) of the total text to be measured for each variable and randomly selected paragraphs from each media outlet in proportion to their contribution to the total number of relevant paragraphs in the variable. By selecting the text proportionately from all the media outlets I hoped to ensure that there were no characteristics of particular text sources that were excluded from the reliability check. I will quote both the simple percentage agreement and use Cohen's *kappa* test (Neuendorf 2002: 155) – a "beyond chance" test, to provide measures of the reliability of each variable.

The results of the reliability testing are set out in table 3.3.7 below. The figures in bold account for the instances on which the two coders agreed on the coding of a paragraph. Where they disagreed, the alternatives selected by each coder are set out. So, for example Coders A and B agreed on 28 instances of negative (Anti) statements about a leader's policy statements on tax – with Coder A identifying two others (making a total of 30) that Coder B did not recognise, one which Coder B had categorised as "Balanced". In addition Coder B recognised one statement as "Pro" and one as "Balanced" that Coder A had included in the "Anti" category (making Coder B's overall total also 30).

Table 3.3.7 Leadership variable coder reliability test

		Coder A			
		Pro	Anti	Balanced	Total (Coder B)
Coder B	Pro	**8**	0	1	9
	Anti	1	**28**	1	30
	Balanced	1	2	**13**	16
	Total (Coder A)	10	30	15	**49**/55

The consequent reliability statistics are set out in table 3.3.8 (below), as they show the simple percentage agreement figure of 89% is well above the minimum of 80% suggested by Neuendorf though it falls just short of the 90% preferred level. The result of the Cohen's *kappa* test result returned figures (0.81) very close to Neuendorf's suggested minimum acceptable level of 0.8. However, as Neuendorf notes "beyond chance" tests such as Cohen's *kappa* have been criticised for being "overly conservative" (Neuendorf 2002: 151) in giving credit only to agreement beyond chance and, as noted earlier, he suggests that some greater leeway may be allowed when using these measures. Though a greater agreement would be ideal, the Cohen's *kappa* "beyond chance" figure is sufficient that the findings of the analysis of the reporting of leadership variables can be reported with reasonable confidence.

Table 3.3.8: Reliability figures for leadership variable

Test	Result
Raw agreement	48/55
Simple percentage agreement	89%
Cohen's *kappa* test result	0.81

Table 3.3.9 (below) sets out the results from each Coder testing a subsample from the tax raising/tax cutting variable, with the number of times they agreed on each variable marked in bold and the disagreements set out in each category. So, for example, taking the statements that might be regarded as being "pro" a neo-liberal agenda (for tax cuts/against tax rises) Coder A identified 99 "pro" statements, but of these only 82 agreed with Coder B who identified only 87 such statements. Of the difference, three of the "pro" statements identified by Coder A were marked as "anti" and 14 marked as balanced by Coder B. In addition Coder B's total of 87 statement

identified as "Pro" contained five statements Coder A had categorised differently – one of which had been marked "anti" and the other four marked as "balanced".

Table 3.3.9 Tax raising/cutting variable coder reliability test

	Coder A				
		Pro	Anti	Balanced	Total (Coder B)
Coder B	Pro	**82**	1	4	87
	Anti	3	**53**	3	59
	Balanced	14	12	**18**	44
	Total (Coder A)	99	66	25	**153**/190

The reliability figures are set in table 3.3.10. As is immediately obvious, these intercoder reliability figures fall some way short of the desired level and suggested a problem with the way in which the data was coded. Looking at the data, and in the course of discussion with Coder B it became clear that the most significant difference was Coder B's tendency to place many more statements in the "balanced" column and that this arose from his understanding of more statements as ambiguous than Coder B. This lead to the creation of a new category within the tax raising/cutting variable – "ambiguous" and the recoding of a new sample of paragraphs by the two coders to test the new scheme for reliability.

Table 3.3.10: Reliability figures for tax raising/cutting variable

Test	Result
Raw agreement	153/190
Simple percentage agreement	80%
Cohen's *kappa* test result	0.68

The details for the repeated test are set out in table 3.3.11 (below). These findings immediately reveal an improved raw agreement figures following the addition of the "ambiguous" category with, rising to 171 from a possible 190.

Table 3.3.11: Tax raising/cutting variable, second reliability test

		Coder A				
		Pro	Anti	Balanced	Ambiguous	Total (Coder B)
Coder B	Pro	**93**	0	0	2	95
	Anti	1	**46**	2	0	49
	Balanced	2	2	**15**	4	23
	Ambiguous	1	3	2	**17**	23
	Total (Coder A)	97	53	19	23	**171**/190

As 3.3.12 demonstrates, the changes to the coding categories resulted in significantly improved coder reliability with the simple percentage rising to 90% and the "beyond chance" Cohen's *kappa* test result rising to 0.85. Both figures are well above the minimum levels put forward by Neuendorf and suggest that analysis of the text using this variable can proceed with some confidence.

Table 3.3.12: Reliability figures for tax raising/cutting variable

Test	Result
Raw agreement	171/190
Simple percentage agreement	90%
Cohen's *kappa* test result	0.85

7. Coding

Having established the relative reliability of the human coded variables the rest of the text could now be coded using the revised codebook as outlined above.

In projects with multiple coders, the analysis of text by human coders would require at least a ten percent overlap in the text analysed by each coder to allow later, final reliability tests. However, there was only one coder used to conduct the final coding so this was not required.

8. Final reliability check

The use of only one human coder throughout the analysis of the data in this section obviated the need for a final reliability check on intercoder reliability, however there remained the possibility that the reading of texts may have changed for the coder over time. Therefore a final test of the reliability of categorisation within the variables over the whole length of the study, what Weber (1990) refers to as "stability reliability", was undertaken. As with the earlier reliability tests, ten percent samples of the texts analysed under both the leadership and tax raising/cutting variables were taken, and recoded. This time, however, rather than comparing the findings of the test sample with another coder the new results were compared with the findings the first time the material was coded.

The reliability figures for these tests are set out in table 3.3.13 (below). The figures in this table suggest that the coding of the text remained consistent throughout the coding period and that, in conjunction with the test of coder reliability conducted earlier, the leadership variable as set out above appears robust enough to allow us to use it with confidence.

Table 3.3.13: Final reliability test: leadership

Test	Result
Raw agreement	53/55
Simple percentage agreement	96%
Cohen's *kappa* test result	0.94

As with the "leadership" variable the findings of the final reliability test for the tax cutting/raising variable (table 3.3.14, below) appear robust over the period of the study and that it is now possible to move on to the analysis of the findings in this study with some confidence in the robustness of the variables designed to measure the changes supposed to herald the *new politics*.

Table 3.3.14: Final reliability test: tax cutting/raising

Test	Result
Raw agreement	184/190
Simple percentage agreement	95%
Cohen's *kappa* test result	0.92

Conclusion

The purpose of setting out the methodology used in the conduct of this study has not been simply the desire to provide the fullest possible account of the lengthy process required to collect, prepare and analyse the data used in the study. As noted in Chapter 3.2, there are unavoidable problems within the methodology of content analysis that cannot be removed entirely but can be reduced by the structure of the project.

The common criticism of content analysis studies such as those conducted by the Glasgow Media Group (1982a, 1982b, 1985, Philo 1999) is that they draw from a

narrow selection of data conclusions relating to the whole political and social structure of society.[5] Content analysis cannot support such grandiose claims. Instead, having set out the nature of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister responses to the *new politics* in Section One and highlighted the shared assumptions in their analysis in Section Two, allows three predictions to be made that should hold true if their claims are right. To restate them these are:

> *1. That the new media will favour the interests of global markets and multinational corporations over and above the traditional media and therefore will favour policies that move national policy in the direction of neo-liberalism.*
>
> *2. That the new media will contain a greater range of opinions, making room for those "fundamentalist identities" that the traditional institutions of liberal democracies cannot contain.*
>
> *3. That the new media will pursue a significantly different agenda from the traditional media which remain tied to the failing institutions of liberal democracy.*

This study has been designed to discover whether evidence supporting these predictions can be found in a particular debate, held at a particular time in particular circumstances. Though the nature of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools claims would make the absence of evidence to support such predictions significant. This is specifically the case in relation to their claims that the changes creating the *new politics* are all encompassing, immediate and irresistible and that the new communications technologies, in particular the Internet, represent a vanguard for

[5] By the same token I have criticised the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters for extrapolating great social movement from short-term trends in a moment of early technological boom.

this change. This study does not seek to construct any alternative vision of the future on these findings nor does it dismiss the idea that in different circumstances, at different times other evidence supporting these claims may be found.

At the same time, the intention of this study has been to develop findings that might possess an element of generalizability. That is to say, that while accepting the specificity of the precise material under study the goal has been to create a methodological framework and individual variables that are capable are withstanding closer scrutiny, which are logically self-consistent and that measure with reasonable accuracy the elements of the text identified here as important. By transparently outlining the methodology employed to break the texts studied here into manageable variables and setting out the assumptions behind this methodology the goal has been to provide a replicable set of actions that would lead other researchers to broadly similar findings regardless of their attitude towards the theories which support the categorisations employed. This should increase the prospects that other researchers might find the process of re-interpreting and reconstructing the findings set out in Chapter 3.4.

Finally, through a process of testing the means used to reduce the texts under analysis to measurable variables, and by following procedures designed to boost the commonality of understanding amongst those involved in conducting the analysis and the specificity of the coding of variables, the goal has been to increase the internal consistency of this study. This does nothing to reduce the richness of meaning that might be applied to the text by those not involved in this particular project, but it increases the reliability of the particular categorisations identified as important by this study. As such, while again stressing that this implies no identification of the "true" meaning of the text, it does provide a stronger foundation for claiming that, within the

assumptions made by this study, the criteria used to measure those elements of these texts regarded as significant possess a degree of reliability which supports the claims made for them.

Having spent much of this and the previous chapter considering the weaknesses of content analysis, it is perhaps worth pausing to consider the particular strengths of this methodology before turning, at last, to the analysis of the data collected in this study.

Riffe *et al* (1998) note four general strengths of the methodology of content analysis that are all applicable to its usefulness to this study. First, they point out that it is a non-obtrusive, non-reactive means of measuring behaviour. None of the people who contributed to the texts analysed here were aware that their words would be included in this study and, as such, the process of conducting this research can have had no influence on their behaviour. Secondly, because the material studied in a content analysis has a life beyond the moments of production and consumption it is possible to collect it, archive it and conduct longitudinal studies over time. In particular, because this material all exists in physically recorded form it does not rely on fallible memory or recall. Of course the meaning that exists at the moment of production or consumption can never be precisely reconstructed, but the material itself remains unchanging. Thirdly they note that the mechanisms of content analysis make it possible to process large amounts of information that, logistically, simply could not be subjected to close qualitative scrutiny. Immediacy with the richness of texts may be lost but there are compensations in terms of the scale of what is possible and the scope of such research. Finally, for Riffe *et al*, content analysis is particularly important because it enables the study of acts of communication and communication is central to human affairs – that almost everything we do is mediated through the use of words and,

therefore, a methodology designed to increase the understanding of such communication is applicable across a range of disciplines.

In reference to this project, it is worth repeating the close fit between the object of study – the relationship between texts produced on different media over a significant period – and the strengths of content analysis. The claims made for the centrality of new media technologies by the authors of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister responses to the *new politics* and their predictions on the distinctions between communication conducted through these new media and the traditional methods of mass communication make content analysis the best means of comparing their predictions. By making communication central to their claims about the future they have ensured that their predictions are subject to analysis and testing by the tools available in content analysis.

Chapter 3.4
Data Analysis

The crises of unfettered corporate globalisation, unrestrained individualism and the decline of democratic institutions said to be facing modern liberal democracies have caused the techno-liberal, social entrepreneurs and resisters to claim that we are in the midst of the construction of a *new politics*. They predict the sweeping away of traditional institutions, said to have lost the trust and respect of their citizens, and the creation of a new order. The precise details are different for each school, but similar assumptions lie at their heart. Each of the three schools has made specific claims about the importance in this process of the new media technologies, and in particular the Internet. The Internet, is a tool in the hands of a new class: the "digital elite", which exploiting this advantage to establish itself as the most "powerful" group in society. It is also a model for the types of social organisation that might flow from the *new politics*, networks of loosely defined, loosely connected self-governing "communities" making consumer political choices freely across the planet. And the Internet is the vanguard of these changes, forcing businesses, governments and individuals to change the way they

operate within society to meet the changes it is imposing.

At one level the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters appear to offer widely divergent understandings of the impact of the new politics (see Section One). However, as this study has demonstrated (in Section Two) a set of shared assumptions underpin the views of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writings. Each group regards globalisation as novel, irresistible and homogenizing, they have a one-dimensional view of power, and they argue for the abandonment of traditional democratic institutions in favour of more direct/deliberative forms of democracy. In accepting these assumptions they have limited the range of policy alternatives that appear viable in the face of the crises of democracy and boosted the apparent value of their own policy prescriptions.

However, they have also opened up the opportunity for their claims about the scale, imminence and impact of the new politics to be measured. Taking their assumptions about globalisation, the role of the individual in the new social order and the decline of democratic institutions and combining that with their claims for the centrality of the new communications technologies, especially the Internet, it has been possible to construct three predictions based on what might be expected in a political debate conducted across the range of media. These predictions are:

> *1. That the new media will favour the interests of global markets and multinational corporations over and above the traditional media and therefore will favour policies that move national policy in the direction of neo-liberalism.*
>
> *2. That the new media will contain a greater range of opinions, making room for those "fundamentalist identities" that the traditional institutions of liberal democracies cannot contain.*

3. That the new media will pursue a significantly different agenda from the traditional media which remain tied to the failing institutions of liberal democracy.

With three testable predictions, this study examines the conduct of the political debate on taxation as conducted during the 2001 General Election.

If the three schools' first claim is correct, that the new media are likely to favour policies that promote a global market based on the neo-liberal "Washington consensus", then it should be possible to find evidence of the new media offering more favourable coverage to those individuals and groups whose manifestos would furthest advance their aims. It should also be the case that policies closest to the neo-liberal ideal – in this instance policies opposing tax rises or supporting tax cuts – should also achieve more favourable coverage in the new media. To explore whether this is the case, this study will look first at how each party leader was reported upon by the media and then look for differences between the outlets' reporting of their position with regard to proposals to change the level of taxation.

If the second prediction is correct, that the debate in the new media will be characterised by individual demands that cannot be contained by the institutions or processes of traditional political structures, then it might be expected that significantly different actors would take part in the new media debates about political issues than in the traditional media outlets. In the context of the 2001 General Election debate on taxation it might be expected that there would be significantly more room for voices outside the mainstream political parties in the new media than in traditional outlets.

The final claim, that the new media have been freed from the influence of traditional political institutions, and in particular from the controlling power of political parties and will follow a different agenda, suggests it should be possible to find

evidence of the new media discussing major issues in different ways and at different times from the traditional media, whose agenda is assumed to be set by the mainstream political parties. Looking at the 2001 General Election debate on tax, the new media should be seen to be starting debates on key issues that interest them according to their own timetable rather than following that set by the traditional political parties. The new media might be expected to give significantly more space to issues that are of particular interest to those that are outside the political mainstream.

In summary then, if the claims of the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs, and resisters are correct and the *new politics* is inevitable, then the new media's coverage of taxation in the 2001 British General Election should include a more diverse and distinctly different set of voices, favouring those who make the case for lower taxation and presenting viewers with an independent agenda.

It is to the first of these claims, that of diversity and difference in the make-up of the actors in the debate in the new media, that I now turn.

1. Do the new media favour neo-liberal policies?

The techno-liberal, social entrepreneurs and resisters each identify the globalisation of markets as a key feature of the crises facing democracy. It is stripping away layers of state competency, reducing the ability for governments to act effectively and reducing democracy to an empty husk with real control transferred elsewhere. Section one set out the apparently distinct responses to globalisation, from unalloyed enthusiasm of some techno-liberals to the out-and-out rejection of some resisters. Section two, however, sought to demonstrate that beneath this apparent diversity there were a set of shared assumptions about globalisation that, taken together, acted to limit the policy responses that appear viable in the face of the *new politics*. These assumptions – on the

modernity, irresistibility and homogenizing effect of globalisation – make the phenomenon so all encompassing that resistance seems futile. Chapter 2.2 sets out a number of counter arguments to these assumptions, arguing that globalisation has quite specific historical antecedents, that the strength of its resources can be overstated and that there is the likelihood that greater communication will encourage discord as much as unity.

With at least the possibility of there existing alternative responses to globalisation, and with the emphasis placed by the three schools on the centrality of new communications technology in the process of extending globalisation's influence to every part of the world, there is the opportunity to look for evidence of whether the three school's assessment can be justified. Therefore the first prediction to be tested here is:

> *That the new media will favour the interests of global markets and multinational corporations over and above the traditional media and therefore will favour policies that move national policy in the direction of neo-liberalism.*

This prediction shall be tested in two ways. First, by looking at the way in which the different media reported the activities of the three main party leaders, this study shall seek to discover whether there is a relationship between the new media's coverage of politicians and their policies, specifically in relation to taxation. Secondly, looking at the way in which the different media discussed the issue of possible increases or decreases to the level of taxation, this study shall seek to discover whether or not the new media do favour policies that tend towards a neo-liberal agenda.

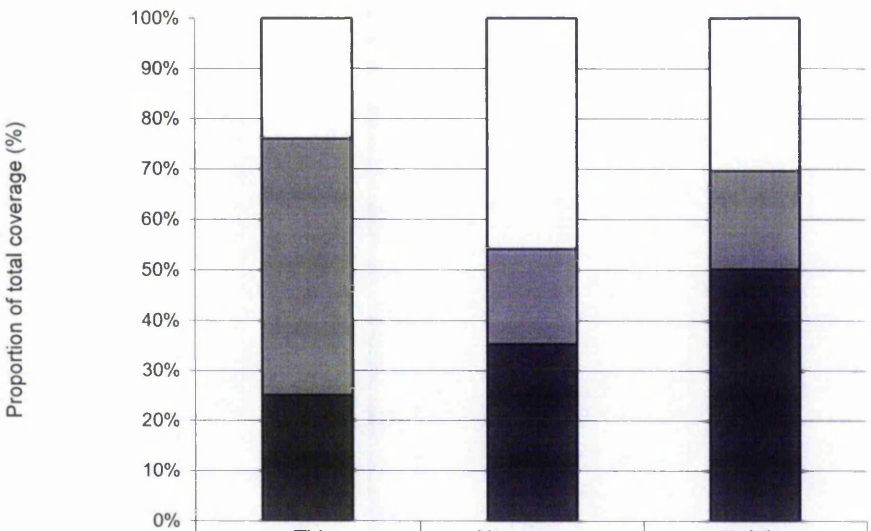
I examined the reporting of the leaders of the main political parties (Tony Blair, William Hague and Charles Kennedy) and examined how the media reported their activities in the election campaign. Looking at each instance where one of the subjects

was mentioned or spoke directly I put the text into one of three categories. The reference was either:

> **Reported,** an indirect reference to what the person said: "Tory leader William Hague vowed yesterday to slash £8billion off taxes if he won next month's General Election" (The Sun 3:3);
>
> **Direct,** a direct quotation or, in the case of television, speaking direct to camera: "He said in London. 'The next Conservative government will be a tax-cutting government" (The Sun 3:9); or
>
> **Commentary,** an editorial statement about what someone has said: "The Sun likes a lot of what the Tories promised to do in their manifesto yesterday. Cheaper petrol, tax cuts for young families, a pension revolution and the pledge to save the Pound are what we have been demanding for ages" (The Sun 2:13-14).

This division is important in itself because one of the claims made for the new media by the techno-liberals is that they act to reduce levels of intermediation between decision-makers and the mass of the public. That is to say, it is claimed that politicians can use the new media to speak directly to the public without having to rely on the filtering of journalists. If this were the case it would contribute to the new political vision of the reduced state – allowing citizens to "cut out the middleman" and acting as a step on the road to a more direct democracy. Of course each party achieved this to some degree by creating their own websites, but as table 3.4.1 shows, the freedom to have their words passed directly to the public is here best represented by television, which, as a proportion of its total coverage, offers least commentary (24%) and the most direct speech (51%) of any of the media.

Table 3.4.1: How the media reported what party leaders said (% of references)[6]



	TV	Newspaper	Web
Commentary	23.98	45.84	30.34
Direct	50.94	18.88	19.48
Reported	25.08	35.28	50.18

There appears to be no evidence, in this sample, of the Internet being a place where party leaders can speak more directly to the public. The Internet coverage is significantly different from the other media, however. It offers about the same level of directly quoted speech as the newspapers but, whereas newspapers might argue that their strength lies in their ability to deliver a commentary on what has been said, the level of commentary on websites is closer to that of television than of the newspapers. Instead, almost half the comments attributed to the party leaders in this research were in the form of indirect reporting. Of course parties and candidates had their own websites to allow them disintermediated communication but it is worth noting here that claims that Internet communication are somehow intrinsically free of mediation (for example, in some of the ideas about how new technologies impact on democratic communication) are not borne out by this finding.

[6] A full breakdown of these figures can be found in Appendix A: Table 1.

Looking in detail at the material collected, table 3.4.2 (below) sets out the proportion (in percentages) of the space each media outlet devoted during the debate on taxation (in commentary, direct speech or reported speech) to each of the party leaders (Labour's Tony Blair, The Conservative's William Hague and The Liberal Democrat's Charles Kennedy). Looking at the total figures for each medium, the new media outlets the most obvious anomaly is the relatively little space offered to Tony Blair in comparison to the other media. A closer look at the figures reveals that one outlet – YouGov is responsible for this anomaly – giving almost six times as much space to William Hague and around twice as much space to Charles Kennedy on the debate about taxation as they did to the Prime Minister. While the other new media outlets fall roughly into line with the space offered by television to the various party leaders, it might be argued that this imbalance in coverage towards the most rightwing candidate, and the only one promising unambiguous tax cuts, is a sign that at least one new media outlet was displaying a preference for neo-liberal. On further investigation, however, this appears less likely.

Table 3.4.2: Space afforded to Party leaders in media outlets (% of references)

	Blair	Hague	Kennedy
BBC News	36.7	42.4	20.9
Channel 4	43.2	31.8	25.0
ITV News	33.9	43.5	22.6
Newsnight	72.1	20.6	7.3
Television Total:	**46.5**	**34.6**	**19.0**
Guardian	35.5	58.5	5.9
Mail	46.3	47.6	6.1
Mirror	22.9	65.7	11.4
Sun	54.1	45.0	0.9
Telegraph	53.8	37.2	9.0
Newspaper Total:	**42.5**	**50.8**	**6.6**
BBC Web	40.4	43.6	16.1
Epolitix	44.3	41.0	14.7
YouGov	10.8	63.5	25.7
Web Total:	**31.8**	**46.4**	**18.8**

Looking at the relative space offered to the party's various Treasury spokespeople – Labour's Gordon Brown, The Conservative's Michael Portillo and The Liberal Democrat's Matthew Taylor – (table 3.4.3, below) it becomes clear first that the new media show no sign of offering more space to the Conservative candidate, indeed like all the other media it offers Labour's Gordon Brown significantly more coverage and that on this measure, YouGov now falls into line with the more traditional media outlets.

Table 3.4.3: Space afforded to Party Treasury spokespeople in media outlets (% of references)

	Brown	Portillo	Taylor
BBC News	78.3	20.0	1.7
Channel 4	21.6	70.3	8.1
ITV News	58.3	41.7	0.0
Newsnight	43.6	53.8	2.6
Television Total:	**50.5**	**46.5**	**3.1**
Guardian	64.4	34.4	1.2
Mail	68.7	30.6	0.7
Mirror	54.5	40.9	4.5
Sun	74.1	25.9	0.0
Telegraph	82.7	17.3	0.0
Newspaper Total:	**68.9**	**29.8**	**1.3**
BBC Web	68.6	26.8	4.6
Epolitix	59.1	38.7	2.1
YouGov	57.8	40.6	1.6
Web Total:	**61.8**	**45.3**	**3.2**

There is no obvious explanation for YouGov's relatively sparse reporting on Tony Blair in the context of the debate on taxation, but it does not on its own suggest a distinct political slant for this news outlet or, indeed, for the media as a whole. Indeed the absence of coverage need not be negative. The Daily Mirror mentions William Hague significantly more often that Tony Blair (table 3.4.2) but the coverage of Hague is overwhelmingly negative.

The amount of space given to an individual or party reveals nothing about the attitudes expressed in the debate. By concentrating on the "commentary" that each media outlet offered on what the party leaders said, it should be possible to see whether the new media demonstrated a significantly different attitude to the party leaders in the debate about tax. Those statements categorised as commentary were divided into three further subdivisions:

Anti: comments that were critical, negative of the subject or the policies they were advocating or that cast doubt on the statements made by a subject;

Pro: statements supporting the individual or their policies; and

Balanced: statements for which there seemed no bias.

The first thing to note about table 3.4.4 (below) is the overwhelmingly negative nature of all the media's coverage of the party leader's contributions on the debate on taxation. In almost every instance the great majority of comments made are negative. There is one exception. The only candidate to call unambiguously for tax cuts, Liberal Democrat leader, Charles Kennedy, received a marginally higher proportion of positive comments but a far lower proportion of negative comments about his policies in the new media than either of the other party leaders. This suggests that the putting forward of policies that do not fit comfortably with a neo-liberal agenda does not necessarily conflict with support from the new media. It was the press who gave Charles Kennedy the hardest time. While Kennedy was reported speaking positively about his own policies in the press (both in direct speech and reported) I could find no positive references to him in the newspapers covered in this study in the debate about taxation.

Table 3.4.4: Comparing comments about subjects (% of total comments)[7]

	Commentary: Pro	Commentary: anti.	Commentary: balanced
Blair TV	13	50	37
Blair Papers	7	74	19
Blair Web	9	67	24
Hague TV	26	51	23
Hague Papers	19.5	66.5	14
Hague Web	11	61	28
Kennedy TV	17	33	50
Kennedy Papers	0	82	18
Kennedy Web	14	14	72

There is an important proviso to be made about this point, however, and that is to note that the Kennedy figure for commentary is based on a very small sample. There were only fourteen instances when a new media outlet commented on something the Liberal Democrat leader said about tax (compared with 75 instances for William Hague and 55 instances for Tony Blair). The liberal leader was frequently quoted and referred to, at least on television and on the Internet, but what he said was rarely talked about. In television broadcasts Tony Blair spoke directly or his words were reported 100 times, for William Hague the figure is 96 and for Charles Kennedy the figure is a relatively respectable 59. However, when it comes to commentary on what the party leader's say, there are 53 instances of commentary on a Blair statement about tax, 47 on a Hague statement but only six for Charles Kennedy.

If it is accepted that, allowing for the small sample, the Charles Kennedy figures might suggest something distinct about the Internet sites' coverage of the debate on taxation in the General Election campaign, then it is something quite distinct from that predicted by the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters. Far from signifying a concentration on those supporting the most neo-liberal-friendly policies this would

[7] A full break down of these figures can be found in Appendix A: Table 1.

indicate that the new media are favouring a party supporting higher taxes and a relatively unreformed welfare state. However the sample is so small that it is difficult, and may be misleading, to attempt to draw such a conclusion with any degree of confidence. What can be stated with some certainty, however, is that there appears to be no evidence that the Liberal Democrats tax-raising plans attracted negative attention from the new media outlets.

It is also worth noting that the medium that gave the highest proportion of positive comments to the only party leader calling for tax cuts was television. With rules governing both its "impartiality" as well as the direct intervention of government departments in television policy it is perhaps the medium most closely tied to the apparatus of the supposedly faltering liberal democratic state. Despite going into the election with a manifesto most likely to appeal to a neo-liberal voter, combining calls for lower taxation with smaller government and greater personal freedom, Conservative leader William Hague received the most positive comments from the most traditional of mediums (26% of commentary on Hague's statements was positive) and the new media which offered him the fewest positive comments (11%).

Looking at chart 3.4.5 (above) reveals a pattern repeated throughout the coverage of all the leaders. While all the media feature more negative comments than positive, television is consistently the least critical medium and offers the highest number of positive statements. By contrast the press are the most consistently critical medium and offer the fewest positive comments. The websites sit somewhere in the middle, tending to be both less critical than the press and less positive than television.

Table 3.4.5: Comparing comments about party leaders (% of total comments)

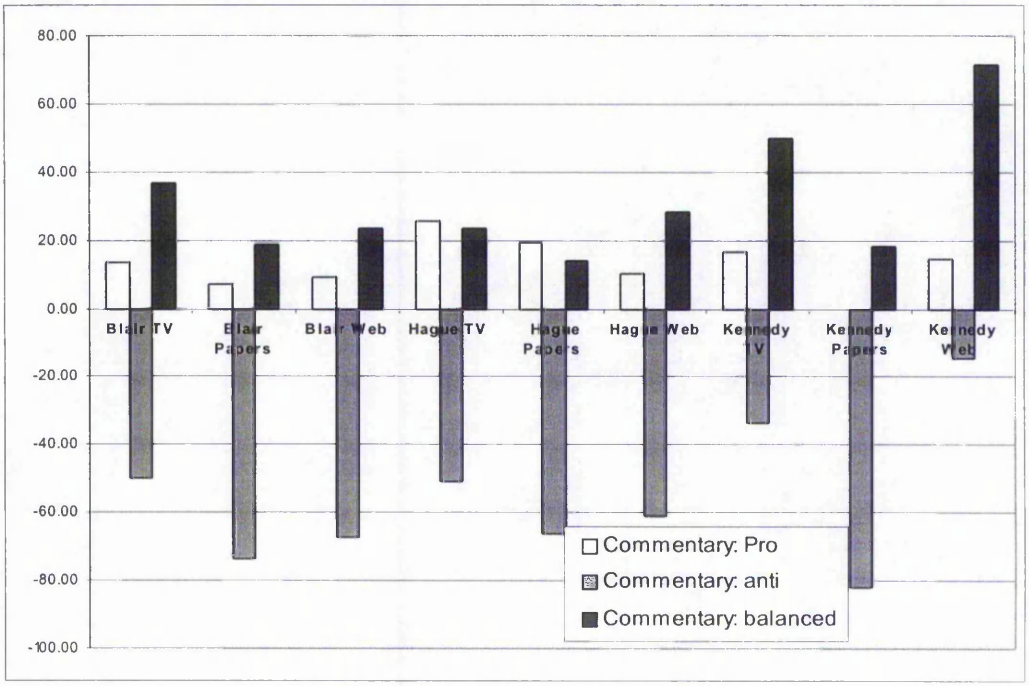


Table 3.4.6 (below) illustrates this point, 71% of all newspaper commentary was critical of the party leader involved, which contrasts with only 50% of television commentary. With a 60/40 split between negative statements and positive/balanced commentary, the Internet sites are neatly bracketed by the traditional media.

Table 3.4.6: Media levels of negative and positive comments about party leaders (% of total comments)

	Commentary: Anti	Commentary: Pro	Commentary: Balanced
Television	49.5	19.1	31.4
Newspaper	70.7	12.8	16.5
Internet	58.8	10.3	30.9

However, as discussed in Chapter 3.2, simple conclusions from the commentary of media outlets to the representatives of political parties cannot be straightforwardly

drawn. It is possible that factors other than ideological similarity may have intervened in directing the choices of media outlets in how to present party leaders during the election campaign. The Conservative Party, for example, went into the General Election very significantly behind in the opinion polls and in considerable disorder (Butler and Kavanagh 2001). It may be that, although they presented policies that would have closely matched the desires of a neo-liberal digital elite, they were obviously incapable of winning so that some media outlets chose to support other parties or individuals, despite their sympathy for neo-liberal reform, in the hope of gaining strategic advantage after the election.

Even if that were the case however, it should still be possible to see a distinct preference for a neo-liberal agenda in the new media when the debate turns to policy rather than personality. It might be expected, if the predictions of the neo-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters are correct, that the new media is demonstrably more likely to speak positively about cutting taxes and to argue against the raising of taxes – key elements in any neo-liberal agenda.

Table 3.4.7 sets out the different media's responses to calls for higher or lower taxation. To allow easier comparison between the different media the figures are presented as percentages of the total number of statements from each media outlet.

"Pro" statements combined those that favoured lower taxes or opposed tax rises, "anti" statements are those that supported tax rises or opposed tax cuts. Subtracting the "anti" statements from the "pro" statements produces the "Difference", which can be regarded the extent to which a media outlet favours the traditional neo-liberal call for lower taxation.

There are a two particular points to be drawn from this data. The first is that, in this sample of the media in the 2001 General Election, support for tax cuts (or

opposition to tax rises) was overwhelming. Only two media outlets, The Mirror (-26%) and The Guardian (just barely with –1%), had a negative difference – indicating their opposition to tax cuts or support for calls for tax rises. Of the other media outlets, only the BBC News coverage approached balance, the rest of the media heavily favoured what might be regarded as a neo-liberal-friendly agenda on tax.

Secondly, taken as a whole, the Internet sites appear to offer most support for this low tax agenda. Comparing the percentage difference for the three media under consideration shows that the Internet sites appear almost twice as strongly in favour of the neo-liberal-friendly agenda of tax cuts than television broadcasts, evidence, perhaps, for the predictions of a preference for a neo-liberal agenda in the new media..

3.4.7: Attitudes to higher and lower taxation (% by media outlet)[8]

	% pro	% anti	% balanced	% ambiguous	% difference
BBC News	28.75	23.75	30.00	17.50	5.00
C4 News	41.10	23.29	19.18	16.44	17.81
ITV News	47.22	19.44	21.30	12.04	27.78
Newsnight	41.05	23.16	18.95	16.84	17.89
Television total	**39.53**	**22.41**	**22.36**	**15.70**	**17.12**
Guardian	34.04	35.11	18.09	12.77	-1.06
Mail	75.84	3.93	15.17	5.06	71.91
Mirror	25.71	51.43	14.29	8.57	-25.71
Sun	45.68	16.05	30.86	7.41	29.63
Telegraph	58.30	12.56	19.73	9.42	45.74
Newspaper total	**47.91**	**23.81**	**19.63**	**8.64**	**24.10**
BBC Web	43.62	23.83	16.11	16.44	19.80
Epolitix	57.94	28.04	11.21	2.80	29.91
Yougov	54.62	17.69	14.62	13.08	36.92
Internet total	**52.06**	**23.19**	**13.98**	**10.77**	**28.88**

	Difference between pro and anti statements about higher and lower taxation
Television	17
Newspapers	24
Internet	29

[8] The full data for this table can be found in Appendix A Table 3.

However, on closer inspection of the figures, the case is not quite so clear. Setting out each media outlet in order (see table 3.4.8) in the order of the increasing strength of their pro-tax-cutting statements reveals that the new media outlets sit comfortably within the range of figures produced by the traditional media outlets. Of all the media outlets the two most powerfully in favour of a neo-liberal attitude to tax are both newspapers (The Mail – 69% and The Telegraph – 44%) and the only two media outlets that come out against tax cutting are also both newspapers – The Mirror and The Guardian.

Far from being in the vanguard of a media-led revolution in attitudes, the Internet sites are comfortably contained within the range of opinions in the existing media – both Epolitix and YouGov have percentage differences that are broadly comparable with ITV news and The Sun but less than half that of the Daily Mail.

3.4.8: Media outlets ranked by % difference between comments supporting tax cuts and opposing tax rises and comments supporting tax rises and opposing tax cuts (lowest first)

Media outlet	"Difference"
Mirror	-23.08
Guardian	-0.99
BBC News	4.97
C4 News	17.33
Newsnight	17.71
BBC Web	18.38
ITV News	27.78
Sun	28.57
Epolitix	29.91
YouGov	32.65
Telegraph	43.22
Mail	68.82

Again there seems little in the way of convincing evidence in this material to suggest that the new media are significantly different from the traditional media and certainly nothing that suggests that they represent a dramatic disjunction between some

old way of conceiving of politics and the *new politics.*

So far this section has looked only at the "mainstream" political parties in the UK. The argument could be made that there was relatively little to distinguish the policies of the main political parties at the 2001 General Election and that such differences as did exist were primarily differences of emphasis rather than substance. Ideally one would look for differences in the treatment of the non-mainstream parties – those such as the socialist[9] and rightwing[10] groups who campaigned or stood candidates at the General Election and who, in theory, should have more distinctly separate viewpoints that could be compared. However, the media gave very little space to these groups in the 2001 General Election (and the new media gave almost no space at all), so meaningful comparison between the groups is not possible.

Table 3.4.9 reveals the degree to which coverage of these groups was overwhelmed. While the main parties dominate the debate with almost 8000 mentions in the material collected in this study the Green Party, the rightwing groups, the Socialist parties and the Nationalists account for just 107 mentions taken together.

3.4.9: Mentions of political parties and their representatives.

	Total mentions
Labour	4136
Conservative	3235
Liberal Democrat	485
Others	107

While it can offer no conclusive proof, the absence of any significant coverage of rightwing groups in the new media does suggest that the prediction of a neoliberal slant in the new media is difficult to sustain. The UK Independence Party in particular,

[9] Socialist Labour, Socialist Alliance and The Scottish Socialist Party all received some coverage, promoting higher taxes for the "rich" and higher public spending.
[10] Farmers for Action, People's Fuel Lobby and The UK Independence Party formed a linked group, sharing spokespeople and campaigning for lower taxes and less regulation.

with its demands for less regulation and much lower taxes came closest to espousing a purely neo-liberal set of policies and so should, if the predictions of the new politics are correct, have been the subject of at least some support on the Internet. That none was forthcoming (these groups only got *mentioned* three times in all the material connected from websites throughout the campaign) added to the evidence set out above does seem to undermine the idea that the new media offer space for such groups or their agenda. I will return to this point in the next section with a closer look for evidence that the new media do actually provide the space for a new type of fundamentalist identity to prosper.

Although there have been some superficial suggestions that the new media might fulfil the role claimed for them by the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters, there has been no substantial evidence that the new media provide significantly greater support for the groups, political parties or policies that might have advanced a neo-liberal agenda during the 2001 British General Election debate on tax. Indeed, what evidence there has been has suggested that on this issue the new media are comfortably contained within the range of opinions represented by the traditional media – the very institutions of the failing liberal democratic state that the *new politics* predicts are in the process of being swept away by radical change.

There are many possible reasons why this study may not have found the evidence for a neo-liberal agenda under advancement during political debate. It may, simply, be that there is something too crude or inaccurate in the design of the tests set out in this study, though given the strength of the claims made by the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers for the overwhelming and sweeping nature of the coming changes this would at least imply that they may not be quite as dramatic as has been claimed. It may also be that there is a digital elite directing the debate in the

new media but that their agenda is significantly less radical than has been supposed in responses towards the *new politics*. If this is the case, then politics and society may change, but it will not be as radical or dramatic as has been predicted. The institutions of global finance and trade may not, therefore, find their interests so closely aligned with the new elite as many writers have supposed. Or it may be that the claims of a rising new elite, made irresistible by new technology and driving global, market-driven reform into every part of society and into every corner of the globe, is just wrong.

Nothing in the evidence gathered here suggests which of these (or the many other) possible scenarios is the case. All that is clear is that the prediction made for the encroachment into political and social institutions of a neo-liberal agenda driven by new technologies of communication is not supported by what has been found here.

2. Do the new media foster fundamentalist identities?

In quite distinct ways the techno-liberal, social entrepreneurs and resisters place the role of the individual at the heart of the *new politics*. Section One showed how each group has made claims for the growing strength of diverse individual identities exercising, increased power over the institutions of government and business. This second crises of democracy is caused by the fact that these new identities are being constructed on relationships that cannot sustain liberal democracy. Section Two explored how the three schools are united by a conception of power as a tool or resource used to enforce the will of those who possess it on those who are without it. That discussion also made clear how, in these circumstances, the idea that individuals or small groups can gather power and enforce their desires on others is extremely limiting with regard to the policy choices that are left open as a result. In contrasting their version of power with another, more subtle, version of power, Chapter 2.3 sought to demonstrate that there are ways of

conceiving of the interactions between power and individuals, groups and organisations that allow greater freedom and recourse to a much wider range of policy choices.

The outcome of new politics vision of power is a prediction that, because they use the new media as both a resource of power and a means of communicating their various creeds:

> *That the new media will contain a greater range of opinions, making room for those "fundamentalist identities" that the traditional institutions of liberal democracies cannot contain.*

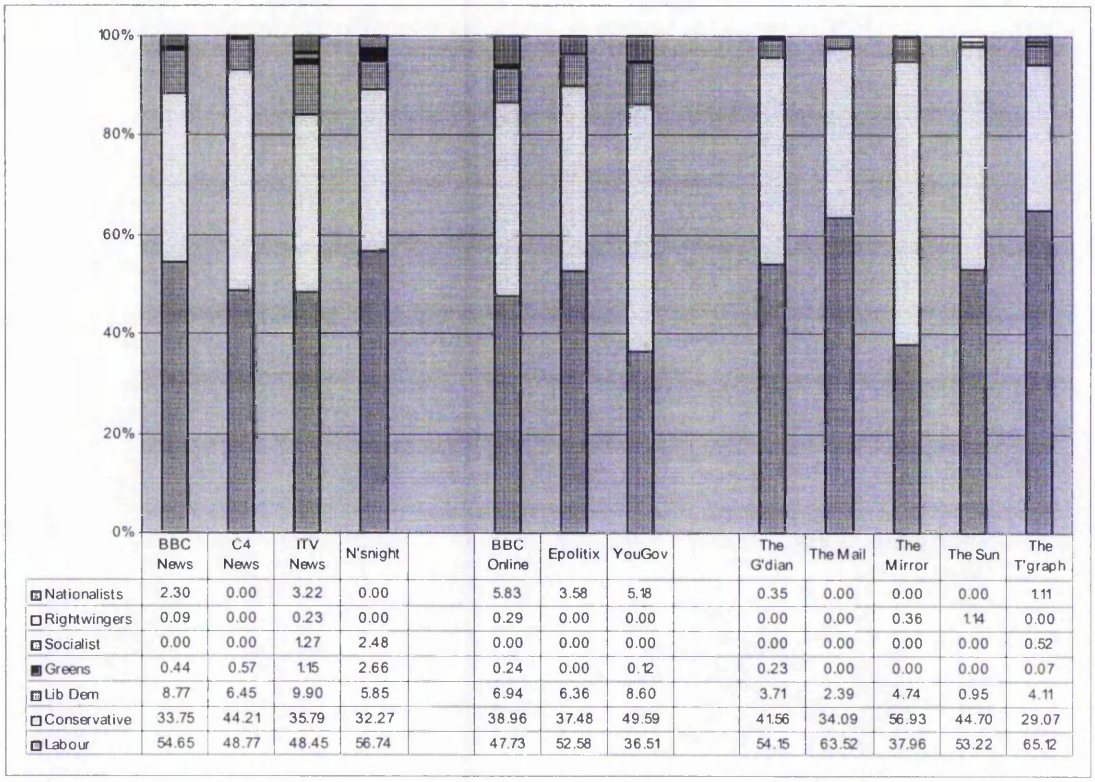
The end of the previous section (table 3.4.9 above) noted how the media of all persuasions seemed to provide little room for those from outside the mainstream political parties to express their opinions. Just over one percent of all the politicians and representatives who spoke to the public on taxation in this sample of the General Election debate were from such parties. Although the number of opportunities for such groups to access any media outlet are infrequent, the distribution of this group of non-mainstream spokespeople may still be revealing.

If this prediction is correct then there should be evidence of the new media allowing space to groups whose agendas and goals are not adequately covered by the traditional political parties. In the particular case of this research, it might be expected to see the new media giving greater space to environmentalists, socialists and rightwing campaigners trying to influence the debate on taxation. There might also be signs that the new media offered space to a greater range of people to express their opinions.

The first task was to identify, within the material collected for analysis, all references to political organisations or pressure groups and the members of those groups appeared in the stories from each of the media outlets. The results are set out in table 3.4.10 (below). What is immediately apparent from this table is that, regardless of

the media, the three major parties, Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat, dominated the debate from every outlet, never accounting for less than ninety percent of all the references to a politician or political party.

3.4.10: Mentions of political groups and their representatives by media outlet (% of all references per outlet)[11]



	BBC News	C4 News	ITV News	N'snight	BBC Online	Epolitix	YouGov	The G'dian	The Mail	The Mirror	The Sun	The T'graph
Nationalists	2.30	0.00	3.22	0.00	5.83	3.58	5.18	0.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.11
Rightwingers	0.09	0.00	0.23	0.00	0.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.36	1.14	0.00
Socialist	0.00	0.00	1.27	2.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.52
Greens	0.44	0.57	1.15	2.66	0.24	0.00	0.12	0.23	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.07
Lib Dem	8.77	6.45	9.90	5.85	6.94	6.36	8.60	3.71	2.39	4.74	0.95	4.11
Conservative	33.75	44.21	35.79	32.27	38.96	37.48	49.59	41.56	34.09	56.93	44.70	29.07
Labour	54.65	48.77	48.45	56.74	47.73	52.58	36.51	54.15	63.52	37.96	53.22	65.12

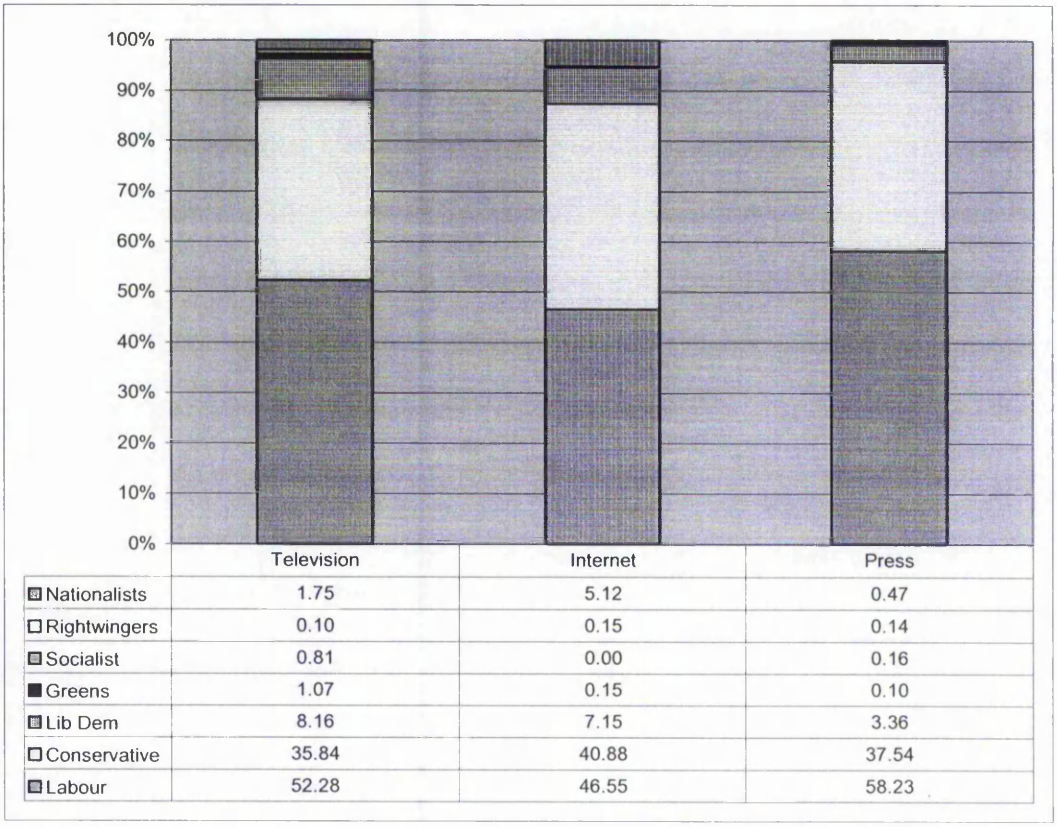
The dominance of the mainstream political parties is even more evident in table 3.4.11 (below), which presents the average coverage in the television outlets, web outlets and newspapers.

None of the media are particularly good at allowing space to voices from beyond the mainstream a chance to be heard. For some of the smaller groups identified as taking part in the debate it was not the new media, as represented here by selected Internet sites, that gave the biggest opportunity to be heard in the 2001 General

[11] A detailed breakdown of these figures can be found in Appendix A, tables 2a-2f.

Election, but television. True this coverage was largely concentrated in just a few items – a general round-up of smaller political parties on ITV News (Monday 4 June, 2001) and interviews with representatives of the Socialist Alliance and Green Party on Newsnight (Wednesday 16 May and Thursday 31 May, 2001 respectively).

3.4.11: Mentions of political groups and their representatives by medium (% of all references per outlet)



	Television	Internet	Press
Nationalists	1.75	5.12	0.47
Rightwingers	0.10	0.15	0.14
Socialist	0.81	0.00	0.16
Greens	1.07	0.15	0.10
Lib Dem	8.16	7.15	3.36
Conservative	35.84	40.88	37.54
Labour	52.28	46.55	58.23

However, it remains the case that both in terms of the proportion of coverage given to smaller parties and in real terms (i.e. the number of words in total), television represented the best place for those not in the traditional political mainstream of British politics to have their voices heard in the debate about tax at the last General Election. The most likely explanation for this is the responsibility placed on British broadcasters to provide "balanced" coverage during the General Election campaign and the fact that,

as groups who stood candidates in the General Election these groups were deemed "entitled" to a degree of coverage. Since there is no such requirement on either the printed press nor the new media, coverage of the smaller parties appears to have been pushed even further to the non-mainstreams than is the case with television.

There is one smaller political grouping who do appear to do better on the Internet than in the other media – Welsh and Scottish nationalists. It could be argued that this demonstrates that there is some truth in the claim that the new media are fostering the fundamentalist identities predicted by the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters. New claims for control based on ethnicity and fragmented national identities are, after all, precisely one of the forms of new identity that the new politics predicts will shatter Western liberal democracies. However, there may be a more prosaic explanation.

The television broadcasts and newspapers used in this study were editions intended for the south of England and, in every case, had an alternative edition which provided regionally targeted news, which were not included in this study. The Internet sites, by contrast, were general sites intended for viewing across the United Kingdom. It is possible that regional television news and the Scottish and Welsh editions of the daily papers would have at least matched the level of coverage provided by the Internet sites, although there is no way to confirm or refute this with the data collected as part of this study.[12]

Excluding the coverage for nationalists, who in any case might not be considered outside the political mainstream in their native nations, television allotted 2.7% of its total reporting of the debate on tax to smaller groups, the press gave them 0.8% of their total coverage, but just 0.5% of the websites' coverage of the election

[12] For a discussion of further opportunities for research, see section 4.

debate on taxation was related to those groups from non-mainstream groups. There is therefore no indication from this data that the new media offered a significantly greater voice to groups outside the mainstream political parties, as would be the case if the predictions of a *new politics* were being sustained.

One drawback of looking at the coverage of organisations and political parties as a measure of the diversity of content in a political debate is that it assumes that these groups are homogenous. It may be that, for example, the new media could provide greater diversity by providing more coverage of the debates within parties and groups. If this were the case, then there should be a greater number of individual speakers on the new media as they sought to give greater voice to those with different points of view. As table 3.4.12 (below) demonstrates there is little evidence that this might be the case. Indeed what is striking is the relatively small pool of people called on in the entire debate on taxation – just 31 unique non-journalists are quoted or speak directly in all the media. The outlet with the greatest number of unique speakers is BBC online, though only two of this eighteen were exclusive to the website.

Overall, however, it is television that leads the way in providing space for the widest number of people to have their says. The sample here may be too small to draw absolute conclusions but once again the data gathered in this study has failed to find evidence of the kind of overwhelming and wide-ranging change that the writings of the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters have led us to expect. None of the media are particularly good at encouraging a variety of contributors, and in this small sample the great majority (as we have seen) of references go to members of the mainstream political parties. Even so, if the new media really are opening up the channels of communication to an ever greater number of people, there is no sign of that trend in this data.

Table 3.4.12: Non-journalistic contributors to each media outlet

Media outlet	No. of non-journalist contributors
BBC News	13
Channel 4	13
ITV News	13
Newsnight	15
TV non-journalistic contribtuors	**24**
BBC Online	18
Epolitix	13
You Gov	13
Internet Non-journalistic contribtuors	**20**
Guardian	13
Mail	12
Mirror	11
Sun	10
Telegraph	15
Newspaper Non-journalistic contribtuors	**20**

It might be argued that evidence for greater involvement might be found elsewhere. Newsgroups, for example, are often cited as a forum for much wider involvement. However, even in the brief study of the material of newsgroups (before they were rejected for further study) carried out as part of this research, it was clear that the number of diverse voices involved in political debate on that medium was also small. The total number of posters (188) may sound large compared with the pool of speakers in the other media studied here (thought it is tiny in relation to the wider polity) but when extraneous and non-relevant posts were removed the actual number of contributors to the specific debates about tax was only 26 – approximately the same as the number of speakers in the traditional media and the Internet.

There may be a variety of reasons for this failure to pick up evidence of the increasing space for alternative identities in the new media. It may be that these

websites were simply the wrong place to look – though the confirmation that there were also relatively few unique contributors to the Newsgroup discussion on taxation seems to suggest that this is not limited to just websites. It is possible that their debate is concentrated in other forums – rather than engaging with others they are debating amongst themselves, but if this is the case it is difficult to square that image of isolated groups talking to themselves with the powerful, radical masses imagined by the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters, poised to use their power to wipe out ancient institutions.

It may be that the debate on taxation does not interest groups driven by fundamentalist ideologies, that the type of group put forward by the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters as typical of these new identities – the digital elite, the creative workers and anti-capitalism campaigners – all have interests that overlap here. And though they may not be particularly interested in talking about the proposals of specific political parties, they would surely have an interest in using their supposed power to put their beliefs before a mass audience to convince them to accept their direction for surviving in the era of the new politics.

Or it may be that the way power works in society is more complex than the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters allow, and it has not been the case that a new class can simply appropriate a technology to be their mouthpiece. Other, more subtle and older imbedded relations of power – such as the relationship between journalists and readers, the interplay between citizens, their representatives and government, the expectations of readers seeking news, and others – may constrain the ability of any group to simply say and do as they please. Despite the resources at their disposal these new, supposedly powerful, identities cannot act independently of the consequences their actions have upon others.

Nothing here helps us decide which of these options, or any other possible cause, is true. However, what has become clear is that there is little, if any, evidence that withstands close scrutiny to support that the predictions of a complete disjunction between the traditional media and the new media, between past practices and current activity or the identities represented on the Internet and those found in the traditional media outlets are becoming reality.

This leaves just one prediction remaining to be assessed, that the new media have broken with the traditional institutions of liberal democracy and promote a political agenda quite distinct from the political parties and the traditional media.

3. Do the new media have a new agenda?

Seeing liberal democracy's political institutions threated by global markets from above and undermined by the abandonment of its institutions by its citizens, the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters offer little hope for the continued viability of existing forms of government. Section One set out the range of responses this has engendered, from the techno-liberal's vision of politics subsumed by market choice, through the wired-metropolis of the social entrepreneurs to the varying degrees of localism favoured by the resisters. Section Two argued that beneath the surface diversity there once again lay a set of shared assumptions about the future of democracy that linked all three schools. Their proposals for new democratic forms all shared a desire for a more direct and deliberate replacement, based on claims that such mechanisms would be more rational, more reasonable and deliver greater legitimacy by promising fairer and therefore more equal decision-making. In exploring these claims, and in noting their similarity with a great body of writing in political science about

deliberative democracy it became clear that while such forms of government may have their advantages, they also possess the potential for less positive outcomes.

The third crisis of democracy begins from the basis that the current democratic system, has been rendered incapable of meeting the present needs of its citizens. As the new communication technologies are granted a central role in the process of rendering present institutions irrelevant (by allowing more choice, enabling direct decision making and promoting non-geographical communities) this leads us to our third prediction:

> *That the new media will pursue a significantly different agenda from the traditional media which remain tied to the failing institutions of liberal democracy.*

If the new media have their own agenda in the reporting of news that is independent of the political parties, then key issues of the debate on taxation should be raised independently by the new media – free from the kind of influence that political parties exert on traditional media outlets. The traditional media may follow the campaign directions set by the actions of the political parties, but the new media should bring up new issues in their own time, to their own purposes. There should, if the predictions of the new politics are correct, be a visible discontinuity between the timing of the conduct of the debate on taxation conducted during the General Election of 2001.

Below I have followed the five major threads of the debate on taxation that were woven through the General election campaign: income tax; fuel tax; national insurance; Europe and tax; and value added tax. If the predictions of the new politics are correct,

there should be significant differences between the ways in which the new media and the traditional media covered these issues.

The tables in this section compare the occurrences of references to the different types of tax in the debate in the Internet and traditional media. For ease of comparison the figures (and the others in this section) are presented as percentages of the total number of mentions of income tax throughout the campaign in each medium. So, for example, in table 3.4.14 (below) the period of the 8-10 May included five percent of all references to income tax made on the web sites studied here and, by the same token, that period contained around twelve percent of all references to income tax made in the traditional media (television news programme and newspapers). Comparing the patterns of coverage in this way makes obvious when each medium placed the most emphasis on each topic.

Income tax

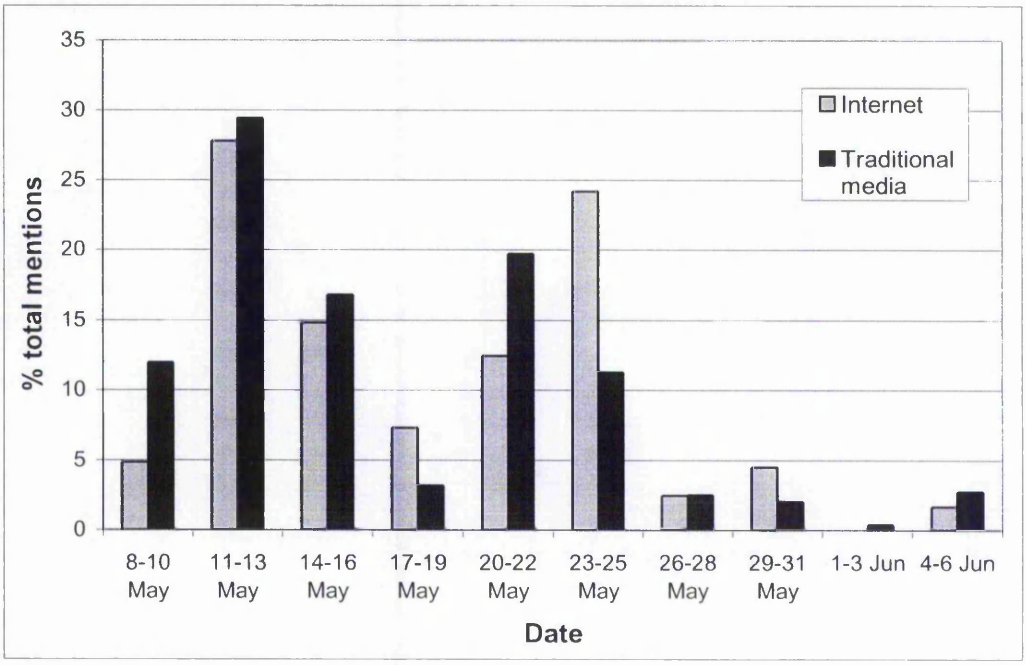
The comparison of coverage in the traditional and new media of the debate on income tax in the 2001 General Election is set out in table 3.4.14.

Almost from the moment that the election was called, income tax became a major issue in the election campaign. In the opening days of the campaign Labour launched a "pledge card" similar to one used in 1997, however it lacked a key pledge from that card – a pledge not to raise income taxes. This omission was pounced on by the Conservative Party, who accused Labour of planning to put income tax up and forced the Labour leadership to "leak" details of their manifesto prior to its official launch to "prove" that they had no intention of raising income tax. While this went some way to calming the row it opened Labour up to attack from the left both within its own party and outside (Greens and Socialists) who argued for higher taxation for the "wealthy."

Labour somewhat confused the issue by promising what they referred to as further "targeted tax cuts" – the increased use of the tax credit system to give more money to the less well paid. It was not always clear whether or not these were tax cuts or increased benefit payments is highly questionable.

The Conservatives did not include a pledge to cut the rates of income tax in their manifesto, although they did promise to change the thresholds so that some people with larger incomes would pay less. Meanwhile the Liberal Democrat's manifesto included a pledge to increase the basic rate of income tax by a penny and to increase the top rate of taxation to fifty percent for those earning more than £100,000.

3.4.13: Mentions of income tax during the 2001 General Election[13]



All parties invested significant efforts in bolstering the credibility of their own plans and attacking the plans for others. Labour was attacked from the right with claims

[13] A breakdown of the data for this graph can be found in Appendix A, Table 4a.

that they had secret plans to raise income tax (or that their income tax pledge was irrelevant as they planned to raise "stealth" taxes) and from the left and Liberal Democrats for being too timid for their tax policies. The Conservatives were accused of having huge "black holes" in their spending plans, which meant that their sums did not add up and their pledges could not be delivered without compromising public services. Labour focused its attack on the Liberal Democrat plans for increased taxation by questioning whether they could raise what they claimed and whether it would be enough to pay for all their pledges, while the Conservatives attacked the Liberal Democrats for wanting to raise tax at all.

With stalemate between the parties the issue faded somewhat until from around 21 May the Conservatives began to claim that Labour's "plans" to remove or dramatically increase the ceiling on National Insurance Contributions meant an "effective" 50% top rate of tax for high earners. Labour's refusal to immediately rule out changes in National Insurance levels and their subsequent denial of a 50% higher income tax rate saw the issue rise to the top of the agenda before eventually subsiding towards the last days of the campaign.

Looking at the pattern of coverage of income tax during the election campaign (table 3.4.13, above) there are variations in coverage between new and traditional media outlets but, overall, they follow a very similar pattern, with an early surge in the importance of the issue followed by a decline, another surge and a tailing off.

Applying a statistical test to these figures (a "Pearson r" correlation test) confirms the likelihood of a link between the patterns of coverage in the new and old media, and suggests that the correlation between the two is very strong, with a degree of significance greater than 99%.[14]

[14] Full results of this test can be found in Appendix A, Table 5a.

There is no evidence here that the new media have pursued a separate agenda on behalf of a distinct class of interest unlinked to the political establishment.

National insurance

The pattern of coverage of the debate on National Insurance in the new and old media during the General Election campaign is set out in table 3.4.14 (below). Labour's plans for national insurance payments became the focus of attention from around the 21 May. While National Insurance had been raised before, normally in relation to Chancellor Gordon Brown's gradual raising of the top level up at which it is paid during the previous parliament, it was Labour's refusal to categorically rule out raising National Insurance when challenged to do so by the Conservatives that propelled the issue to the forefront of the election campaign.

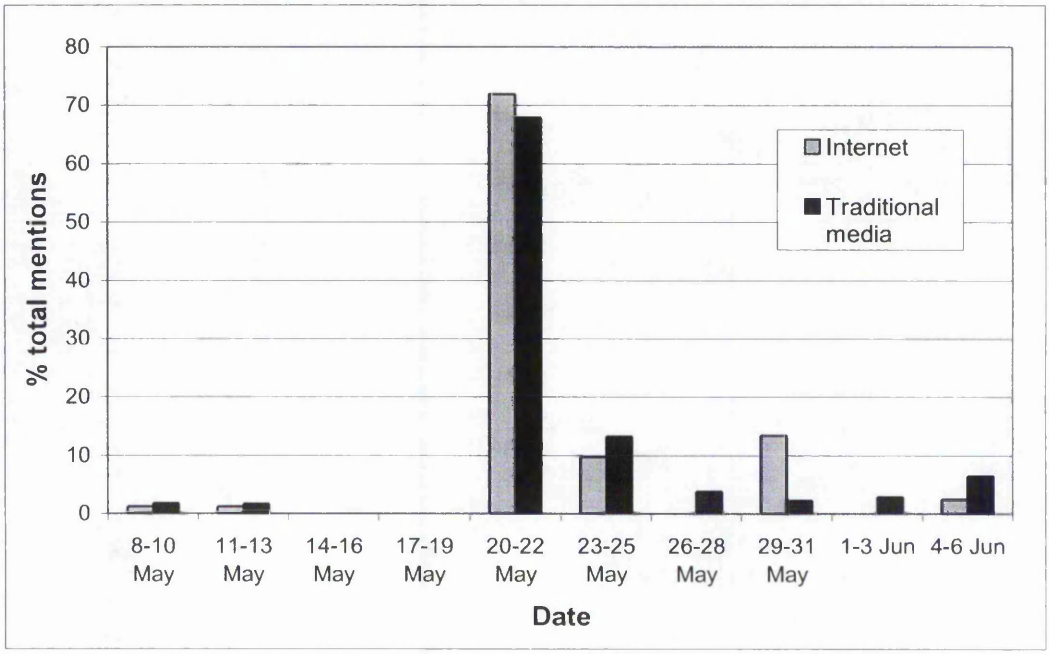
A Conservative strategy during the election was to portray Labour as having tax raising plans and to try and pin the government down over which taxes they planned to use with a series of "scare" stories focusing on one tax after another – so that, by the time Labour had denied one story, the Conservatives were already on to the next.

It appeared as though the Conservatives had some success with the strategy when Labour ministers fumbled a number of press conferences when asked to respond to Tory charges that they would lift the ceiling on National Insurance Contributions – effectively increasing the top rate of income tax by over ten percent for all those earning above £29,900. This led to Conservative claims that Labour was planning to hit higher rate tax payers with a fifty percent top-rate band of taxation.

Labour, led by Gordon Brown, conducted a series of interviews that failed to lay the issue entirely to rest, because, although they ruled out a fifty percent higher rate of taxation they also refused to rule out some change in the National Insurance system.

The Liberal Democrats largely stayed out of in this argument, sticking to their point that they'd set out their tax plans and they didn't involve an increase in National Insurance, and this was an issue for the other parties.

3.4.14: Mentions of national insurance during the 2001 General Election[15]



There appears to be a very strong coincidence between the coverage of the debate about National Insurance on the Web and in the old media, in the table above. And this is confirmed by a correlation test result suggesting a level of significance in the link between the two patterns of coverage of beyond 99%.[16] The vast majority of coverage is focused in a very narrow time period that directly corresponds to the peak in the disagreement between the two major parties about the issue. Again while minor variations exist, there appears to be no convincing evidence that the new media are

[15] A breakdown of the data for this graph can be found in Appendix A, Table 4b.
[16] Full details of this test result can be found in Appendix A, table 5b.

pursuing a distinctive agenda, rather their coverage appears to mirror that of the "old media" and to be just as responsive to the activities of the traditional political parties.

Fuel duty

The pattern of coverage of the debate on fuel duty in the traditional and new media during the 2001 General Election is set out in table 3.4.15. When the Conservatives launched their manifesto very early in the campaign, the centrepiece was the promise to reduce the level of tax on petrol by six pence a litre. Designed to raise memories of the biggest protest against the Labour government in the previous parliament, the claim succeeded in attracting a great deal of media attention. Of all the threads in the debate on taxation, fuel tax received the most mentions. The Conservative Party, the right wing groups such as the People's Fuel Lobby, the UK Independence Party, as well as the Scottish National Party all promised voters some reduction in fuel tax in exchange for their vote.

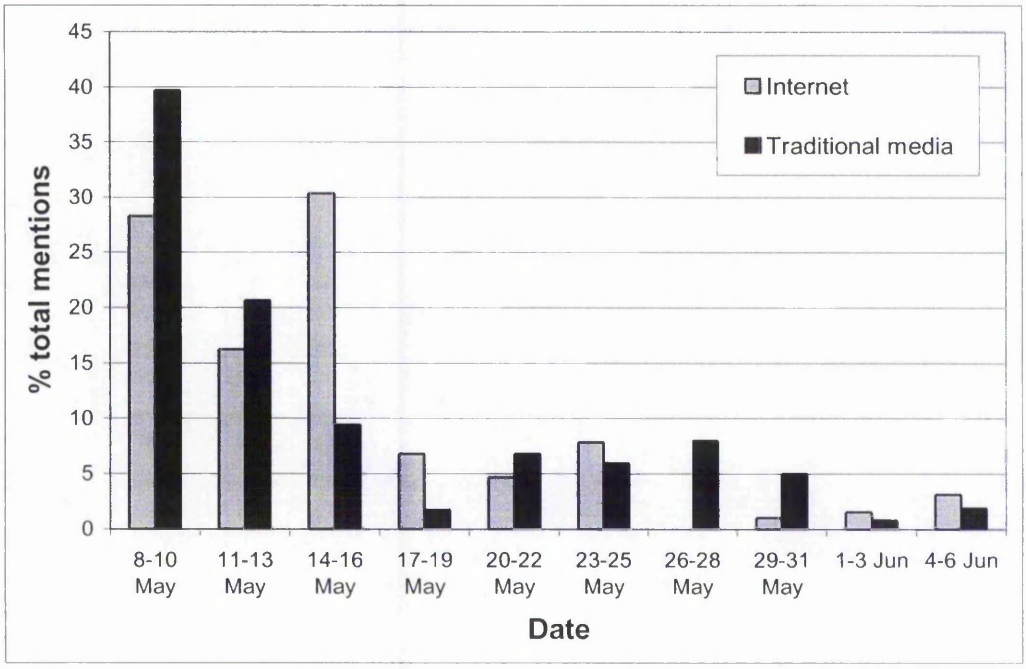
However after the initial flurry of reporting, debate about the issue gradually declined and an attempt to recreate the fuel protests by convoys of vehicles descending on London failed to attract significant support.

Looking at the spread of coverage of the issue during the General Election campaign a number of differences in the details of distribution emerge. In particular there are many more mentions of fuel taxation in the period 14-16 May on the Internet sites than in the traditional media outlets. While this disparity is undeniable, it does not appear to be evidence for the new media following an agenda separate form the traditional political institutions and political parties. On the contrary, a closer examination of the coverage of fuel tax on this day reveals that it was precisely because the new media offered more space to a political party that caused this increased level of

coverage. On 14 May, Conservative Shadow Chancellor Francis Maude attacked the Labour Party for conspiring with Europe to increase the level of fuel taxation in the UK by agreeing to tax harmonisation. The claim was quickly dismissed by the other political parties and independent commentators who pointed out that European levels of fuel taxation were actually lower than in the UK and, therefore, harmonisation of this particular tax was likely to reduce the tax bills for the public.

While most of the traditional media gave very little space to the story – perhaps because the claims had been discredited before their deadlines and no longer seemed credible. However, both the web-based media outlets that updated their sites frequently during the day (BBC Internet and YouGov) ran the story prominently.

3.4.15: Mentions of fuel duty during the 2001 General Election[17]



While this is hardly evidence of the new media having a distinct agenda representative of a new political elite, it may point to a potential shortcoming in

[17] A breakdown of the data for this graph can be found in Appendix A, Table 4c.

"instant" news coverage offered online. When news is produced instantly there is very little time for editorial consideration of stories before an item is published and little opportunity to check the facts. If everything is reported instantly as "breaking news" then apparently dramatic stories without a credible foundation may receive uncritical attention. The potential for "instant news" to mislead has been picked up by a number of resister (and other) writers, but it falls outside the scope of our study here.

Apart from this aberration, the pattern of media coverage of the debate on fuel tax appears very similar across the new and old media outlets beginning as it does with a peak of interest and falling away relatively quickly to a lower level, though never quite disappearing from the agenda. This similarity in the patterns of coverage is confirmed by a correlation test result showing a link between the two patterns of coverage with a significance level of above 98%.[18]

European tax harmonisation

The pattern of coverage of the debate on European tax harmonisation during the 2001 General Election in the new and traditional media is set out in table 3.4.16. Although an important issue in the wider election campaign, Europe played a relatively minor role in the campaign debate about tax in the 2001 General Election until the Conservatives announced that they had a "secret" document outlining EU plans to "harmonise" taxes across the European nations, forcing countries to set the same rates of tax. Claiming that this would lead to higher taxes for British voters, the Conservatives attacked the plans and accused the Labour Party of taking part in a plot to dilute British sovereignty.

Both Labour and the Liberal Democrats mocked the "secret" document – pointing out that it was a publicly available report, but it was the unusual intervention of EU Commissioner Frits Bolkestein (as the Commissioner responsible for the

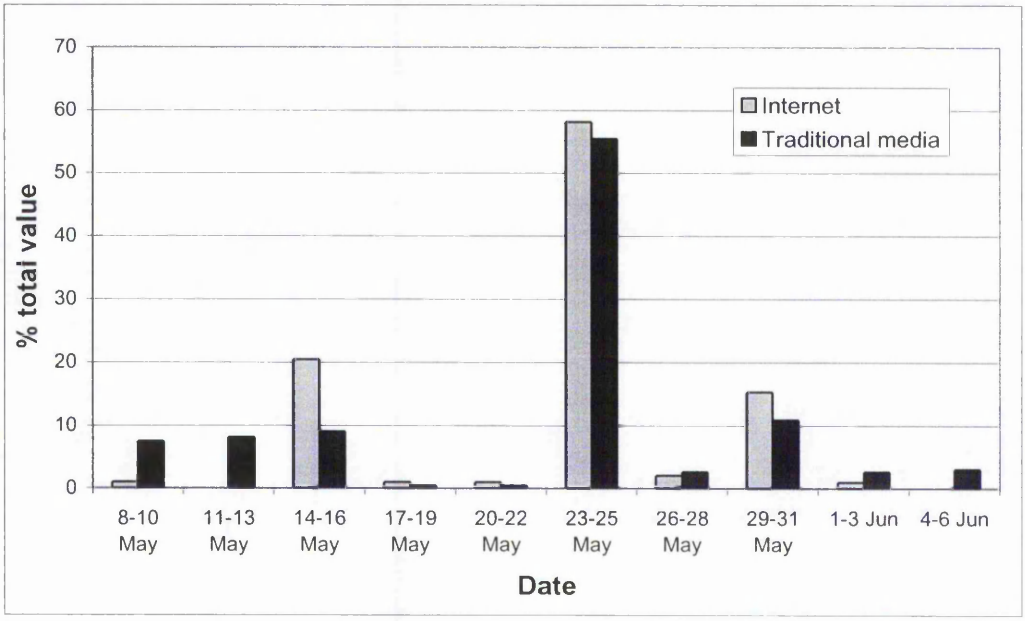
[18] Full details of this test result can be found in Appendix A, Table 5c.

document, he angrily attacked the Conservative interpretation of the plans) that ensured that the story ran for longer than it might have otherwise.

Europe recurred later in the campaign when the Head of the European Commission, Romano Prodi and French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin made separate speeches on the same day calling for a direct, European-wide tax to pay for EU activities and to make the Union more directly accountable to citizens.

As table 3.4.16 indicates, the coverage of this issue follows a similar pattern across the new and old media, with the biggest concentrations of coverage between 23-25 and 29-31 May – coinciding with the two incidents outlined above: Conservative claims of having discovered a secret EU document and the speeches by Jospin and Prodi. There is an additional peak (14-16 May) in the Web coverage of this story due to the story of Francis Maude's claim that there were plans to harmonise fuel taxes across Europe (discussed in the section on fuel tax, above) that, as we have seen, were given more space in the new media rather than traditional outlet.

3.4.16: Mentions of European tax harmonisation during the 2001 General Election[19]



[19] A breakdown of the data for this graph can be found in Appendix A, Table 4d.

Despite this slight variation, the patterns of coverage between the new and old media are consistent and do not suggest that the new media are following a significantly different agenda or that they are divorced from the influence of political parties in controlling the political agenda. A test of correlation between the patterns of coverage suggests that there is a link between the two with a level of significance beyond 99%.[20] Once again there appears to be no evidence that the new media are pursuing their own agenda or that they represent a break with the ability of the traditional institutions of the liberal democratic state to exercise control over the what is discussed in political debate.

Value Added Tax

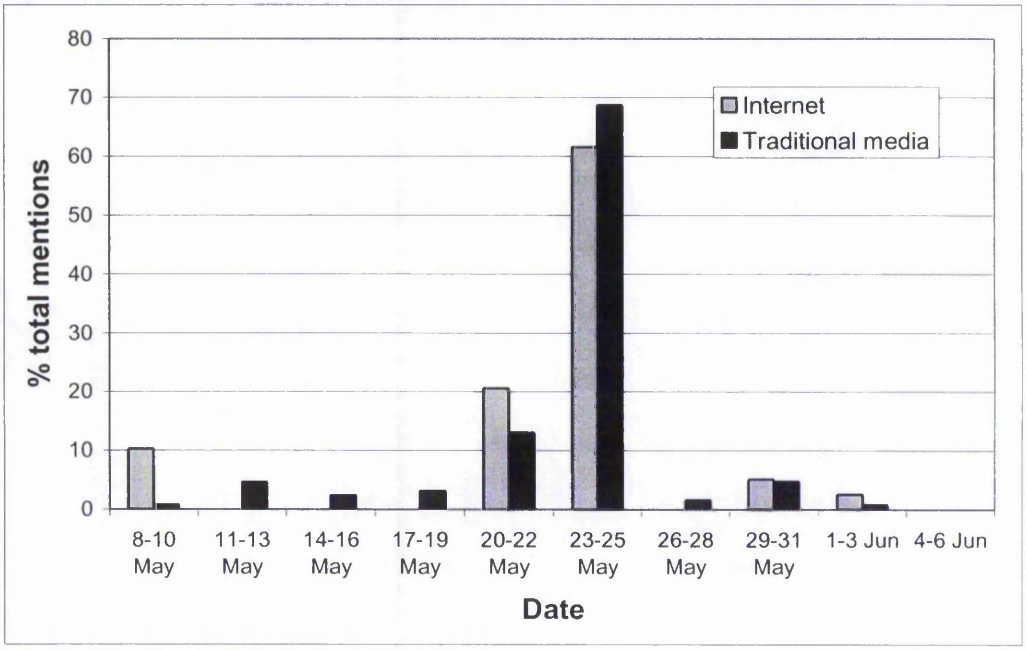
The pattern of coverage of the debate on Value Added Tax (VAT) in the new and traditional media during the 2001 General Election is set out in table 3.4.17. As the debates about income tax and national insurance subsided, the Conservatives next focused on VAT – accusing the government of having secret plans to extend the scope and amount of this tax. The plan backfired somewhat, however, when Labour immediately ruled out any extension for VAT and the Conservatives were unable to offer the same pledge.

The pattern of coverage of VAT in table 3.4.17 appears consistent across the new and old media, there is some interest before the Conservatives turn to the issue around 22 May, but it is low and spread around the different outlets in the traditional and new media with little no discernable pattern. The vast majority of coverage in both is concentrated on just the few days (23-25 May) when the main political parties are discussing the issue before it recedes as a topical issue and coverage drops to a very low level. The link between the coverage of this issue and the new and old media

[20] The full result of this test can be found in Appendix A, table 5d.

appears to be confirmed by correlation test which reveals a connection between the two with greater than 99% level of significance[21].

3.4.17: Mentions of Value Added Tax during the 2001 General Election[22]



Looking at the overall coverage of the five types of taxation in this study, there appears to be nothing in any of the timings of the media stories to suggest that the new media were following a distinct agenda within the tax debate in the General Election of 2001. Indeed closer inspection has revealed that, far from there being a divergence between the new and traditional media, there has in fact been a strong and persistent correlation in the timing and extent of their coverage of the issues discussed in the debate on taxation. This suggests that claims for the new media as the site of a distinct democratic forum beyond the reach of the traditional institutions of the state are, at the very least, questionable.

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[21] The full details of this test result can be found in Appendix A, table 5e.
[22] A breakdown of the data for this graph can be found in Appendix A, Table 4e.

Balance of debate

Although there has been no apparent disjunction in the timing of the debates it might still be possible to find evidence of the new media pursuing a distinct agenda of their own in the weight applied to the importance of stories within the overall balance of news coverage during the debate on taxation in the election campaign.

Table 3.4.18 (below) seems to offer the possibility of different trends between the old and new media, and in potentially significant areas. It was noted in the previous chapter that fuel costs had been the cause of very large public protests in September 2000, less than a year before this election, and had motivated a group of protesters (including Farmers for Action and the People's Fuel Lobby) to attempt to take a high profile during this election campaign, including several failed attempts to cause disruption during the election campaign. It might be argued that such groups represented some of those who no longer feel their interests are being represented in traditional democratic institutions. Also a key issue in this respect was the relationship between Britain and Europe, highlighted here by the debate around the European Union's plan's for the harmonisation of tax rates across borders. Once again, it might be argued, those who oppose British membership of the European Union have not been well served by the traditional party system and the issue of withdrawal or significant renegotiation of the UK's role in the EU was a major part of the manifestos of all the non-mainstream parties (The Green Party, Socialist Alliance and UK Independence Party) identified in this debate.

In the case of both fuel duty and Europe the new media seem to offer more space to the debate than the traditional media. Even though the debate in the new media on both issues appears (as we have already seen) to follow similar patterns to that in the traditional media, becoming prominent at around the same time and fading at around

the same time, the greater emphasis given to these particular issues is potentially important.

3.4.18: Mentions of Value Added Tax during the 2001 General Election[23] (% of mentions in each medium)

	Income Tax	National Insurance	Fuel Duty	Europe	VAT
Television	24.1	24.1	31.0	12.9	7.9
Internet	17.8	16.4	38.3	19.6	7.8
Newspapers	25.8	22.2	29.2	14.9	7.9

On closer examination, however, such claims do not appear to be justified, and are not supported by statistical analysis. A correlation test between the patterns of coverage in the new and traditional media reveals the likelihood of a link between the patterns of coverage in the new and old media as having with a greater than 95% level of significance.

It has been noted above that the disparity that exists in both the issues of fuel duty and Europe can be traced to a single news story – Francis Maude's claim that the Conservatives had uncovered a secret document setting out plans for dramatic change. When it quickly emerged that this document was neither a secret nor a plan, television news dropped it and it appeared only very fleetingly in the press the next day (most further coverage concerned with the unusual step of an EU official intervening in a national election to deny the claim of one of the competing parties). However, in the gap between the claim being made in a morning press conference and the claim being dismissed in the afternoon, the websites with their flexible and rapid updating of their pages all ran significant coverage of the story.

[23] A breakdown of the data for this graph can be found in Appendix A, Table 6.

This may well reveal something significant about differences between the traditional and the new media (and indeed, between traditional forms of news coverage and modern "24 hour" rolling news) but it does not appear to demonstrate that the new media are striking out to pursue agendas of their own.

Overall, then, there is no significant evidence to suggest that the new media as, represented in this study, represent a vanguard for the break-up of the institutions of government. There is no evidence that these sites have sought to establish their own, distinct agenda –indeed they seem firmly wedded to the same agenda as the traditional media.

Conclusion

Despite the predictions of the new politics, there is little, if any, evidence here that the new media are behaving in a way that suggests they represent a significant break with traditional democratic structures. What has been found repeatedly is that rather than being distinctly different from the traditional media, the new media actually follow a rather similar approach when they discuss politics and that their approach, the people they talk to and about, the stories they cover, what they say and when they say it all fit rather neatly within the scope of the traditional media output.

This analysis of the debate on taxation in the 2001 British General Election sought to test three predictions:

> *1. That the new media will favour the interests of global markets and multinational corporations over and above the traditional media and therefore will favour policies that move national policy in the direction of neo-liberalism.*

2. That the new media will contain a greater range of opinions, making room for those "fundamentalist identities" that the traditional institutions of liberal democracies cannot contain.

3. That the new media will pursue a significantly different agenda from the traditional media which remain tied to the failing institutions of liberal democracy.

While limitations to this research have been noted (and shall be addressed further in the next chapter), it is also the case that the claims made by writers in all three schools for the scale, force and speed of these changes should make them visible even to a relatively insensitive study. Furthermore, in exploring the differences between the new and traditional media, this research has chosen precisely the place where most of these writers claim the arrival of the *new politics* will be most strongly felt.

However, over the course of this chapter, no decisive evidence has been found to support the three schools' claims that the impact of the sweeping changes said to accompany the *new politics,* actually exist.

The new media appear no more likely to support the neo-liberal agenda of business of globalisation than do the other media. At the same time they seem no more able to offer a wider range of voices in their debate and do not seem to provide room for those who might feel themselves outside the mainstreams of the existing political system. Finally, there has been no evidence that they are pursuing their own agenda within political debates, rather they appear just as linked to the party political system as their forerunners.

As previously stated, this research does not seek to make grand claims of its own, nor to use its findings as the foundation for an alternative explanation of how the world is changing. Content to test the predictions of change made by others, the

application of a clearly stated methodology together with as transparent a method of analysis as possible, the goal here has been to test the taken-for-granted assumptions underlying key visions about the way in which the world, society and politics is changing.

This small study cannot be definitive, nor is it possible to make claims beyond the specific time, space and subject matter that falls within the remit of this research. However, as Sections One and Two have shown, there have been more than enough grand and dramatic claims on the side of the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters to suffice. It is their claims for the all-encompassing nature of the transformation said to be heading our way that makes these research findings troublesome for their visions of the future.

If, as Section Two sought to demonstrate, there are, theoretical alternatives to their narrative of inevitable change and limited choices, and if the findings in this chapter are robust, then perhaps there will continue to exist spaces where national and local policy decisions can be made to matter, where the capacity for resistance to power and the marshalling of shared resources of influence allow individuals and communities to continue to express themselves. The choice of how, when and why the institutions of nations states are transformed may remain within the remit of national governments and their citizens.

None of these possibilities are demonstrated by the findings in this chapter, but neither are they ruled out. It may be that they will be contradicted by other research in other places at other times, but within the very limited boundaries of this research, the supposedly unstoppable forces of globalisation, technological change and social and political transformation appear to have stuttered if not to have been stopped.

Chapter 3.5
Conclusion

This concluding chapter seeks to offer a brief overview of the material set out in this section and to consider some of the potential weaknesses in the methodology used in this study.

Section One set out the positions of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers as they see themselves, in conflict with each other and presenting a diverse range of options about the future of society. Section Two explored the common assumptions that underlie their responses to the three crises facing modern democracies and argued that these assumptions contributed to an unwarranted restriction on the range of apparently viable policy options available. However, as these sections noted, much of the evidence used to support the claims made by the three schools is little more than anecdote and the reusing of selected statistics that can, and have, been interpreted in many ways.

In the process of identifying the common assumptions of these writers, and taking into account the central role they give to modern communication technologies in empowering and shaping the *new politics*, three testable predictions became apparent. It has been the aim of this section to construct a suitable methodology for research and to apply that methodology to evidence drawn from an actual political debate.

Chapter 3.2 addressed many of the shortcomings of the techniques of content analysis and sought to construct a limited but robust methodology that accepted there must inevitably be limits on levels of shared understanding, but also to develop a transparent and replicable technique for assessing texts. This research is constructed around very specific and testable predictions and limits the application of its findings to those specific claims about the *new politics*. The corollary of this has been that the scale of the claims that can be made for the findings of this research are limited only to what is realistic given the bounds of the data. It is a product of a particular time, space and focus on a narrow range of issues, but then these limits may be applied to practically all research. In any case, this need not be seen as a drawback or weakness. The specificity of this research is in stark contrast to the sometimes nebulous claims made about the future shape of society by those in the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools. In this sense it has sought to deal with what is, rather than claims of what might be or what should be, which seem to concern many of these writers.

Chapter 3.3 set out at length how this research was conducted. Transparency is important in content analysis because, having accepted that all meaning exists on a scale of latency and that understanding is a compromise between text and reader, there can be no "reliable" truths to be pulled from the page as manifest features of its creation. The strength of content analysis, as set out here, lies in its ability to construct techniques for allowing different researchers to follow reproducible steps and reach a degree of reliability in their findings. This "replicability" is created in the enumeration of the assumptions behind the construction of the mechanism designed to reduce a rich and complex text into a few measurable and relevant variables. It depends, also, on the sharing of the means by which the text is eventually translated into a new measurable language of numbers.

Having established the methodological underpinnings necessary to conduct this research, chapter 3.4 applied this model to the claims of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writings. As has been shown, within the limits of this research, their predictions have been found wanting. Instead of finding evidence for a radical break with existing tradition, the new media appear comfortably contained within the existing scope of political debate.

Some further potential shortcomings

The BBC website[24] called the 2001 General Election the "poll that never was" pointing to the low turn-out and the almost unchanged electoral picture after the election. It claimed that the voters were never engaged in the campaign. It is certainly true that the turn-out of just over 59% was the lowest for 80 years (Morgan 2001). Whether this low turn-out signalled genuine voter apathy with the democratic process, something that threatens democracy's long-term viability, or was simply a response to the fact that the polls had long shown that the result of the election was a foregone conclusion, will only be demonstrated by the passage of time. Norris (2001: 4) notes that there is strong evidence from other nations that competition between parties (something almost entirely lacking in the 2001 election since Labour enjoyed a strong poll lead throughout) can play a major role in increasing turn-out. Whatever the reason, that the low turn-out does not invalidate the choice of the General Election period for this study.

Even with a low turn-out of around 60% there are few, if any, other activities that so many of the population engage in together at the same time as voting. More than 26 million people voted on 7 June 2001, vastly more than watch even the most popular television programmes or indulge in the most popular hobbies. For the purposes of this

[24] http://news.bbc.co.uk/vote2001/hi/english/newsid_1383000/1383403.stm

research the General Election remained the period in the electoral cycle when most people were paying attention to, and, at least to some limited degree, getting involved in, the political process.

A more serious criticism of the choice of the General Election as the period for study is that, rather than being a period when smaller groups have a chance to express their opinions on a wider platform, it is actually dominated by those larger parties who stand a realistic chance of gaining seats and forming governments. It is certainly true that the larger political parties dominate media coverage in the election periods, but it seemed likely that this is the case in period outside the election campaign as well.

To test whether this was the case, the material from the election campaign was compared with another week's worth of material that was collected outside an election period from the same sources used in this research using the same methodology outlined above. This material is not included in the analysis performed in the rest of the research, and was examined only for the presence of material from parties and groups outside the political mainstream. During the period from 16-22 September 2001 ninety five stories were gathered (40 from newspapers, 38 from the Internet, 27 from television) – mostly dealing with the introduction of the working families and child tax credits and with a suggestion that Labour were about to embark on a new, redistributive, tax policy. Far from finding that non-mainstream material was more prevalent outside the election period, the debate was even more comprehensively dominated by representatives from the main political parties with no mentions for organisations or individuals outside the mainstream parties at all. Not even the Scottish and Welsh nationalists. This suggests that the General Election campaign did offer a significant opportunity for elements outside the political mainstream to get access to the media and communicate with the public.

Finally, it is possible that this research has been conducted at the wrong period in the evolution of the Internet. For example, by the time that this research was conducted the radical phase of the new media may have finished because the influence of the digital elite had already grown beyond the limitations of new technologies and were shaping the agenda for the whole media. Or, perhaps, that this research, being conducted at around the time when the Internet made a decisive shift from being a minority pursuit to becoming an almost ubiquitous element in modern life, took place too early to catch the really big changes that are coming.

Both criticisms have some element of validity, however, neither invalidates the specific object of this study. What is being tested in this study are not my predictions of what is happening but those of techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers who have made, and continue to make, sweeping claims for the likely impact of new communications technologies, and have made and continue to make grand claims for their capability to bring about dramatic changes in society.

It is their claim that the new media will be different from the traditional forms of television and newspapers and, in their terms, that it must continue to be seen as the vanguard for change because the grand scale of their predictions for an entirely revolutionised social, political and economic order remain some considerable distance from being realised. Until that point comes, the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters must either continue to place their faith/fears in the transformative force of new media technologies or reassess their predictions and assumptions about how the world is changing.

The privileged role of the new media in these writings is threefold. Most obviously they serve as a propaganda tool, spreading the message of the benefits of the globalised, free-market future. More concretely, they act as a template for new

organisational structures, acting across distance, loosely connected and prizing flexibility. And finally they are a resource to bring to bear on those who might resist the changes, forcing compliance through increased competition, cutting costs and increasing mobility.

These advantages go to the heart of the *new politics* and it is clear that none of the writers in the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur or resister schools, whether they welcome or fear the impact these changes will have, believe that they have played out their full course. Until they do, or their expectations are proved to be unrealistic, the predictions for the continued distinctive role of new communications technologies will play a central part in shaping how we imagine the future of our society.

Section 4
Conclusion.

4.1 Conclusion

> At the dawn of the Information Age, a crisis of legitimacy is voiding of meaning and function and the institutions of the industrial era. Bypassed by global networks of wealth, power, and information, the modern nation-state has lost much of its sovereignty. By trying to intervene strategically in this global scene the state loses capacity to represent its territorially rooted constituencies (Castells 2000b: 354).

The issues at stake in the study of the *new politics* could hardly be bigger. If the three crises of democracy are real, then Western democracies face enormous challenges. If the scope and scale of their impact is as great as is claimed by the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers, then every aspect of our lives faces tremendous change. If the institutions on which the citizens of Western democracies rely for the maintenance of a stable social, economic and political environment are as weak as is supposed, then we stand on the brink of a revolution that will rival (and perhaps surpass) any political uprising, social movement or technological shift in recent history.

The matter at hand, as the quotation from Castells (above) makes clear, is nothing less than the future of the nation-state and the structure of ever network of social relationships. The three crises of democracy – the rise of global capitalism, increasing fundamentalism and the corruption of democratic politics – are combining to challenge the very foundations on which liberal democracies stand. As noted in the introduction to this thesis, the position taken here is that extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence – and the claims for revolutionary change as proposed by the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools in the era of the *new politics* are certainly extraordinary.

However, in the analysis of the assumptions on which the writing of these groups of authors are based, and in the analysis of the debate on taxation in the 2001 General Election, no compelling evidence, extraordinary or otherwise, in support of their claims has been revealed.

The three crises of democracy

Section Two sought to critically examine the assumptions that form the foundation for the claims made by the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters. These assumptions: that globalisation is novel, irresistible and homogenizing; that power is a single dimensional tool or asset gathered up and used against others; and that direct and deliberative politics are superior to existing democratic forms, delivering rational decisions made by reasonable actors with equitable outcomes, were found to be open to question.

The crisis of globalisation

Chapter 2.1 examined three common assumptions amongst the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools of writers with regard to globalisation. These assumptions were:

i. That globalisation is a new phenomenon, unique to the second half of the twentieth-century;

ii. That globalisation is so powerful a phenomenon that the traditional social, democratic and economic institutions of liberal democracies cannot hope to resist; and

iii. That globalisation's effect is to promote a cultural, economic and political homogenisation.

Close examination of these claims revealed doubts about each of these claims. Scholte (2000) discredited the claims that globalisation's novelty was based on universalisation, liberalisation, Westernisation or internationalisation. Universalisation, the spreading of culture and ideas across the globe, can be traced back at least to the spread of the world's great religions. Liberalisation, globalisation through the exploitation of markets led by corporations, can be traced back to the earliest era of European imperialism, and corporations such as the British East India Company could be seen as more than match the power of the modern multi-national. Internationalisation, the cross-border movement of people, finance and goods, can bee seen to have existed in the past at levels that match (proportionately), and even exceed (in the case of migration), the levels found in the modern economy. Finally, Westernisation, globalisation through the spread of a single, usually American culture, can be understood in terms of "modernisation" or "cultural imperialism" and does not require the rhetoric of globalisation.

However, though Scholte's critique of the claims for novelty of these aspects of globalisation is effective, his attempt to claim that globalisation can be best understood through another apparently novel characteristic, deterritorialization. Rosenberg (2000) attacks deterritorialization from an historical perspective, arguing that for the idea to work requires Scholte to place too much emphasis on the "Westphalian" notion of statehood. Nations, Rosenberg argues, have always been part of more intangible networks of relationships and the idea that in the past there were hermetically sealed nation is a myth that has been overstated to increase the contrast between historical circumstances and the present.

The idea of globalisation as an irresistible force is based on the supposedly unprecedented extent of modern global markets and the power of multinational corporations to break the bounds of geographic location and exist beyond the reach of national governments. As a result, the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers argue that the economic, social and political institutions of modern liberal democracies are incapable of resisting the encroachment of markets into every area of life.

However, a range of authors, including Hirst and Thompson (2000), Gilpin (2001) and LeGrain (2002) have offered critiques of the common assumptions about the power and extent of global markets and multinational corporations. These writers, undermine the idea that multinationals are footloose and have been set free from constraints placed on them by geographically bounded governments. They also point to the limitations of global markets, which remain heavily concentrated on a small number of developed nations, and financial flows, which also remain concentrated on a relatively small number of nations.

The third shared assumption about globalisation is that it imposes cultural and political homogeneity on each society it touches. Held (2004) dismisses the idea that the increased contact between different cultures necessarily implies that they will come together around a hybrid or homogenized culture, on the contrary contact may increase fragmentation and cultural diversity.

A more serious form of homogenisation is the threat that globalisation will impose on states a form of "McRule" (Klein 2001), government that no longer addresses the needs of its citizens but which conforms to global rules on market freedom and competition. The "McRule" state can no longer take decisions that matter for their citizens, they are bound to serve big business and the global market. Kennedy (2002) makes the case that the comparison of the fortunes of citizens of states like Costa Rica and Haiti demonstrates that the decisions of government, especially in pursuing open government and social welfare, can still make a crucial difference. The contrast between Southern and Eastern Asia and much of Africa, while complicated by a variety of historical and environmental issues, also demonstrate that governments can make a difference to the well-being of their people depending on the choices they make.

In considering the nature of globalisation the question is not whether globalisation exists or whether its influence will continue to spread and change societies but, as Edwards (2001) notes, how globalisation's: "costs and benefits are distributed and on this question there is little that is preordained by technology or impervious to politics" (2001: 10). The debate around globalisation may force the debate into a new language, but the fundamental question remains what balance societies want between the wealth-producing potential of capitalism (and its costs, such as inequality) and the provision of social, political and environmental protection.

Globalisation does not exist outside time, space and social order. Globalisation can be said to have historical roots, it remains restrained to some degree by geography, and government decisions continue to matter. The assumptions of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers are, therefore, subject to question.

The crisis of fundamentalist identities

The techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers each imagine that society is undergoing a fundamental transformation marked by a shift of power towards individuals who are increasingly defined in terms of fundamentalist identities. This notion about the changes facing society is based on a conception of power that is essentially one-dimensional. It sees power as a resource that can be gathered up, denied to others and deployed to further the group or individual ends.

A Foucauldian alternative to this conception of power stresses the historically grounded and constructed nature of power relations, the inevitable presence of resistance to any exercise of power and the role of the individual in shaping their own life and society as actors in networks of power. By contrasting these two views of power, this study suggests that the relations of power in society need not be as narrowly defined as the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister assumptions claim.

For Foucault, the power relations embodied in the social, economic and political institutions of the modern state cannot be properly understood simply in terms of their current shape and form. All power relations are the product of a process of historically contingent construction and reflect not the balance of social power at the point of observation but the current manifestation of historical forces. As such, no power relationship is natural or given, and the form and structure of all institutions are capable of "genealogical" analysis to reveal the forces that have brought them to this point.

The exercise of power is never a one-way event. Power relations are best envisaged as a network in which every actor (individual, institution, or community) possesses a portion of power. Attempts to exercise power over others always contain, within the exercise of that power, the potential for resistance. Power is never simply held by one group over another, it is always diffuse. This is not to deny that there exist disparities in resources and differences in capability that can determine the influence that one group or individual can bring to bear on others, but it does deny that the exercise of power is ever simple. All exercises of power are contested and, even in the all but the most unequal contests, there remains the potential for resistance.

The individual subject is neither entirely shaped by their place in the networks of power, nor is it free to shape its world however it chooses. However, the Foucauldian subject as master of its own element of power (however small) does possess the ability to exercise degrees of freedom within their personal sphere. And, crucially, there remains the option for individuals to combine their resources of power to achieve more through communal action than they are capable of achieving alone.

The exercise of power can be seen as being more complicated and more diverse that the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters claim. This could have important consequences for their predictions about the way in which power will be concentrated and put to use in the future. The corporations, digitally empowered elites or fundamentalist groups that are supposedly siphoning power from communal responses to the *new politics* can be seen as acting unilaterally only if we suppose that their exercise of power meets no resistance. But as Chapter 2.3 makes clear, there is ample evidence that resistance is widespread. Corporations like Monsanto, Shell and Microsoft have all found themselves forced to alter their plans because of the resistance of concerted groups. These actions suggest that there remains room for cooperative

action of the sort that might continue to sustain institutions of liberal democracy. Certainly it suggests that claims that powerful elites will be able to simply abandon the rest of society may underestimate the capability of the ordinary citizen to act, and to coordinate their actions with others.

The Crisis of democratic institutions

That the way liberal democracy is currently working (or failing to work) is leading to a crisis of legitimacy of governance is perhaps the most widely supported of the crises of democracy. In this instance, the assumptions that link the arguments of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers relate to their proposals for the regime which should replace existing democratic institutions. In all three cases the writers in these schools propose the development of a more direct and deliberative democracy, a system that allows citizens to make decisions for themselves based on the outcome of some form of debate about the merits of the choices available.

The claims for the superiority of direct and deliberative forms of government are based upon the belief that they will deliver policies that are: rational – they match the 'real' needs of individuals and communities; based upon debate amongst reasonable participants – those who obey certain rules about what may be discussed and the form of the discussion; and create outcomes that are more equitable – they represent the needs of all parts of society. These assumptions about the superiority of direct and deliberative forms of democracy do not only apply to the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers – they also, as Chapter 2.4 demonstrates, form the basis for the claims of theorist of democracy such as Habermas (1984, 1990, 1996), Rawls (1996, 1999, 1999b) and Barber (1986, 1988, 1998).

However, claims that deliberation can deliver rational outcomes have been shown to depend on the fulfilment of ideal criteria that cannot often be met in the real

world. What Behabib (1996) describes as a "methodological fiction" is the idea of people as economic or political actors taking part in debates possessing all the facts, with an ordered and coherent set of preferences and fully aware of the consequences of their actions. But even if such actors exist, game theory demonstrates that the actions of rational actors in pursuit of their own goals need not lead to optimal outcomes for a group as a whole – or even for the individuals involved. An alternative conception is based on "communicative rationality" put forward by writers like Dryzek (2000) and Bohman (2000) and based on the willingness of actors to continue to deliberate with their fellows, even if the outcome of the decision-making process does not always (or even most of the time) deliver what they want. However, the looser requirements of this form of rationality abandon the promise that deliberative forms of government can deliver decisions that best match the needs of those involved in the process. Thus, those who lose out in the deliberative process can no longer be guaranteed that the final decision made by deliberative means will be better than those made in existing democratic institutions.

A basic assumption of the supporters of direct and deliberative democracy is that those involved in debates will behave reasonably. The definition of what is reasonable is by no means straightforward, as d'Entrèves (1997) and Gaus (1997) have noted, and there is a danger that the expectations of standards of behaviour will actually exclude some groups. A further assumption is that reasonable actors brought together with others of divergent opinions are likely to change their initial positions on their preferences and interests towards a shared agenda. However, as Mouffe (1993, 2000) and Sunstein (2001) argue, improving communications between opposed groups and bringing them together to discuss issues may not lead to greater consensus but may actually create more division. The tendency towards what Sunstein describes as

"enclave deliberation" in which debate actually encourages opposed groups to look inwards and to become more extreme in their opinions may mean that hopes of deliberative democracy based on reasonable actors are likely to be unfulfilled.

The final claim by the supporters of direct and deliberative forms of democracy is that the decision made by a deliberative process are necessarily more equitable than those arrived at by existing democratic institutions. In part this is a necessary assumption, because writers like Cohen (1998) and Dryzek (2000) believe that deliberative forms of democratic decision-making can only be effective if all those taking part are effectively equal – but there is no clear idea of how this might be achieved in large-scale debates. This demand somewhat defeats the purpose of many claims made for the radical nature of deliberative forms of governance. If deliberative democracy can only deliver fairer outcomes after the social revolution required to ensure that citizens are equal in terms of resources (both physical and intellectual) then why do radicals need deliberative democracy at all. Direct and deliberative decision-making puts the process of communication at the heart of democracy. But, because the resources required to communicate in modern democratic states tend to be concentrated in the hands of a few companies and wealthy individuals, it is possible that the introduction of deliberative forms of democracy to an actual liberal democratic state may entrench control of decision-making processes rather than diffuse it.

Shared assumptions

This critical analysis of the shared assumptions of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers does not discredit their view about the impact of the crises of democracy or attempt to construct alternatives that might be used to support another vision of the future. Rather the purpose has been simply to demonstrate that

there exist alternative ways of conceiving the assumptions that form the foundations for the three schools' predictions on the impact of the crises of democracy.

The claims by the authors in the three schools that their responses to the new democracy represent the only viable set of policy options available are important in developing the sense of imminent threat and the need for rapid, dramatic change. The insistence that the present era is so unlike the past that familiar policy choices are inadequate, that the world is changing so fast that established institutions cannot cope and that we do not have the power to resist these changes are crucial to the wider arguments made by techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters.

If, as the discussion in Section Two suggests, we can place globalisation in a longer historical context, with threads that stretch back through human experience and challenges that have been met and dealt with in the past, then it may be possible that there remain lessons we can adopt from history and existing policy options that may continue to be valid. If power is conceived as a Foucauldian network of relationships rather than as a realist, one-dimensional resource, then the possibility of resistance and of important communal responses to the *new politics* seems more likely. And, if direct and deliberative decision-making processes cannot, as has been claimed, deliver policies that are manifestly rational taken by reasonable actors and delivering equitable outcomes, then the supposed failures of existing democratic institutions may not seem quite so sharply contrasted with the promise of a utopian new order.

None of this is to argue that globalisation is not real or not a significant influence on the development of societies across the planet. Neither is it to suggest that citizens and community groups face anything less than very considerable difficulties in getting what they want in the face of challenges from governments, big businesses and global markets. Nor is it to claim that existing democratic institutions are without fault,

or even that they would not be improved by the greater involvement of citizens in direct and deliberative methods of decision-making.

However, it has highlighted the fact that these claims need to be substantiated, that they cannot be taken for granted as self-evident outcomes of the "natural" evolution of the impact of the crises of democracy.

Looking for evidence of the *new politics*

Taking as a starting point the shared assumptions of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers set out in Section Two and the emphasis all three schools place on the importance of new media technologies, Section Three sought to find evidence to support the claims about the imminence and the scale of the changes presaged by the *new politics*. The role of the new media is crucial as, for all three schools, they represent the information technology revolution incarnated and as such provide both inspiration for new ways of organising society and a decisive break with existing institutions of liberal democracy, including the traditional media. Comparing the output of the Internet and traditional media allows, therefore, the testing of the claim that the institutions of traditional liberal democracy (in this case newspapers and television) are disconnected from the key resource of the *new politics*, the Internet.

The debate on taxation in the General Election of 2001 was chosen as the topic for study. The content of the debate itself was relatively unimportant as the study's focus is on the differences in how the issue might be reported in the different media rather than what was said, but taxation was useful as it is a key issue that divides neo-liberal thought (which favours much lower taxation) from the perspective of the traditional European social democratic and centre-right parties. The general election

was chosen because it provided a period of relatively intense and self contained debate, conducted over a brief period and representing a reasonably complete debate.

The material gathered during the election campaign was compared using the tools of content analysis. There are limitations to this methodology, discussed at greater length in Chapter 3.3, but used wit appropriate caution, it offers significant strengths. This study and sought to find evidence for three hypotheses drawn from the assumptions of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister schools.

1. That the new media will favour the interests of global markets and multinational corporations over and above the traditional media and therefore will favour policies that move national policy in the direction of neo-liberalism.

2. That the new media will contain a greater range of opinions, making room for those "fundamentalist identities" that the traditional institutions of liberal democracies cannot contain.

3. That the new media will pursue a significantly different agenda from the traditional media which remain tied to the failing institutions of liberal democracy.

The claims for the findings (set out in Chapter 3.4) of this study must be restricted by both the scope of the study (which is focused narrowly on a particular time, place and topic), and by the limitations of content analysis as a methodology. However, within those limits no significant evidence was uncovered which suggested that the new media offered support to those who put forward policies that would shift British government policy towards a more neo-liberal stance. It found no compelling evidence to suggest that the new media offered space to a greater range of voices or favoured those from outside the mainstream of British politics. And it found no

evidence to support the idea that the new media pursue an agenda significantly different from traditional media outlets.

This study cannot prove or disprove the overall validity of the claims made for the *new politics* by techno-liberal, social entrepreneurs and resister writers. There are a number of possible reasons why no evidence for these claims is visible in this study. It is possible that the timing was wrong – but the clear implication of the three schools' writings is that we are in the era of transformation. The changes must have started, because the technologies, global markets and powerful new actors are all in place and writers from all schools purport to have evidence of its impact. However, the process is not yet complete because their predictions of dramatic changes to society have not yet been entirely fulfilled. It is also possible that this search was looking in the wrong place – perhaps the General Election debate is atypical or taxation is an issue with particular resonances – but the claims by the three schools of the enormous impact of the crises of democracy, which they believe will transform every aspect of human life, suggest that the impact of such changes should be felt everywhere.

The absence of evidence supporting the assumptions behind the three schools' responses to the crises of democracy does have important implications. It suggests that the claims made by the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers for the scope and scale of the crises of democracy need careful examination. It might suggest that the progress of the transformation of society is not taking place as quickly as has been supposed, in which case there may be more room for manoeuvre than the three schools suppose. Or it might lead us to believe that the new communication technologies, and particularly the Internet, are not necessarily and absolutely the tools of the *new politics* and that other factors – the particular culture of a society, the professional culture of journalism or other issues – may act to bring the new media

within the scope of the institutions of liberal democracy. Or the lack of evidence for supporting the three schools' assumptions may reveal that they are simply wrong about the extent, speed and impact of the *new politics* and that the crises of democracy have been overstated.

Any of these explanations, or none, may represent the correct explanation for the absence of significant evidence to support the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister claims. Only further research, a topic that will be returned to in a moment, might be able to settle these questions.

Opportunities for further research

There are a number of questions opened up by this research that are beyond the scope of this project. As discussed above, one possible reason why this research failed to discover any evidence to support the assumptions on the crises of democracy is that the timing was wrong – either too early to identify the trends posited by the techno-liberals, social entrepreneur and resister writers or too late, so that the attitudes which the three schools assume to be unique to the new media have become suffused throughout society.

To test whether the research has been conducted too early it would be relatively easy as opportunities exist to conduct similar tests on ongoing political debates using the hypotheses set out in Section Three. The collection of material over time would also allow researchers to identify whether there were trends in the differences of media coverage over time, which would add an additional layer to the sensitivity of the research. It would be more difficult, but perhaps not impossible, to extend this research backwards in time. One of the advantages of content analysis conducted on materials

gathered by the media is that the artefacts under analysis are often preserved for long periods. There are archives of newspaper and television material that may be available for academic research that could be used as the basis for further study, and it may be possible to access some older Internet material, either from organisation's own archives or services such as the "Internet Archive WayBackMachine" (www.archive.org), which provides a partial record of old websites. This material could be collected, sampled and compared to extend this research further back in time. Although this study excluded newsgroup posts more, extensive, though not complete, archives of newsgroup posts exist (at http://groups-beta.google.com/) and could be used to extend the timescale of future studies back further.

Other potential shortcomings of this research, including the possibility that no evidence was found because the study was looking in the wrong places (for example it included the wrong media or media outlets) or that the General Election was potentially the wrong time of the political cycle to look for this evidence (because the debate, though more intense than normal, is dominated by the major parties) could be addressed by extending the research. The monitoring of more media outlets over longer periods of time may create findings that are more sensitive to the differences in what the media are saying and, therefore, reveal evidence not found by this study.

One area where there appeared to be some evidence that the new media offered greater space to groups outside the political mainstream than the traditional media was the greater coverage that it a gave to the Scottish and Welsh nationalists. Because this study relied on material gathered in the South of England there was no way to confirm whether or not the scale of coverage was an artefact caused by the fact that the newspapers and television programmes under analysis produce specific editions for each region while the websites were produced for the whole country or whether this

was a genuine example of the new media favouring a fundamentalist identity. A comparison of the output of traditional media in Scotland and Wales with material from the Internet would reveal whether this was evidence in support of the claims of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers or a flaw in the design in the research.

One of the concerns identified in this study with the evidence put forward by those seeking to boost claims about the imminence of the new politics is the tendency for it to be drawn from a very narrow range of cultures. Most typically the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters draw on the American (occasionally just the Californian) experience and imagine that the lessons from there can be applied, without modification, around the globe. This study's emphasis on sources from the United Kingdom is partly a response to that, but there is also the potential for comparative, cross-border/cross-cultural studies to test whether evidence for the predictions of the *new politics* varies according to local expectation, circumstances and political structures.

Weaknesses of the new politics

In the introduction to this research the point was made that extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence and this research has found no such evidence to support the predictions of the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters. This study cannot prove or disprove the claims of these writers, although the failure to find evidence that reinforces their claims is itself significant. While the reasons why such evidence is not visible may be due to the research design employed for this study, it is also possible that the cause is that the techno-liberals, social entrepreneurs and resisters are mistaken, or have overstated their case. In drawing this study to a close, I want to briefly consider

some of the factors that might contribute to the three schools' predictions about the *new politics* not reflecting the actual state of modern liberal nation-states in the face of the crises of democracy.

First, as we have seen throughout this study, there has been a tendency for writers from the three schools to base their predictions on the experiences of "early adopters." There is no certainty that the experiences of those who choose to take the risk to be the first to take up new technologies or new ways of living will be typical of the rest of society. Early adopters, whether Silicon Valley technologists or anti-capitalist activists, may be a distinct group within society whose specific attitudes or behaviour, such as their enthusiasm for change, may create a particular, atypical subculture. In addition, although there are potential advantages of early adoption (the ability to stake a claim to certain types of knowledge or activity, for example) there are also costs. Early adopters might choose the "wrong" technology (Betamax instead of VHS) or find themselves locked into social or economic relationships that bring them no benefits or which cannot adapt to new circumstances. Early adopters must also often contend with the teething problems and glitches in new systems that make them difficult to master. As a result early adopters are likely to require practical problem-solving skills, and be willing to devote time to work out problems that will not face those who come later. The experiences of early adopters, therefore, may not bear much relation to the experiences of those who eventually take-up the "consumer" version of a technology or an established way of living and, as such, they may prove a poor basis for constructing claims about the future direction of society.

Second, there is no guarantee that future developments can be extrapolated in a straight line from limited research and early trends. The experiences drawn on for evidence in techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writing tend to come from

narrowly defined and culturally distinct regions. The future is most often explored in the light of experiences in North America (frequently California), Japan and, less often, Europe. As new technologies, new forms of social organisation and new economic practices are rolled out across the globe they may be subject to quite different demands, competition, stresses and needs. There seems to be no easy way of predicting how such complex forces may interact and no obvious reason to assume that the results of such interaction will be identical to what has gone before. Previous examples of rapid eras of technological and social change resulted in diversity not homogeneity.

Third, these writers place considerable faith in their ability to understand and foresee how technologies will be adopted and adapted as they are diffused through different classes and different cultures. There is often the assumption that such technologies will be used in the same way everywhere and by everyone. This need not be the case. The introduction, for example, of text messaging was seen as a gimmick and neither the companies involved nor any of the experts in technology predicted that this system would be as popular as it has become in parts of Europe and Asia. In countries like Singapore and The Philippines mobile phone users average around 200 text messages a month (Economist 2003). Yet, though the same technology is available in the Unites States of America, mobile phone users there average just over seven messages per month and in France the number is approximately fifteen. There are a number of possible causes for these different patterns of behaviour[1] but what seems undeniable is that the simple presence and availability of this technology has not lead to the same patterns of behaviour in different countries.[2] But most techno-liberal, social

[1] The cost of voice calls in America, for example, tend to be much lower and the American communications regulator initially encouraged competition based on competing, incompatible, technological standards – though there have been shared standards for texting since 2002.
[2] Other examples of modern technology being used differently in different societies might include the cultural differences in computer gaming habits between Europe, Japan and America (Kent 2005) or the family/group based use of mobile phones in Indonesia (Goto and Subramanian 2004).

entrepreneur and resister writers remain in danger of being misled into making sweeping claims about the future based on a crude technological determinism. The impact of technology (and especially new, complex technologies in the area of something as fundamental as communications) may be difficult to predict in one culture, but the task may well be impossible across dozens or hundreds of different societies and subcultures.

Fourth, the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister writers often underestimate the flexibility and robustness of existing institutions and social practices, which may not be as brittle as these writers assume. Nation-states, at least in most of the developed world, have demonstrated a remarkable ability to shift and adapt their institutions to repeated technological, scientific, cultural and political challenges and revolutions: nations such as America, France and the United Kingdom have adapted to at least two previous industrial revolutions (the invention of steam power in the mid-eighteenth and electrification in the late nineteenth century); the rise of Darwinism and the replacement of the Newtonian universe with Einstein's version and its subsequent usurpation by quantum theory; the abolition of slavery, the shift from monarchy and oligopoly to democracy and the introduction of the universal franchise for men and, eventually, women; the decline of organised religion and the rise of feminism. Surviving these challenges has required governments and the institutions that have become the structure of liberal democracy to balance often-competing forces and accommodate dramatically changing demands from their citizens. Though there are undoubtedly serious challenges presented by the crises of democracy, the appropriate lesson from the history of the liberal state may be that it is not as rigid and inflexible as those awaiting the *new politics* might suppose. Indeed, on past performance, the liberal state's record of reshaping itself in the face of each new threat might suggest that the

forces of globalisation, individualism and democratic disillusionment will find it more difficult to wipe away existing structures than those proclaiming their irresistibility and absolute nature have supposed.

Finally, it can be argued that the one theme that really unites the writings of the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur and resister authors is their underestimation of the ability of citizens in modern democracies to exercise choice and to use power to acquire what they desire and need. Conceiving power as a one-dimensional resource or tool to be gathered and deployed only by the privileged, leads these writers to misconceive the capability of individuals, groups and communities to react, adapt and pursue their goals in even the most difficult settings. If, as we have seen, the supposed overwhelming power of multi-nationals and market forces can be challenged by the collection of supposedly powerless individuals, then perhaps the other forces of the new politics are being and will continue to be diverted by similar concerted action. Perhaps struggles such as those conducted by anti-globalisation protesters around the world or pro-hunting demonstrators in the United Kingdom need not be seen as modern aberrations but can be placed in a context of mass action that stretches back to the very beginnings of the stirrings of Western democracy, at least as far back as the original poll tax demonstrators and Wat Tyler in 1381. Those protesting against the Iraq War and those fighting against the "decline in moral standards" represented by controversial television programmes need not be seen as "fundamentalist" and outside democracy's inclusive reach. They may be characterised as the continuation of a tradition that includes (just in the twentieth century) trade unionists, suffragettes, racists and anti-racists, and gay rights campaigners, all of whom have used mixtures of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary tactics in pursuit of their goals.

None of these possible explanations for flaws in the techno-liberal, social entrepreneur or resister writers' arguments constitutes proof that they are wrong, but taken together they suggest the greatest weakness of the three schools – the absence of an historical perspective. Very few of the writers considered here[3] give serious consideration to the place of the changes they are envisage within the context of the history and experiences of communities and states before the present era (which in some instance is defined as post 1987). There are good reasons for this, of course, in that the three schools are arguing that the changes they foresee are so radical and dramatic that they render our previous experiences useless. But this lack of perspective does lead them to regard every action as something momentously new. As we have seen through this study, there have been powerful corporations and high levels of international trade in the past. There have been higher levels of migration and attempts to spread single ideologies, political systems and cultures across the globe. There have been widespread public demonstrations and challenges to the legitimacy of government. Only with a genuine understanding of what has gone before can societies make a reliable judgement about what is actually new in the modern era, which institutions need reform, which can cope and which institutions may need to be totally rethought.

Conclusion

It has not been the purpose of this study to claim that nothing in the world is changing. Making the case that widely held assumptions about the future are not supported by irrefutable evidence is not the same as arguing that the status quo will continue to apply

[3] Perhaps only Cherny (2000) of the social entrepreneurs.

indefinitely. Writers like Callinicos (2001) and Hirst and Thompson (2000) have often been perceptive in their critiques of overblown claims made for the novelty of modern developments in capitalist economies. However, they have also, on occasion, appeared to overstate the continuity between the mechanisms and explanatory factors for past change and the forces that are driving modern social, economic and political change. That is not the position of this research. The development of new technologies, the growth of global markets, increasingly individualistic citizenry and declining respect for political institutions clearly represent significant challenges to the future of democratic states. The end of the Cold War, far from signalling Fukuyama's "end of history" (1993) has seen a period of dramatic acceleration of changes that might, without exaggeration, be called revolutionary. Nations have been torn apart and reconstructed, political systems that seemed firmly entrenched have been washed away, the geographical and political map of the world has been redrawn. It also seems fruitless to deny that modern communication technologies – from cheaper flights on jet aeroplanes to the Internet – have for many (at least in the developed world) contributed to new ways of understanding and interacting with the world (though this does not imply that they have been used the same way everywhere). One may disagree with the techno-liberal, social entrepreneurs and resisters about the causes and consequences of such change, but it is certainly not the intention to argue here that such changes are not important.

However, two reasonably firm conclusions can be drawn from this study. First, that there continues to be the potential for choices to be made by citizens, communities and governments that will have important effects on the quality of life, liberty and wealth of their fellow humans; claims that our options are limited to only a narrow range of policies should be treated with caution. Second, there remains room for doubt

that the techno-liberals, social entrepreneur and resisters have correctly identified the scale and detail of the changes to social, democratic and economic institutions.

The potential freedom to make choices from a broader range of policy options leaves the future more open than many of the proponents of the *new politics* would claim. It offers no guarantees, and this study makes no attempt to offer an alternative model, but we need not assume that the path has been marked out for us in advance.

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Appendix A:
Research findings.

Table 1. How the media reported on parties in the debate tax in the 2001 General Election.

		Reported: positive	Reported: negative	Reported: Defensive	Direct: positive	Direct: negative	Direct: defensive	About: Pro	About: anti	About: balanced
Television	Blair	25	-7	5	18	-12	33	7	-26	19
	Brown	18	-12	7	20	-7	9	1	-19	14
	Hague	6	-21	9	14	-28	18	12	-24	11
	Portillo	2	-9	2	14	-20	7	2	-15	11
	Kennedy	13	-7	1	22	-15	1	1	-2	3
	Taylor	0	-1	0	1	-3	0	0	0	0
	Socialists	5	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	5
	Green	3	0	0	8	-1	0	2	0	2
	Rightwingers	4	0	0	2	0	1	0	-2	0
	Nationalists	11	-1	0	1	-2	0	0	-5	0
Newspapers	Blair	27	-6	10	29	-33	4	9	-95	24
	Brown	28	-18	26	20	-14	8	24	-219	35
	Hague	46	-36	12	13	-12	6	26	-89	19
	Portillo	12	-41	22	4	-23	6	2	-34	7
	Kennedy	8	-9	0	3	-2	0	0	-9	2
	Taylor	0	0	0	0	-4	0	0	0	0
	Socialists	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Green	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
	Rightwingers	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
	Nationalists	12	0	0	0	0	0	1	-1	2
Internet	Blair	57	-12	4	16	-3	1	5	-37	13
	Brown	31	-36	11	23	-20	3	16	-48	9
	Hague	33	-31	13	19	-25	3	7	-41	19
	Portillo	12	-27	10	4	-12	4	3	-17	14
	Kennedy	16	-27	0	7	-7	0	2	-2	10
	Taylor	0	-2	0	0	-5	0	3	0	0
	Socialists	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Green	0	0	0	0	-2	0	0	-1	0
	Rightwingers	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
	Nationalists	27	-4	0	14	-2	0	0	-5	5

Table 2a. Mentions of the Labour Party and Labour politicians in the debate on taxation in the 2001 General Election

	BBC News	C4 News	ITV News	Newsnight	**Total (TV)**	BBC Internet	Epolitix.com	YouGov	**Total (web)**	The Guardian	The Mail	The Mirror	The Sun	The Telegraph	**Total (press)**
Labour															
Tony Blair	138	48	104	102	**392**	182	110	20	**312**	124	72	18	68	214	**496**
Gordon Brown	71	41	49	20	**181**	116	64	52	**232**	137	117	16	50	168	**488**
Alistair Darling	14	3	5	1	**23**	6	8	7	**21**	5	13	2	4	7	**31**
Ruth Kelly	0	0	0	8	**8**	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Andrew Smith	1	0	0	0	**1**	2	3	3	**8**	2	2	3	0	0	**7**
Helen Liddell	0	0	0	0	**0**	3	0	2	**5**	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
"Labour"	170	73	105	58	**406**	377	162	147	**686**	399	153	29	37	221	**839**
Total (Labour)	**394**	**165**	**263**	**189**	**1011**	**686**	**347**	**231**	**1264**	**667**	**357**	**68**	**159**	**610**	**1861**

Table 2b. Mentions of the Conservative Party and Conservative politicians in the debate on taxation in the 2001 General Election

	BBC News	C4 News	ITV News	Newsnight	**Total (TV)**	BBC Internet	Epolitix.com	YouGov	**Total (web)**	The Guardian	The Mail	The Mirror	The Sun	The Telegraph	**Total (press)**
Conservatives															
William Hague	79	16	53	15	**163**	100	52	51	**203**	78	39	25	51	64	**257**
Michael Portillo	13	29	28	14	**84**	60	46	39	**145**	78	43	11	20	39	**191**
David Willetts	0	9	0	20	**29**	0	7	3	**10**	5	4	2	3	4	**18**
Howard Flight	0	0	0	16	**16**	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Oliver Letwin	10	13	8	3	**34**	43	8	28	**79**	26	4	8	5	5	**48**
Margaret Thatcher	3	4	2	2	**11**	13	2	4	**19**	24	1	0	0	0	**25**
"Conservatives" "Tory"	171	91	129	42	**433**	376	147	171	**694**	294	118	64	78	222	**776**
Total (Conservative)	**276**	**162**	**220**	**112**	**770**	**592**	**262**	**296**	**1150**	**505**	**209**	**110**	**157**	**334**	**1315**

Table 2c. Mentions of the Liberal Democrat Party and Lib Dem politicians in the debate on taxation in the 2001 General Election

	BBC News	C4 News	ITV News	Newsnight	**Total (TV)**	BBC Internet	Epolitix.com	YouGov	**Total (web)**	The Guardian	The Mail	The Mirror	The Sun	The Telegraph	**Total (press)**
Liberal Democrats															
Charles Kennedy	37	11	28	6	**82**	37	18	19	**74**	9	5	4	1	17	**36**
Matthew Taylor	1	2	0	1	**4**	7	6	1	**14**	2	1	1	0	0	**4**
"Liberal Democrat" "Lib Dem"	23	8	30	19	**80**	56	16	33	**105**	42	9	3	3	29	**86**
Total (Lib Dem)	**61**	**21**	**58**	**26**	**166**	**100**	**40**	**53**	**193**	**53**	**15**	**8**	**4**	**46**	**126**

Table 2d. Mentions of the Green Party and Green politicians in the debate on taxation in the 2001 General Election

	BBC News	C4 News	ITV News	Newsnight	**Total (TV)**	BBC Internet	Epolitix.com	YouGov	**Total (web)**	The Guardian	The Mail	The Mirror	The Sun	The Telegraph	**Total (press)**
The Green Party															
Mike Woodin	0	0	0	0	**0**	2	0	0	**2**	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Margaret Wright	2	0	0	7	**9**	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Vanessa Hall	0	0	2	0	**2**	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Penny Kemp	0	1	0	0	**1**	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Green	1	2	8	1	**12**	3	0	1	**4**	4	0	0	0	1	**5**
Total (Green)	**3**	**3**	**10**	**8**	**24**	**5**	**0**	**1**	**6**	**4**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**5**

Table 2e. Mentions of the socialist groups and socialist politicians in the debate on taxation in the 2001 General Election

	BBC News	C4 News	ITV News	Newsnight	**Total (TV)**	BBC Internet	Epolitix.com	YouGov	**Total (web)**	The Guardian	The Mail	The Mirror	The Sun	The Telegraph	**Total (press)**
"Socialist Left"															
Kambbiz Boomla (Socialist All)	0	0	2	0	**2**	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Dave Nellist (Socialist Alliance)	0	0	0	6	**6**	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Tommy Sheridan (SSP)	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	2	**2**
Socialist Alliance	0	0	7	2	**9**	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Socialist Labour	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Scottish Socialist Party	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	3	**3**
Total (Socialist Left)	**0**	**0**	**9**	**8**	**17**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**7**	**7**

Table 2f. Mentions of the "rightwing" groups and their representatives in the debate on taxation in the 2001 General Election

	BBC News	C4 News	ITV News	Newsnight	**Total (TV)**	BBC Internet	Epolitix.com	YouGov	**Total (web)**	The Guardian	The Mail	The Mirror	The Sun	The Telegraph	**Total (press)**
Rightwingers															
Brynle Williams (PFL, Farmers for Action)	1	0	0	0	**1**	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Nick Farge (UKIP)	0	0	2	0	**2**	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
John Coxon (PFL)	0	0	0	0	**0**	1	0	0	**1**	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Andrew Spence (PFL and UKIP)	0	0	0	0	**0**	2	0	0	**2**	0	0	1	2	0	**3**
David Handley	0	0	0	0	**0**	1	0	0	**1**	0	0	0	2	0	**2**
People's Fuel Lobby	0	0	0	0	**0**	2	0	0	**2**	0	0	0	2	0	**2**
UKIP	0	0	6	0	**6**	1	0	0	**1**	0	0	1	0	0	**1**
Farmers for Action	0	0	0	0	**0**	1	0	0	**1**	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
Total (Rightwingers)	**1**	**0**	**8**	**0**	**9**	**8**	**0**	**0**	**8**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**7**	**0**	**9**

Table 2f. Mentions of the Nationalist Parties and their politicians in the debate on taxation in the 2001 General Election

	BBC News	C4 News	ITV News	Newsnight	**Total (TV)**	BBC Internet	Epolitix.com	YouGov	**Total (web)**	The Guardian	The Mail	The Mirror	The Sun	The Telegraph	**Total (press)**
Nationalists															
John Swinney	5	0	1	0	**6**	14	7	5	**26**	0	0	0	0	2	**2**
Ieuan Wyn Jones	0	0	1	0	**1**	7	0	0	**7**	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Scottish National Party	8	0	12	0	**20**	39	10	17	**66**	1	0	0	0	5	**6**
Plaid Cymru	0	0	1	0	**1**	8	2	0	**10**	4	0	0	0	2	**6**
Total (Nationalist)	**13**	**0**	**15**	**0**	**28**	**68**	**19**	**22**	**109**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**10**	**15**

Table 3. Attitudes to higher and lower taxation in all media outlets

	Higher tax						Lower tax					
	pro	anti	balanced	ambiguous	Difference			pro	anti	balanced	ambiguous	Difference
BBC News	25	25	31	17	0		BBC News	21	13	17	11	8
C4 News	12	7	9	4	5		C4 News	18	10	5	8	8
ITV News	28	14	11	7	14		ITV News	23	7	12	6	16
Newsnight	21	16	12	6	5		Newsnight	18	6	6	10	12
Guardian	54	51	36	19	3		Guardian	42	48	15	17	-6
Mail	90	2	25	5	88		Mail	45	5	2	4	40
Mirror	3	5	3	0	-2		Mirror	6	13	2	3	-7
Sun	12	5	25	5	7		Sun	25	8	0	1	17
Telegraph	87	13	37	11	74		Telegraph	43	15	7	10	28
BBC Web	70	25	33	25	45		BBC Web	60	46	15	24	14
Epolitix	33	9	5	2	24		Epolitix	29	21	7	1	8
Yougov	45	12	11	3	33		Yougov	26	11	8	14	15

Table 4a. Incidence of references to income tax in each media outlet during 2001 General Election

	8-10 May	11-13 May	14-16 May	17-19 May	20-22 May	23-25 May	26-28 May	29-31 May	1-3 Jun	4-6 Jun	Total
BBC News	2	16	3	4	9	1	0	3	0	1	**39**
Channel 4	3	2	1	1	4	4	0	0	0	0	**15**
ITV News	7	4	5	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	**23**
Newsnight	4	14	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	**24**
BBC Internet	4	11	2	3	11	9	1	1	0	0	**42**
Epolitix Stories	1	7	2	0	0	8	1	0	0	1	**20**
YouGov Stories	0	6	8	4	3	3	0	3	0	0	**27**
Guardian	2	15	18	0	8	5	12	3	0	4	**67**
Mail	8	5	3	0	14	9	3	1	0	0	**43**
Mirror	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Sun	0	3	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	**10**
Telegraph	6	14	7	4	14	25	0	3	3	2	**78**

Table 4b. Incidence of references to national insurance in each media outlet during 2001 General Election

	8-10 May	11-13 May	14-16 May	17-19 May	20-22 May	23-25 May	26-28 May	29-31 May	1-3 Jun	4-6 Jun	Total
BBC News	0	0	0	0	43	0	0	1	0	0	**44**
Channel 4	2	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	**15**
ITV News mentions	1	0	0	0	30	1	0	0	0	0	**32**
Newsnight mentions	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	**10**
BBC Internet mentions	1	1	0	0	46	8	0	0	0	0	**56**
Epolitix mentions	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	2	**11**
YouGov mentions	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	11	0	0	**15**
Guardian mentions	0	2	0	0	23	5	7	0	2	2	**41**
Mail mentions	1	2	0	0	34	5	2	0	0	0	**44**
Mirror mentions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Sun mentions	0	0	0	0	9	1	2	1	0	0	**13**
Telegraph mentions	0	0	0	0	21	33	2	5	8	5	**74**

Table 4c. Incidence of references to fuel tax in each media outlet during 2001 General Election

	8-10 May	11-13 May	14-16 May	17-19 May	20-22 May	23-25 May	26-28 May	29-31 May	1-3 Jun	4-6 Jun	Total
BBC mentions	19	10	2	1	5	1	0	1	0	1	**40**
Channel 4 mentions	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**32**
ITV News mentions	27	4	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	**34**
Newsnight mentions	9	4	0	0	0	7	0	4	0	0	**24**
BBC Internet mentions	49	20	23	12	7	5	0	1	3	0	**120**
Epolitix mentions	5	0	10	0	1	6	0	0	0	6	**28**
YouGov mentions	0	11	25	1	1	4	0	1	0	0	**43**
Guardian mentions	5	18	30	0	2	2	20	1	1	6	**85**
Mail mentions	7	13	5	0	12	0	16	5	0	0	**58**
Mirror mentions	6	8	3	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	**23**
Sun mentions	4	18	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	**26**
Telegraph mentions	8	5	1	1	6	10	0	1	1	1	**34**

Table 4d. Incidence of references to European tax harmonisation in each media outlet during 2001 General Election

	8-10 May	11-13 May	14-16 May	17-19 May	20-22 May	23-25 May	26-28 May	29-31 May	1-3 Jun	4-6 Jun	Total
BBC News	2	1	2	0	0	19	0	0	0	0	**24**
Channel 4	4	0	2	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	**20**
ITV News	1	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	**7**
Newsnight	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
BBC Internet	0	0	7	1	0	22	1	8	1	0	**40**
Epolitix	1	0	3	0	0	25	1	0	0	0	**30**
YouGov	0	0	10	0	1	10	0	7	0	0	**28**
Guardian	0	7	5	0	1	9	4	5	6	5	**42**
Mail	0	0	1	0	0	22	2	4	0	0	**29**
Mirror	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	**5**
Sun	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	**5**
Telegraph	0	1	0	1	0	19	0	11	0	2	**34**

Table 4e. Incidence of references to value added tax (VAT) in each media outlet during 2001 General Election

	8-10 May	11-13 May	14-16 May	17-19 May	20-22 May	23-25 May	26-28 May	29-31 May	1-3 Jun	4-6 Jun	Total
BBC News	0	1	0	1	1	15	0	0	0	0	**18**
Channel 4	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	**4**
ITV News	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	**9**
Newsnight	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**2**
BBC Internet	4	0	0	0	7	7	0	1	0	0	**19**
Epolitix	0	0	0	0	1	15	0	0	0	0	**16**
YouGov	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	**4**
Guardian	0	0	1	0	4	3	2	1	1	0	**12**
Mail	1	1	0	0	2	9	0	2	0	0	**15**
Mirror	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**
Sun	0	1	1	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	**9**
Telegraph	0	0	1	2	6	15	0	0	0	0	**24**

Table 5a.Testing for correlation between traditional media and new media coverage of Income Tax during 2001 General Election

Pearson r test results

n	=	10
r statistic	=	0.92
Level of significance		
2-tailed p		0.0002

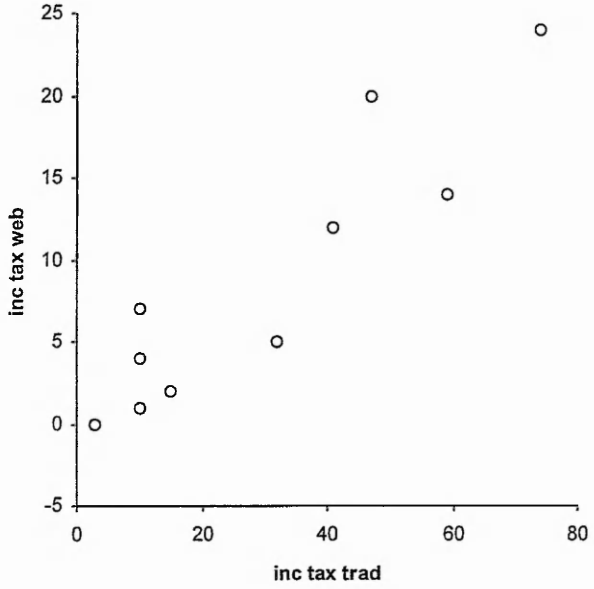


Table 5b.Testing for correlation between traditional media and new media coverage of National Insurance during 2001 General Election

Pearson r test results

n	=	10
r statistic	=	0.97

Level of significance
2-tailed p <0.0001

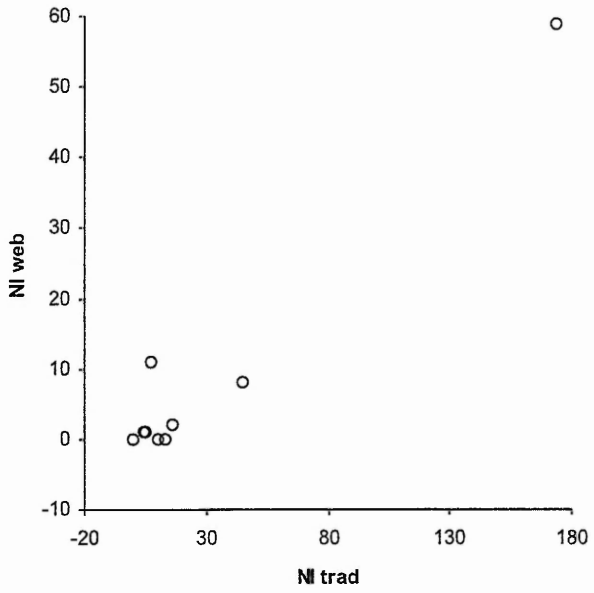


Table 5c.Testing for correlation between traditional media and new media coverage of fuel duty during 2001 General Election

Pearson r test results

n	=	10
r statistic	=	0.72

Level of significance
2-tailed p 0.0180

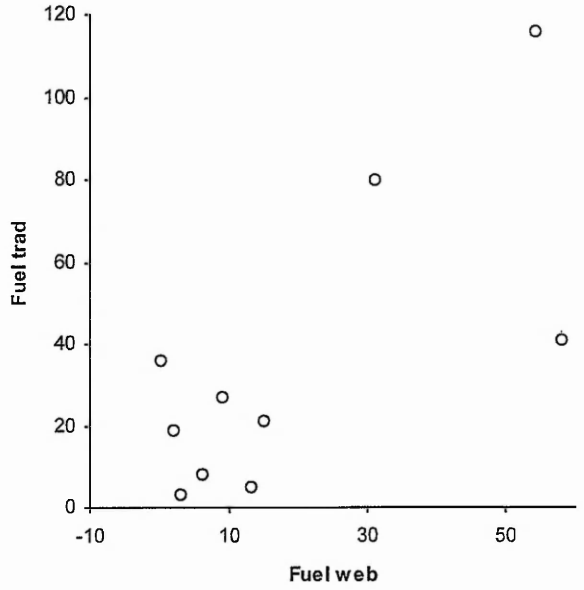


Table 5d.Testing for correlation between traditional media and new media coverage of European tax harmonisation plans during 2001 General Election

Pearson r test results

n	=	10
r statistic	=	0.96

Level of significance
2-tailed p <0.0001

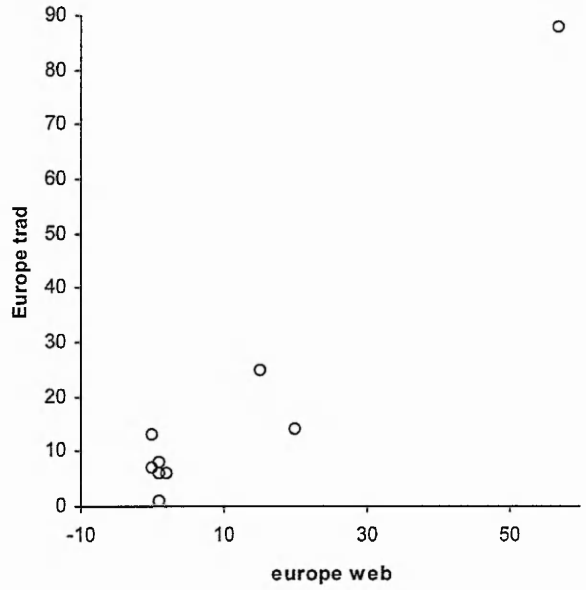


Table 5e.Testing for correlation between traditional media and new media coverage of Value Added Tax during 2001 General Election

Pearson r test results

n = 10

r statistic = 0.98

Level of significance
2-tailed p <0.0001

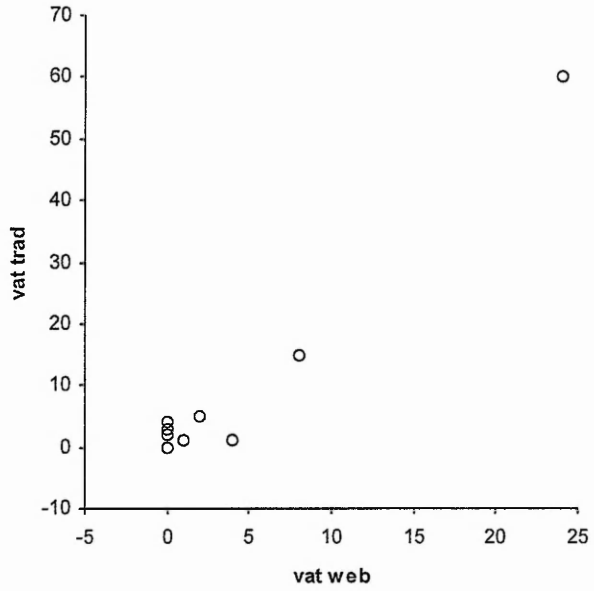


Table 6. Coverage of key debates in each media (mentions of each issue)

	Income Tax	National Insurance	Fuel	Europe	VAT	Total
Television	101	101	130	54	33	**419**
Newspapers	200	172	226	115	61	**774**
Internet	89	82	191	98	39	**499**
Total	**390**	**355**	**547**	**267**	**133**	**1692**

Table 7. Testing for correlation between traditional media and new media coverage of key debates on tax in the 2001 General Election

Pearson r test result

n	=	5
r statistic	=	0.91

Level of significance

2-tailed p	0.0303

