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**Exploring E-democracy: The Internet and the Empowerment of Civil Society Groups  
Case studies of the Zapatistas and Greenpeace**

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E-Democracy  
2005  
ID : 316822

## **Executive summary**

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Civil society, one of the stakes of democracy, faces critical problems, threaten it as an actor in local and international arenas. Technology has been one of the solutions for socio-political problems, so information technology, and specifically the internet, is adopted strongly, and in a determinist way by many governments, and civil society groups to confront these problems. The study shows that, the relation between the civil society, and the Internet is not a linear one, means the Internet doesn't empower the civil society as such. But this relation depends on the nature of the political regime where the group is working, and the extent of freedoms and political rights it enjoys, which affect how the group conceives the internet and how it benefits from it.

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## **Résumé**

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La société civile, un des pieux de la démocratie, rencontre des problèmes critiques, le menacent en tant qu'acteur dans les arènes locales et internationales. La technologie a été l'une des solutions pour des problèmes socio-politiques, ainsi la technologie de l'information, et especificalment l'Internet, est adopté fortement, et d'une manière de determinist par beaucoup des gouvernements, et groupes civils de société de confronter ces problèmes. L'étude montre cela, la relation entre la société civile, et l'Internet n'est pas linéaire, le moyen l'Internet n'autorise pas la société civile en tant que telle, mais cette relation dépend de la nature du régime politique où le groupe travaille, et de l'ampleur des libertés et des droites politiques qu'elle apprécie, qui affecte comment le groupe conçoit l'Internet et comment il tire bénéfice de lui.

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## **Introduction**

Since the 16th century, and for about four centuries, states were considered the main actors in the local and international arenas. In the 20th century, state's authority has been competed for other actors, such as the multinational corporations and the international organisations, specifically the United Nations. However, states were still seen the most powerful political actors until the 1950s. The second half of the 20th century has witnessed massive changes in the different aspects of life: fast development of technological innovations, especially in information technology, started by innovating the first computer in the beginning of the 1950s, reaching the Internet in the beginning of the 1990s, changes in the economic structures and in the nature of economic activities and the appearance of new political actors, such as the civil society groups.

In their search for new political roles, those new actors, used many different tools Since the beginning of 1990s, the world has witnessed an extensive interaction between the Internet by non-governmental organisations -NGOs-, civil society groups, social movements and individuals, to create political influence, which confirm the determinist idea that Internet can contribute in empowering non-state actors, and small groups, and so enhancing the process and the phenomenon of democracy. This idea was popularised under the label of e-democracy.

In this thesis, the idea of e-democracy will be analysed in its relation with civil society groups, trying to explore if Internet can empower those groups, in what sense, and what are differences between different levels-local and global- of civil society in using the Internet. Two cases will be studied: The Zapatistas, who are indigenous, Indian people fighting the Mexican government, and Greenpeace, which is one of the most famous environmentalist movement in the world, calls for protecting environment.

The idea of e-democracy lies in the heart of the relation between democracy and technology in general, if we consider "e" as a symbol of technology. The relation between those two phenomena is very old, for Winner "democratic revolution and industrial revolutions were twins a sort but ones that from the very beginning lived with troubled relations" (Winner 1992, 2), in addition modern power structures appeared with technological societies (Winner, 1992).

There are two lines when we speak about technology and democracy: The first is the debate around technology as a mean for promoting democracy. This debate was enhanced after the falling down of the Soviet Union. Many analysts (Winner, 1995, Huntington, 1991, Fukuyama,

1991) believe the main reason behind that falling was the tools of information technology, which made information available for all citizens. They started to see other models of life; e.g. the American one and they started to ask for a change. This led at the end to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and put an end to the communist authoritarian regimes. This debate was promoted more in the decade of 1990s with using Internet from different groups in different ways to create political effects. This debate attached mostly to the information technology rather than to any other kinds of technology.

The other line in this relation, the idea of democratisation of technology, refers to the involvement of the public in the decision making related to technology and science policy. In other words, transferring some of the scientists' power and domination on science and technology matters to the public. For Bijker there are different types of experts and "more social groups are involved in matters of science and technology, and those groups have their own expertise... we are all experts in a specific way" (Bijker, 1995, 10). While for Sclove, environmentalists all over the world, green parties and social movements which defends issues related to science and technology are a clear expression of the democratisation of science and technology. (Sclove, 1995).

Although both the first and the second arguments seem different in a way, they are in fact two sides of the same coin. On one hand, enhancing democracy in general, weather by technology or by other tools, means more involvement of the publics in decision making process, including those decisions related to science and technology. On the other hand, the involvement of the public in decision making related to technology may lead to designing more democratic technologies refer to technology that doesn't promote discriminative values, meet real needs of people and has as less harm as possible.

Those two ideas are closely related to each other. However, this study will focus on the first argument only; that technology- specifically the Internet technology- can enhance, or promote democracy.

The main hypothesis of this study is that Internet, as a technology, doesn't empower individuals, groups or promoting in general democracy as such, but depends on other factors related to socio-political factors, which affect how the technology is conceived, and used. This raises the idea of the social construction of global technologies, or technologies which work on the global level. The idea of the social construction of technology is always attached to the first

stages of the technology, the design and the building of the new technology. In the case of the Internet it is difficult to talk about these stages, but at the same time we can't ignore the socio-political factors affected by and affecting the technology. So the study is concerned with the transferred technologies, the nature of the political environment to which the technology is transferred, social conceiving of the technology and the way the technology is used. To test this hypothesis, the study tries to answer the following questions:

The main question of the study is:

- Does the Internet empower the civil society groups in different levels (local /global)?

The sub questions are:

- \* How (in what) do civil society groups use the Internet?
- \* What are the effects of the Internet on the roles and functions of civil society groups (comparing to their roles and functions before)?
- \* What are the differences between e-democracy on local and global levels?
- \* Can the Internet form a public space on those two levels?

Two remarks should be mentioned here, the first one is that the study adopts a wide definition of the civil society contains social movements, NGOs which have organisational levels, small groups (even if they don't have organisational levels), free activists...etc. The second remark is that the term *empowerment* in this thesis refers to the ability of the group to achieve its goals, putting into consideration that getting support from different parties helps the group to achieve its goals. According to Bradley, " in the new global order the success of the social movements is not measured solely by an increase in the material well being, or economic gain. Success in the new global order is measured by the extent that their political message was transmitted and received by others, the level of support they receive and the influence they have motivated other activists to be politically involved" (Bradley, 2005, 45).

### **The motivation of the study:**

The motivation of the study can be seen on two levels: The theoretical level, on which the study questions if the technology can really play a role in changing the power relations among actors in local and global arenas, mainly the state and the civil society groups. According to Rothkopf "the real politick of the new era is the cyberpolitick in which the actors are no more just states and raw power can be countered or fortified by information power" (Rothkopf, 1998, 325). This issue is related to the calling from political scientists and sociologists that in a new age- the

information age- all concepts should be redefined. For example one of the definition of the politics is (who gets what), or (who has what) which refers to the distribution of resources if who is changing and what is changing as well so politics should be redefined. This view is coming from a determinist vision that technology (internet) will change actors or nature of power, but in this study this will be put into question: Can technology change these power relations and what are the limits and expected results of that?

On a more practical level, the results of the study could be useful for other civil society groups. For example the experience of the Zapatistas and the Greenpeace with the Internet could be useful for other groups in other countries which have the same circumstances, and the same for global civil society groups. At the same time, it should be put into consideration that there are political and cultural differences among countries and among societies. Even among the countries which belong to the same category (for example, developing countries), there, are different models, and levels of development, Hence, saying that the results of the study could be important for other groups doesn't mean to transfer these models exactly to other contexts, regardless the differences, but means to learn from others experiences.

### **Limitations of the research**

There are two main limitations:

The first is related to the concept of democracy, the idea and the phenomenon are very old and the concept is very complex. There are many different perspectives on the democracy as a phenomenon/ concept, and so many perspectives on e-democracy.

The second limitation is related to the Internet. The problem of the explosion in the numbers of the writings on the Internet. For some (Clark, 1996, Levinson, 1999, Timollinson, 1991, Wresch, 1996) it is Bandora box as it enhances the digital divide within and among societies, and work as a tool for cultural imperialism. And for others (Fisher, 1997, Gates, 1996, Herman & McChesney, 1997, Kalil, 1997, Poster, 19997) it is the only way to rebuild democratic societies to start the dialogue among different cultures, and to promote have-nots. At the same time the Internet became available for the commercial using less than 15 years ago which means it is a very new technology, making it very difficult to evaluate its effects very clearly. The Internet now is seen as a revolutionary technology, more or less as the printing machine of Gutenberg was seen in 1455. In addition, the Internet as a technology is different from other technology in the scale, as it is global and in the nature, as it has a soft nature. For credible and objective results, all

these limitations should be put into consideration while dealing with the Internet and its effects.

### **Structure**

The thesis contains 2 parts:

Theoretical part: contains 2 chapters, the first one is on the concept of the civil society and two of its interrelated concept, namely the global civil society, and the public space and the problems they face. The second chapter is on the E-democracy, definitions, forms, actors of this kind of democracy, and how can the civil society use the internet for achieving its goals ...etc.

The empirical part will deal with 2 case studies: the Zapatistas, a Mexican local civil society group and Greenpeace, a global one. Finally the conclusion will present findings of the research, and suggestions for further researches.

## **Chapter 1**

### **The Concept of the Civil Society**

There is no real agreement on what democracy means, how it can be practised, or what are its conditions, as perceptions of democracy differ according to time and culture. However, there is an agreement that the strong civil society is one of its conditions. In this chapter the concept of civil society as a precondition for the real democracy will be presented as well as its history and evolution, and the environment or the realm in which it is formed and work, namely the public sphere, and problems that face it. Section 1-1 deals with the concept of the civil society and the global civil society, section 1-2 presents the environment of the civil society and how it is formed which, expresses the idea and the concept of the public sphere. Problems, which face the civil society, will be discussed in section 1-3.

#### **1-1 The Concept of the Civil Society**

In one of its definitions, the civil society is “ the sum of all initiatives, unions, associations, organisations, and networks in which people are voluntary engaged, with the objective of pursuing welfare of the community and/or bundling special interests”(Clarck, 2000). The idea of civil society has had a long history, as it refers to the relation between the individual and the state, or the relation between local communities and the government. This relation is expressed by many thinkers and philosophers, for example, according to O’Brien “ the main problem has been how to reconcile individuals pursuing their own personal interests while, at the same time ensuring that collective needs are met” (O’Brien, 1999, 3).

The state, since the Westphalia conference in the 15th century, which admitted the nation states as the main units in Europe, dominated the political life. However, in the 17th and the 18th centuries the business class appeared as a powerful actor in European societies, as it tried to rival the state authority, and to work autonomously, sometimes even against the government. It used its abilities to have better circumstances for trade: locally, it could pass laws in favour of capitalists over working class, and globally, it pushed and supported the phenomenon of colonialism, to guarantee cheap raw material and markets for distributing the manufactured goods. (O’Brien, 1999).



For Brenner (1976), the civil society wasn't only the traders and merchants class, that time, farmers also formed a civil society group in Western Europe. The feudalism system and its use of farmers, resulted in mass efforts of farmers for organising themselves against the lord, in a kind of communities. Thus the European countryside witnessed groups for defending farmers rights. This appearance of the civil society is connected to the feature of the self-organising and the sharing in interests which, enabled the farmers, to replace the lord by their elected magistrates, and in some villages they even could choose the priests of the villages.

Although this history of civil society was in Europe in general, the level of the evolution was different from one country to another. In France and Germany, for example, where the state was very strong the evolution was slower than in Britain, where the individual freedom -affected by the victory of the parliament on the king- was evident. The civil society, in this meaning, wasn't a product of the bourgeois class. On the contrary it was one of the driving forces behind the appearance of this class, which has led the European modern history, and played an important role in the development of European societies.

In the 20th century, civil society groups have taken a different form from the business, trade, or farmers groups. As in the first half of that century, civil society groups were mainly interested in charity, and took the form of associations helping poor or disable people and gradually, since the second half of the century, civil society groups have had different roles and interests. They are now considered the mediator between grassroots, or people and the state, and they are mostly taking the form of non-profitable or non-governmental organisations, whose aims became more related to issues of development, environment protection... etc.

In 1990s, a new concept related to civil society and the civil work has appeared: The global civil society. Refers to the field of activities, based on believing in the global values, at least in some issues, such as: Justice, peace, and human rights in general. Its actors are the NGOs and non-profitable organisations, which have widened their activities from local or national to global level.

There are three factors behind the appearance of the global civil society:

- The global civil culture.
- The modern communication systems.
- New economic and financing systems.

For the global civil culture, it has been crystallised since the 2nd world war, because of the

huge number of the governmental and non-governmental international organisations. The United Nations played an important role in putting the basics for this culture; for example the UNISCO played a pioneer role concerning the cultural rights for different people, which appeared in many international agreements for human rights. For defending women and children, there have been many organisations that follow the UN and have helped in dealing with these issues globally. However the United Nations has been considered one of those governmental organisations which are still constrained in many aspects to their states policies. Because of these constraints, other NGOs and civil society groups have been established to compensate the absence of the United Nations in many issues.

This civil culture is also connected to the movement of the civil rights in the United States, which have refused the extreme right, or the traditional left, and has searched for other concepts of democracy and politics. These concepts have made politics close to people and have been concerned with the problems most societies face: crime, education, and immigration. These civil groups have been close to the people and their needs, and have presented the politics in an attractive way, for example, global demonstrations organised by global antiglobalization movement, have been marked by singing, dancing, folk music and so on.

The second factor is the development of the modern communication systems which helped in building multi-national associations, and friends groups, either virtual or real, These communication systems have helped social movements and the civil society groups to widen their membership all over the world, and to mobilise people who find in them new free frames for participating social and political activities.

The third factor is the new economic system that has become in favour of the service sector, marked by long holidays and free times. This permits people to travel, and to interact with other cultures. At the same time, the expansion of the global charity family institutions like Ford, Fulbright and others, as well as churches and businessmen, provide fund resources to civil society. These fund resources are necessary for the interaction among different civil society groups in different countries. Conferences, publications and meetings among the members of these groups would not be possible, without such funds.

After presenting the history and the main features of the civil society and the global civil society, the question is: how does the civil society form? Study turns in the next section to the environment in which the civil society or the realm of the civil society works: the public space.

## **1-2 The Context of the Civil Society: the Public Sphere**

Different civil society groups have different interests and defend different issues. For every group to define its agenda, to appoint its interests, and to decide the mechanisms it should follow to achieve its goals, the members of the groups should meet, discuss, deliberate, and form a specific view. So to reach a common end concerning a specific issue, members of the society need a *place*, or a *space*, to exchange their visions around the issues they are interested in; what is called the *public space/sphere*.

One of the first contributions concerning the public space/sphere, was presented in Habermas writings. By this concept, Habermas means the environment in which the public opinion towards public matters and general interests is formed, with guarantees of assembly, association and freedom of expression.

Habermas studied the public sphere in the 17th and the 18th century in Britain, France and Germany. In this period, normal people started to meet together in coffee-houses, literary salons, parliament, meeting halls, political clubs, public assemblies and pubs. They had debates on their problems and interests, and they could form real public opinion, which opposed the state power especially in Britain, where, thanks to the licensing act of 1595, newspapers were printed without the queen's permission. So the bourgeois class could carry its voice to journalism and to the state, forming mediators between the society and the state.

Thus the main function of the bourgeois public sphere was to mediate between the private economic and political interests of individuals, and interests of social and public life. Another function was to check on the government work, and to make the state be accountable to people. Many tools helped the public sphere in doing these functions like newspapers, which, were wide spread thanks to the print machine. In the 19th century, the telegraph and the telephone enabled people to communicate easier, faster, and at larger distances. The radio in the last 19th century and the television in 1923, particularly, opened the door to talk about the role of technology in democratisation process.

For Habermas, after the democratic revolutions in Europe, such as the French one in 1789, the public sphere was institutionalised in a system of rights. Habermas mentioned five categories for those rights, which are:

- 1- Rights that enable people to act freely.
- 2- Rights come from being a member in a certain group, which make any member of this group a

legitimate actor.

3- Rights for protecting the individual rights.

4- Rights to guarantee the equality of individuals to participate.

5- Rights that enable people and provided them the circumstances to use their rights.

After this overview on the public sphere as an environment for the civil society, the problems that face the civil society will be presented in the next section.

### **Problems of Civil Society**

The phenomenon of the civil society faces different problems such as:

- **Disconnection between government and society**

According to Norris Rannue (2002) citizens in all countries have this feeling that they are marginalized and there is a kind of disconnection between them and their governments or politicians. The critical attitude among the people, especially the young, is increasing, and the general orientation among the citizens concerning the unsatisfying performance of their governments, is augmenting. There is a need to develop or to present new ways to reconnect people to government which can be direct democracy electronic websites...etc.

For Pierre and Peter (cited in Rannue, 2002) there are four things which cause the problems of existing democracy, and which are behind calling for e-democracy.

1-the expansion of governmental structures.

2 -the disconnection between ordinary citizens, and their governments.

3 -achieving the personal aims of the governors on those of the citizens.

4- the desire of the government to narrow the options or the solutions in front of the citizens concerning public matters, in a way that makes its point of view is the only available one.

This problem connected to the failure of the representative democracy, so the calling is now for the deliberative democracy, which is a mix of participative and representative. Still people elect representatives. However, local communities and small groups deliberate on public issues and form a strong public opinion, which presents the preferences of these groups concerning those issues to the elected officials. In the democratic society those local communities or small groups don't depend in their existence on the government, they should be able to operate and work freely, and defend issues or interests of their members or of some categories of the society.

- **The weakening of the public sphere**

The problem of the weakening of the public sphere has two sides:

The first is that related to the way the public sphere formed, it has started since the 19th century. The characteristics of bourgeois class changed, which led to the decline of the public sphere. The state became responsible for what was considered for a long time the private life of the citizens, like education, health care...etc. Bureaucracies and technocrats could form a class with certain interests that took people away from participating in taking the public decisions.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, debates and consensus formed the public opinion, while in the 20th century, especially during the second half, public opinion is managed and dominated by the media, which is dominated by the state and by the media corporations, turning people into consumers of goods.

The public opinion shifted from rational consensus coming from debates and discussions to a manufactured opinion of media experts. The function of media has been changed from a tool facilitating discourse and arguments within the public sphere to working in shaping, constructing and limiting public discourse to themes validated and approved by media corporations. (Habermas, 1962).

The second problem is related to the idea of public sphere itself, as a realm for civil society. Critics of the idea (Fraser, 1995, Kellner, 1998) see that Habermas idealises the idea of public sphere, by presenting it as a completely free forum of discussion and debate but in fact certain groups were excluded. As the case in direct Athenian democracy, the public sphere was dominated by white- property owning male; the working class and women were not represented. It is better and more logical if it is theorised for more than one public sphere. (Kellner, 1998). “The public sphere was really a way for bourgeois men to see themselves as a universal class and preparing to assert their fitness to govern” (Fraser, 1992,123). So women as actors and their issues were absent from this sphere. Mary Ryan noted that not only Habermas neglected the public sphere but also he marks the decline of public sphere at the moment when women started to gain power. (Kellner, 1998)

- **The decline of the civic engagement**

If the public sphere as a context of civil society has been weakened, it is expected that the civic engagement is being declined as well. Nevertheless, this civic engagement decline returns back in some views, which can be considered to some extent determinist, to the technology. According to Ellul, if we want to have real civil society, we should have citizens who are willing

to go for debates. But most societies now are marked by the individuality, the small communities have collapsed and individuals have become separated islands. For example, labour unions were important actors on the political stage in the beginning of the 20th century, because labours used to meet, discuss and deliberate and try to find solutions for their problems. For Ellul, it seems that there are no longer actors on the political stage because technology has destroyed civic activities.

Putman presents the same view, for him one of the most important problems that civil society face now, is the decline in the civic engagement. Although the huge number of civil society groups we see everywhere, and which give a wrong impression that the civil society is being enhanced, what's happening in the real life is completely different. According to Putman, the past 25 years have witnessed a clear decline in the participation of people, who belong to or join volunteer work in local groups. At the same time there is a parallel decline in the participation in the political life, as attending the municipals meetings, and being members in political parties. (Putman, 2000)

Ellul and Putman argue that one of the most important reasons behind that decline is the television. For Ellul, people prefer to stay in their houses watching T.V, rather than to meet together and debate about public matters. While for Putman, "in 1950 barely 10 percent of American homes had television sets, but by 1959, 90 percent did. By 1995 viewing per T.V household was more than 50 percent higher than it had been in the 1950s. Most studies estimate that the average American now watches roughly four hours per day, this massive change in the way American spend their days and nights occurred precisely during years of the weak civic engagement." (Putman, 2000, 4)

Reasons why television is behind this decline in civic engagement are:

It takes the time one was spending in such activities with the other members of the local community, and violence and conflict-based movies and programs have increased the pessimism about human nature. Finally, it increased violent attitudes and aggressiveness especially among children who are heavy watchers of T.V. (O'Brien, 1999).

Sclove sees that also other kinds of technology destroy the society and the social relations, in absence of which talking about the technology is imaginable. He gives this example from Spain, in 1970 in a small village in Northeast Spain -Ibieca-; running water was installed in all the village houses. People no longer had to go to the public fountain to get water. Gradually every family got a washing machine and women stopped meeting in the public laundry to wash their

families' clothes. Suddenly the social relations within the village had changed completely; the fountain and the laundry which were two of the public spheres, and where many of public issues of the village were discussed have been destroyed. "Installation of running water helped break down the Ibicans strong bonds with one another as a community" (Sclove, 1995, 3). Another example of technology, which has disastrous effects on community life, is the automobile, which enabled people to go to suburbs and vice versa. Relation among individual communities in the local areas decreased as individuals preferred to go to spend their leisure time in cities. The former local communities of workers and farmers were decreased, especially with new, different architectures of the suburbs, allowing families to live in separate structures, that were easily accessible to big shops and the places of work, only with the use of car (Dwyer, 2003).

So the problems of the civil society can be summarised in three: Firstly, the disconnection between people and politicians, which resulted from a structural problem in the representative democracy. Secondly, the decline of the public sphere which, is partly because of hijacking of this sphere by the state and the media, and because of some defects in the idea of the public sphere itself. Thirdly, the technology, as for Ellul, Putman, and Sclove, the technology destroys the intimate relations, especially in the local communities, or societies, and weakens the civic engagement.

These problems face the civil society and threaten democracy, led to calls from civil society and from citizens for more involvement in the political process, made governments and civil society groups search for new solutions for promoting civil society and enhancing the democratic process, one of these solutions is e-democracy, or using information technology for empowering democracy, in the next chapter the concept of e-democracy and its implications will be presented.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Perceptions of E-democracy**

The previous chapter presented the concept of civil society and the problems it faces, those problems that limit the real activation of democracy. One of the solutions suggested and adopted by different formal and informal sectors in different societies for those problems, is the idea of e-democracy. The e-democracy as an idea appeared for facing these problems. However, there was another reason behind it, which is the accelerated development of ICTs. The 1990s witnessed a very fast development of ICTs, and trials from different governments to make it available to as many citizens as possible. And since using the Internet in the commercial use, it became for many different groups an important or a main channel for creating political influence. It is known that in many cases the development of a certain technology creates new needs, which means that the existence and the development of ICTs and especially the Internet and its abilities, created the desire for more direct communication between people and politicians. This chapter gives an insight on the idea of e-democracy. Section 2-1 presents the definition of e-democracy, from different perspectives, as part 2-1-1 presents the idea of computer society, and part 2-1-2 presents the idea of information society. Section 2-2 deals with the internet and empowering the civil society, how do the government use the internet for empowering the civil society will be presented in part 2-2-1, and how is internet used by civil society groups themselves in section 2-2-2.

#### **2-1 The Perceptions of E-democracy**

There are two attitudes concerning the definition of e- democracy, the first is attached to the perspective of the computer society, while the other one is connected to the information society.

Those two perspectives will be presented in the next sections.

##### **2-1-1 E-democracy: the Computer Society**

This perspective has been popularised since the beginning of 1980s, when the American



government and then European governments adopted ambitious plans for spreading computers in their societies. Those plans generally consisted of three dimensions:

1-building digital cities, 2- computer based education, and 3- personal computing.

### **1- Building Digital Cities and Technology Centres**

The American government started to build those cities in the middle of 1980s, where all citizens, or at least as many as possible, could have the access to computers and learn the basics of using them. This strategy was clear also in the United States technology centres projects, which were established in the local communities to teach citizens how to use computers. These centres were seen as a way to empower citizens, and to create a kind of equality among different classes and groups. This policy ignored the social factor of the technology. As these centres weren't seen or used as places for developing social capital, or as spheres for enhancing the social bonds among visitors, it is clear that for policy makers, the technical aspect was dominating.

### **2- Computer-based Education**

This kind of education has witnessed a great rise in the United States and in Europe, especially in elementary and secondary schools. The mass media, parents and policy makers have supported this idea to a wide extent, as the involvement of the computers in the education system was seen as a way to teach students to participate actively in simulations of political, economic and social problems of real life. This was seen as good training on one of the democratic values, the participation, and also creating a kind of equality among students belonging to different groups. (King & Lacono, 1990). The social and economic equality, in the American society, which suffered for centuries from discrimination, was that time one of the priorities, for politicians and sociologists, for Papert (1979, 80, cited in King & Iacono, 1990), schools and the educational system in general, don't deal in a real way with the problem of inequality in the opportunities of life. The innovations of the 20th century like the T.V, movies, language labs, and other educational devices, didn't contribute in a serious way to solve this problem. According to him, the powerful computers could have done so.

It seems that this kind of education, focused on computers as powerful machines, may help in creating new or enhancing old values. However, creating or enhancing values within laboratories or within schools, doesn't necessary mean that these values would be promoted in the society. That was what this policy lacked: an integrated image on how to practice these values in society, after enhancing them in the schools. In other words, it was not expected that providing every

student with an access to the computers, or making her/him participate in political simulations, would give all students equal opportunities in life.

### **3- Personal Computing Policy**

Personal computers became common in the early 1980s. Hardware companies, together with governments, adopted different projects for providing every family, and then every person with a cheap PC. Jim Warner, the founder of a computer magazine, stated that “ I continue to feel that computers in the hands of the public, are crucial tools for positive social change. The only hope we have of regaining control of our society and our future is by extracting the information we need to make informed and that is what computers do”( Goodwin, 1988, 144).

E-democracy this way had the meaning of social development, and was related more to the idea of equality in the right of knowledge. Knowledge has been seen as a kind of power, and it was attached to computers. So the aim was to make computer access available to everybody, especially the marginalized groups, such as women and poor or homeless people. This perception of e-democracy deals with the technology as a goal itself. The computer was seen as the most important way to empower the marginalized groups, the empowerment for the supporters of this policy meant to enable the marginalized groups to get computer based jobs, as those jobs have been socially well seen and well paid, comparing to the other jobs. In other words: the computer, in the computer based society, was seen as the tool and the aim at the same time.

#### **2-1-2 E-democracy: The Information Society**

The other meaning of the e-democracy is more related to what is called information society and networking society. The idea here isn't attached to the ICTs from the technical view, but from a cultural and logical one, meaning the logic and the culture control the ICTs. In this perception the ICTs are tools for achieving societal goals and not the societal aims. The information society, or the information based social system, is based on two main characters that are the decentralisation and the networking, meaning the transformation of the traditional society based on hierarchy and centralism, to another model based on different logic. The logic of building networks of all elements and parts of the society, and facilitating the flows of information among them. According to this view, information society doesn't depend on the amount of information available, but in the reconstruction of the society and social system, according to the new values of the information age.

According to this perception of e-democracy, the state has new different functions from the

traditional ones, and there are new actors who share the state its previous powers. This view is attached to a new culture, and a new space: the cyberspace, where individuals and groups can practice their activities freely, freed from the real life constraints, and feel more powerful.

The Internet, was the technological tool for reaching and creating this space. Hence, the Internet itself as a huge net is an expression, a metaphor and, at the same time a reflection of the networking society. This means that the technology became a kind of societal simulation, which has become a complex net of actors, sectors and interests. The Internet thus provides three-dimensional technology: information, communication and public space.

One of the first and clear expressions of this vision, started also in the united states, when the government adopted the freenets project, from early 1990s to offer access to the internet. These nets aimed at connecting citizens and politicians by providing users free and easy access to governmental information. The more important idea behind creating these nets was enhancing the local communities by providing them a way to communicate and deliberate in this new cyber space, form a public opinion about local and national policies. (Oudthoorn, 2004). In the same perspective, we find the vision of e-democracy presented by Vedel (2003), the vision marked by historical analysis, as he presents three phases of e-democracy through the history of ICTs in general. It can be said that his view combines the view of computer society, and the view of information society in one comprehensive historical one.

For Vedel (2003), the idea of the political nature of communication is not new; telegraph, radio, and television, all had this nature and were all seen as means for increasing communications and creating a real public space. Moreover, the idea of e-democracy itself isn't attached to the Internet, but it was developed parallel to the development of the ICTs in the 1950s. That phase, for him considered the first stage of the evolution of the e-democracy, as it was marked by the appearance of the first computer, which was seen as a powerful machine, that could deal with millions of pieces of data and information, and help people in making more rational decisions.

The second phase is the 1970s, which witnessed the spread of television cable networks in local areas and in small communities. Concerning impacts of ICTs on civic engagement in this phase, there are two attitudes: the first was about the ability of the community networks to enhance certain forms of democracy (representative, deliberative), within the small communities, and how those technologies could affect the communication process between citizens on one side

and elected officials on the other, and on the participation of citizens in public decisions. This second attitude was more about the ability of the ICTs to enhance local identities and to enhance the flow of information among individuals, thus creating independent social movements.

The third phase has started in the beginning of 1990s, with the development of the Internet and with many changes in the socio-economic-political systems on local and global levels. Those changes related to the spread of the liberal model of democracy, and demands for more deliberative model of it, meaning greater citizens involvement in politics, the popularisation of the human rights movements as well as the spread of the liberal economy, the freedom of transformation of capital, and refusal of state intervention in economic matters. The Internet offered a space for practising all these liberal activities on the virtual reality online, and a mean for facilitating them off line. See table 1

Table 1 three ages of the electronic democracy (source: Vedel, 2003, 10), “ translated from French ”.

<i>period</i>	<i>Social-political context</i>	<i>Technical context</i>	<i>topics, frameworks and privileged actors</i>
<b>1950-1960</b> <b>the appearance of computers machines</b> Karl Deutsche	The end of the second world war and the cold war. Strong intervention of the state and the appearance of the public management	Computers were seen as a powerful tools for data calculation. Centralisation of information systems	Effective management of the administration. Scientific control of the public action.
<b>1970-1980</b> <b>the Tele-democracy</b> Amitai Etzioni Benjamin Barber Franck Arterton	social -political crises of the end of 1960s and dispute of the institutions returning back of the state to the local communities to reconstruction the	cables of television, telematics, and autonomous Interactivity.	Modernisation of the representative democracy. Better relation between the citizens and the elected officials. Local community as a laboratory for strong

	political affairs		democracy.
<b>1990-2000</b> <b>the</b> <b>cyber-democracy</b> Howard Rheingold Alvin Toffler Esther Dyson	Opposition against the intervention of the state Globalisation and questions on the end of the role of the nation state. Rise of the data processing .individualism values	Distribution of computer networks then the development of the internet. Non hierarchical modes of communications.	Strong bonds among virtual communities. The citizen as an autonomous individual in the public space and the global village The cyberspace as a metaphor and a tool for building political organisation

The study focuses on the Internet, it means the period of 1990s and after, in the next section the study presents, how can the government use the Internet in the frame of the E-democracy .

### 2-2-1 The Internet And The Government

In this section, the study presents how the Internet is used by different actors to empower civil society. Here we can distinguish two strategies in using the Internet by two actors. The first, is the effort of the government to make itself accessible to its citizens, and the other is connected to the society (as the study focuses on civil society groups and social movements).

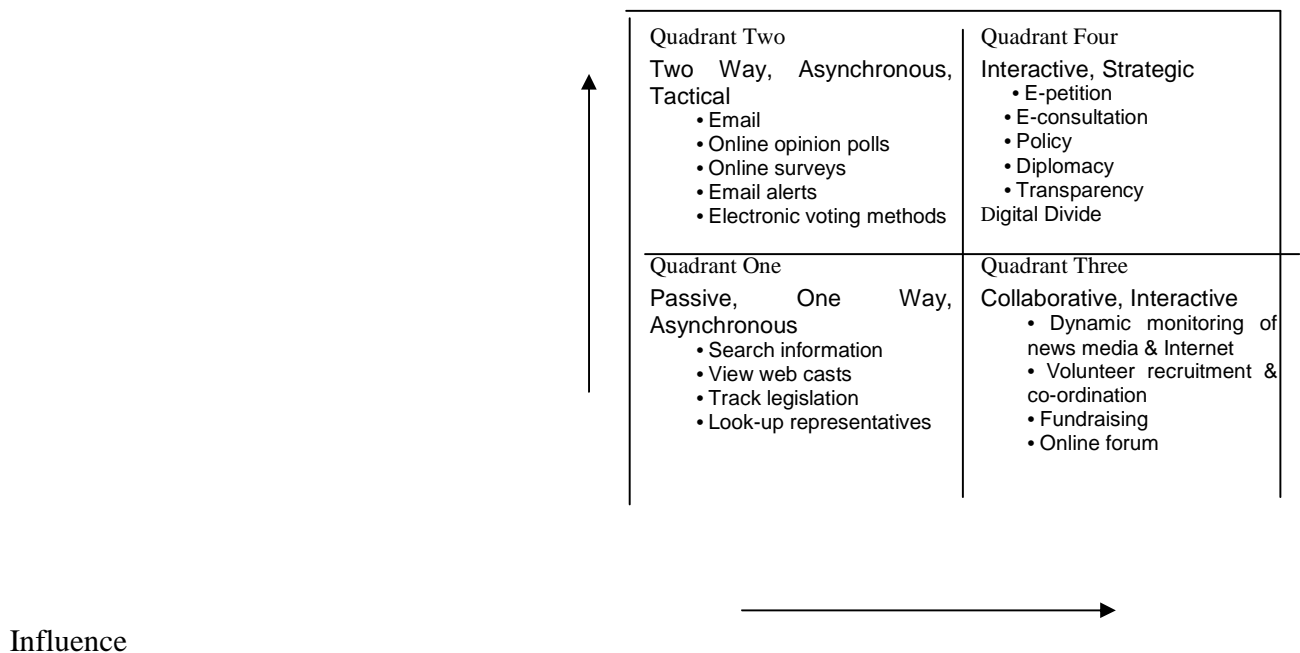
The first part expresses the concept of e-government, according to Du Toit, (2001, cited in Masermule, 2004) "e-government is a permanent commitment by government to improve the relationship between the private citizens, and the public sector government, through enhanced cost effective and efficient delivery of services and knowledge". Infodeu, (2002, cited in Masermule, 2004) defines e-government as "the use of information and communication technologies ICTs to make the government more accessible, effective, and accountable". In another definition, "it is the electronic means of delivering services, and information to the public" (Brynard, 2004).

The American institute for electronic government offers a model of four quadrants for using Internet by the government. The advantage of this model is that it presents to the government a way to identify their position in the process of e-democracy, and to identify other ways to improve this position. Although it is related to the government work, the goal of such model is to illustrate how governments can use the Internet to empower the society. The case study on which the model was based was the American society, as data and statistics were collected and tested in the USA. However, the model can be examined and applied to any society where the government adopts plans for e-government, as the theoretical part in the model is not only attached to the American society (Caldow, 2004).

Figure 1

## Internet and government

Source: (caldow, 2004, 9)



### Quadrant one

Government, political parties, and legislative bodies try to make information about their activities available on- line, and most of them succeeded to a wide extent. For *pew foundation Internet and American life project 2002*:

“ 68 million Americans visited websites, up from 40 million in just 12 month,

42 million Americans used government websites to reach public policy issues, 23 million Americans used the Internet to send comments to public officials, 13 million Americans participate in on-line lobbying” (Caldow, 2004, 10).

### **Quadrant two**

Here there is two- way communication between government and citizens. As mentioned in congressional report of 2001 the senate offices have received more than 55000 e-mails a month. They responded to up to 60 percent of them via e-mail. However, 75 percent of the senate members responded by sending postal letters.

Using e-mail alert is one of the strategies in this quadrant. People send their opinions about certain policies to the government without expecting a specific response, but the government can then read how people see its policies. According to the *MIT artificial intelligence laboratory*, the strategy of two- way communication goes back to the cheap and the fast nature of the Internet in communication.

### **Quadrant three**

In this quadrant we find tools like interactive voice response, interactive digital T.V, and voting by the Internet. Tools of this quadrant are important during election time to encourage people to participate in politics. In 1996, the year of one of the presidential elections in the United States, the centre for governmental studies created the democracy network. One of its aims is testing if the new technologies, such as the Internet, can contribute in improving the democratic process. It has been examined in 5 presidential and congressional elections, and reported that the information technology, offers considerable opportunities for democracy, as it enables people to have real contact with their representatives and so they are aware of their choices (Weston,1998). The democracy network offers services to both candidates and voters, among them the issue grid which allow every candidate to have a unique place on the network, and create his/her own issues as a text, audio, or video and allow the citizens to respond to these issues by talking directly to the candidate or by putting comments.

### **Quadrant four**

In this quadrant, the main aim is involving the public in the deliberations, and to establish real links between citizens and decision making process. This quadrant is considered an advanced phase in e-democracy. An example of this quadrant is the Queensland Australian website, where citizens have good opportunities to interact with the government officials, and parliament

members. The website informs citizens of any political changes and asks them for comments, which go directly to the parliament, to help the members in reshaping policies and laws. The website also enables the citizens to create e-petitions, whose aims are to put pressures or convince the parliament for taking certain policies and actions.

Now, after presenting how the government uses the internet for involving its citizens in politics, the study turns in the following section to the other part of the idea of e-democracy: How do the civil society groups use the internet?

### **2-2-2 Internet and Civil Society Groups**

Most civil society groups now use the Internet in different aims such as communication among members, between the group and the other groups, as well as getting or distributing information, getting funds and deliberating on public issues. The Internet helped many civil society groups to publicise their issues, and to create political, or social influence and helped others to exist. Before talking about how civil society uses the Internet, it may be useful to mention some problems the civil society faces when using the Internet.

- **Digital Divide**

To use Internet one needs economic resources, to get computers, telephone cables, and so on. These requirements are not available to all civil society groups on the same level, as it is different from one country to another, and from one group to another within the same country. What is called the digital divide, as the United Nations program stated “the industrial nations of about 15 percent of global populations, and 88 percent of Internet users. In Africa just half of one percent of the population is online, and a quarter of all the world’s countries have less than one telephone for every 100 people” (United Nations information report, 2000, 211). For civil society groups which are global in nature, the digital divide will affect the structure and the abilities of different branches of the group as members who belong to developed countries will have the chance to use the internet, while those who are located in less developed countries will be deprived of it.

- **Weakening of Social Bonds**

It is not denied that the Internet establishes new bonds and helps in building relations among people, but those relations, which are on-line are not as strong and trustful as those ones off line. According to Sclove, to talk about the concept of the community we should have face to face interactions, emotional bonds, and the feeling of the common sense among the group, which is not available on line.(Sclove, 1992).



For Bimber Bruce we should differentiate between thick and thin communities. In thin communities people participate, because they think that their participation in this community will bring them benefits, while they don't necessary feel or appreciate the value of the group or of the community. For example, if someone signs up in a mailing list to get information about a certain topic, as soon as s/he feels that s/he doesn't get the desirable information she/he can withdraw from this community -here the mailing list- "it is highly an instrumental one, as it requires trust but trust of conditional and limited type"

The thick community is different as people belong to this kind of communities for different reasons, but they understand and appreciate the value of the community and its aims, and it is difficult to withdraw from these communities (it is however possible). The easiness of membership and withdrawal from the community on-line mark them unstable, on the contrary, the thick ones are stable to a wide extent. Thus thick communities can't exist on line without real existence off-line, as this presence off-line gives them the stability and more credibility.(Bruce, 2000).

- **Threatening Public Deliberations On-line**

Deliberation is one of the good ways of communication among citizens. Through deliberations people express their views and opinions towards public matters so as to reach a compromise or consensus. These opinions and views are usually formed by participation in discussions, or some times just by observing the attitudes of the discussions. Internet users can select the space they want to join to deliberate, and in most times they choose to deliberate with those who are similar to them in views and interests. Van Aistyne and Brynjifsson, in their study, have found that more "connectivity", which is the ability to connect other people in a fast and flexible way, encourages fragmentation. According to Sunstien, when different people deliberate they tend to reach a compromise, but when similar people deliberate, they tend to be more restricted to their ideology and not accept others' opinions and views.

If these are some of the limitations, or problems that different groups may face in using the Internet, then how do those groups benefit from the Internet, or use it in favour of their goals?

### **How Does Civil Society Use the Internet?**

According to Mooris and Langman (2001), there are two main types of cyber activism either 1- through the net or 2- in the net.

#### **1- Through the Net: The Cyberactivism can be seen in:**

#### A- Internetworking :

Through the Internet, civil society groups have a cheap and fast mean for organisation and co-ordination among the members and the branches of the group and on the local, regional and global levels. Many groups like Greenpeace, use the Internet as a medium for co-ordination among the members. Through this co-ordination, they can expand their membership and take more serious steps for defending their issues. *ICPL*, the international campaign to ban landmines appeared when many civil society groups and NGOs organised a kind of lobby for defending this issue. This resulted in the appearance of the land mine treaty of 1997.

At the same time, the Internet is a space for activists who form powerful groups through organising their activities. We can call this direct action co-ordination. Direct political actions like demonstrations and manifestations are in many occasions organised by net campaigns, using civil society groups websites and e-mails, which spread rapidly and produce enormous effects. These strategies were used recently in the Georgian revolution against the authoritarian previous system, where some civil society groups called on their websites for a civil disobedience and for surrounding the parliament. Soon these calls were reached to millions of people who exchanged these messages, by e-mails and mobiles. The surrounding of the parliament and the disobedience resulted in the changing of the old regime. If in the case of the Georgian revolution these strategies produced temporary actions, they produced more stable movements in other cases. Anti-globalisation movement is one of those Internet based groups, which has been formed by activists who have met in the cyberspace and co-ordinated their efforts to create such presentable social movement in Seattle and Genoa. Waterman (1998, cited in Mooris and Langman2001) argued that now old movements, which were absent for sometime from the political space like the labours, now returned to work by linking labour movements in different countries and societies, and by linking them at the same time to the global issues like social justice.

There are different kinds of networks which could be established by civil society groups, such as:

1. chain network, where the flow of information is moving in one line of separated communications.
2. the star network, where there is a central node, and all other nodes are connected to it, all communications happen only through this central, mother node.
3. full matrix network, where every node is connected to every other node. This is the most one

that best illustrated the idea of internetworking.

The node may be a person, group, organisation, movement....etc. In some movements the three types exist, and in others one may be dominant, according to the movement's structure.

#### B- Raising Funds:

Another benefit civil society gets from the Internet is the ability to raise funds. Many civil society groups and social movements search for funds through the Internet. On many websites there is information on fund resource. This fund is not necessary in the form of money, but sometimes it takes the form of different services offered to the civil society groups, like training courses for its members, or offering them some software which help them in their work, and so on. Many of these services and software exist on the web, and considered indirect kind of fund. Decentralised networks such as postnapster, peer 2 peer, is based on free software. Any group or movements can download those software, documentation, and publications for free, and all these strategies follow the idea of fighting the property of information and information capitalism, this idea of fighting information monopoly is itself one of the goals of the global civil society.

#### C- Alternative Media:

Many civil society groups now have their own newspapers on- line, and some of these newspapers are not allowed off line. They also have publications, books, reports, movies, and documentaries. Alternative media is now the main source of information about those groups, their strategies and their plans and news. Indy media is one of those decentralised media works. It serves as a free press network and at the same time a network for media activists to cover news directly from the streets. This network was developed through covering the protests against globalisation in Seattle.

The other way the civil society use the net is:

## 2- In the Net

Here the net is seen as a sphere for actions and activities of civil society groups, either because they can't practice these activities off line, due to constraints on freedoms or because this space presents "more" and "more attractive" opportunities for those groups.

#### D- Direct Cyber activism

On the net there are different kinds of NetWare, such as cracktivism, and hacktivism wars. Many net activists try to destroy big corporation websites, as a way to put pressures on them to revise their policies, which sometimes result in catastrophes for those corporations. The war in Kosova

was the first when the Internet was clearly used to produce political influence from social movements (Dinnind 2000, Cited in Langman and Mooris, 2001).

Different movements belonging to different parties, used hacktivism policies as they destroyed or virused the Serbian governmental and NATO websites to express their refusal of their aggressive policy, and to prevent them from mobilising the people through their websites. The same happens in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, many movements -sometimes pushed by their governments- try to hack the other party's sites.

#### E- Contesting and Constructing The Internet.

It is difficult to see the Internet as a neutral technology, as it is mainly controlled by huge multinational corporations, and it's working to a wide extent according to the capitalist economic system. Contesting and constructing the net means to turn it from this monopolised technology to a more common one.

One of the aims of civil society groups is to put an end of the monopoly of the information, and to make as many services on the web available to all, in other words to narrow the digital gap among countries or within societies. This idea, together with the idea of using the Internet for enhancing the global social capital, was behind the appearance of what so called the open source community, or the open source software code. This community appeared on the net, and tries to make software free, and to replace the capitalist economy by information-digital common economy. Maybe the clear example of their work is the linux open source operating system, which is expected very soon to break the monopoly of Microsoft on the software market.

Another problem is the problems produced by information technology for blue and white collars. Unskilled workers and employees are suffering all over the world because of the increase use of computers and robotics in production. (The industrial revolution was known as the massacre of blue collars, as machines replaced workers, while the information revolution is known as the white-collar massacre). For these reasons, some civil society groups in developed countries adopt educational programs through the net for empowering workers and employees all over the world and specifically in the third world for free.

#### F-Virtual Communities

Castell (2001 cited in Mooris & Langman) argues these kinds of communities are temporary, because they are not real, however it is evident that virtual communities are efficient in many activities, as it is a way for identifying or reidentifying identities. These communities are marked

by the diversity in attitudes, classes and ethnicities, which enriching these kind of groups. There are hundreds of communities on the web and among the most famous ones the open-source community and the blue badges community who defends the freedom of expression on the web and oppose any governmental intervention or censorship on this freedom. The importance of these groups is that they form a part of this parallel virtual space, and through their existence they give it more legitimacy and credibility.

In this chapter the concept of e-democracy from different perspectives and its implications were discussed and two perspectives were presented: the traditional one sees that e-democracy is attached to the computer society which was popularised since the 1980s, and the other relates to the idea of e-democracy to the information society. Two actors are attached to e-democracy, the government that has the resources and the abilities to empower its citizens, by providing the society with information technology tools to participate in the political process. At the same time civil society groups use the Internet in different ways to achieve their goals. As these actors (civil society groups) are the focus of the study, in the next chapter two civil society groups will be presented: the Zapatistas and the Greenpeace.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Case studies : The Zapatistas and Greenpeace**

In the last chapter the concept of e-democracy and its implications for the government, and for civil society groups were discussed. In this chapter, two case studies will be presented: The Zapatistas and Greenpeace, in order to explore if the Internet contributes in empowering them or helping them to achieve their goals. Before presenting the case studies, it might be useful to give an overview on the methods used to deal with them, and how data was collected. So section 3-1 is a methodological part, as part 3-1-1 presents the interview, and part 3-1-2 presents the web analysis tool. in section 3-2 remarks the differences between the case studies, and why specifically those cases were chosen, will be discussed. section 3-3 is the first case study "the Zapatistas", as section 3-3-1 presents an overview on the national environment of the group, means some facts about Mexico and the state of the Internet there. This part is important to understand the background and the conditions under which the group was created and work. in section 3-3-2 the history of Zapatistas and their narrow environment-Chiapas- will be presented. And section 3-3-3 discusses how do Zapatistas use the Internet. Section 3-4 is the second one "Greenpeace", section 3-4-1 presents the history of the group, and the aims behind creating it, and section 3-4-2 presents how Greenpeace uses the Internet for achieving its aims.

#### **3-1 Methodological Part**

For collecting data for this study, two tools were used: interview and web analysis. In the next section an overview on both tools will be presented.

##### **3-1-1 The Interview**

For the Zapatistas it was difficult to find interviewees, thus it was decided to depend on reports published by Zapatistas or their supporters on how do they use the Internet. Fortunately

the University of Namur hosted members of Zapatistas during the Zapatistas week<sup>1</sup>, one of the university cultural activities in the academic year 2004/2005. The aim of this week was to introduce the Zapatistas issue to the students as a model of a successful civil society group, and to get support from them to the Zapatistas issue, as the organisers of this week are themselves supporters of Zapatistas. In this week, the researcher could get many reports, a lot of information and documentaries, and more important was to get contact with some of the Zapatistas members and supporters.

As for Greenpeace it was much easier, as the group has offices in almost all-European countries. Through a friend, the researcher got the contact information of the responsible of the web page of the Greenpeace in Belgium, and through him it was possible to contact other members of the group.

The interview is divided into three parts: The first is an introduction to the interview and the aim of the research and a confirmation that the information got by the researcher is used only for scientific aims. The second part contains questions about the member background, position in the group and how did s/he become a member ...etc. The third part tries to explore the relation of the group with the Internet; the history of this relation, how do they use it and its effects on different aspects and problems in using it. (see appendix 1)

### **3-1-2 The Web Analysis**

Although the Internet is not WWW ( the World Wide Web), this service is the most common one in the Internet world. In a study by Fogg (2003), the author showed that the WWW is the first service used by the internet users to get information, news, and reports or studies. For its importance this study uses the web analysis tool to explore how do the two groups use this service for achieving their goals, besides pointing out to the other services they also use. The web analysis is a tool for analysing web pages, trying to understand the messages they send especially indirect or unclear messages, and what are the ways used to send these messages.

In Fogg's study a sample of 2684 British persons were chosen to explore their opinions concerning the things that attract them in websites. The study showed that the design look comes firstly as it was mentioned by 46.1%, the second most important thing was the information structure and information focus, or the message of the website.

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to point out that this week was held for popularizing the zapatistas issue, it means that invited activists and lecturer (among them Madame Metterand the wife of the French ex-president) were all biased to zapatistas.

The design and the structure of the websites refers to many different things such as the colours used, the organisation of different parts of the site, if it is easy to navigate in the site, flash messages, the messages behind all these things, and the level of credibility. The other factor in the analysis is to look at the content, are messages presented by presenting facts, numbers, statistics, historical facts, real photos...etc, who are the authors of the essays, what are their backgrounds...etc.

Five websites were chosen in every case as a sample for this analysis, for the Zapatistas

[www.ciepac.org](http://www.ciepac.org)

[www.schoolsforchiapas.org](http://www.schoolsforchiapas.org)

[www.naraconews.com](http://www.naraconews.com)

[www.zapatistas.de.vu](http://www.zapatistas.de.vu)

[www.zapatistas.org](http://www.zapatistas.org)

For Greenpeace five websites were also chosen

[www.greenpeace.org/international](http://www.greenpeace.org/international)

[www.greenpeace.org/climatecampaign](http://www.greenpeace.org/climatecampaign)

[www.greenpeace.org/cybercenter](http://www.greenpeace.org/cybercenter)

[www.greenpeace.org/in](http://www.greenpeace.org/in)

[www.greenpeace.org/nuclear](http://www.greenpeace.org/nuclear)

after this overview on the methods used, the study turns to the case studies

### **3-2 The Differences Between The Two Case Studies**

The thesis deals with two case studies, the Zapatistas and Greenpeace. before presenting them it is important to point out that these two cases were chosen as they are very different. The aim of this study is to see the Internet effects on different civil society groups, which makes the results of the research more credible for different kinds of civil society groups. Hence, the main differences between them :

- The first difference is the scale, as the Zapatistas is a local civil society group while Greenpeace is a global one. The scale is of course important regarding the financial resources and the nature and the scale of their activities.
- The degree of the development of the movement : the Zapatistas is a group in a developing country -Mexico-and in one of the poor regions ( in fact it is rich of minerals but this hasn't been reflected on the life there), although Greenpeace has branches in



many developing countries still it is a European movement, meaning it belongs to the developed countries..

- The level of experience: finally the appearance of Zapatistas returns back to the middle of 1980s but became active in 1994. The Greenpeace started working in 1971 and was a natural product of the 1960s social movements in Europe in.

When studying the effects of the Internet on the civil society groups all these aspects should be taken into account, because they certainly have impact on the way each group uses the Internet and regards it .

### **3-3 The First Case: The Zapatistas**

*"The forces that are taking command of the international economy are mounting a very serious threat to freedom, democracy, and social justice, which, calls for popular resistance on a global scale. the Zapatistas have provided an inspiring example of forms it might take, an initiative that merits committed support and that should be studied carefully for the lessons it teaches."* (Chomsky, cited in Flores, 2001,1)

#### **3-3-1 The National Context of The Group**

##### **Facts about Mexico**

Mexico is located in south of northern America, bordering the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, between Belize and the US, and bordering the North Pacific Ocean, between Guatemala and the US. The area is about 1,972,550 sq. km, and the population is about 98 million persons (statistics 2002). See appendix 2, map 1

The Mexican history is a product of the interaction among civilisations , cultures, ethnicities, and conflicts. 3 main indigenous branches , Mayan, Olmecs, and Toltecs, formed traditional Mexico, which was colonialized by Spain in 1519. During the 16th and the 17th centuries, Spain used native people as slaves to farm the land and to take out minerals. At the same time, the interaction between Spanish and Indian people resulted in a new race; the mestizos, who are the mix between whites and native people. At the beginning of the 20th century, specifically in September 1810, Father Costilla, one of the catholic priests, called native and mestizos people to rebel against the colonialists and called the Spanish to abolish slavery immediately. Soon thousands of Indians and mestizos joined each other in a big revolution under the leadership of Costilla, and although he was arrested and executed, the Mexican continued their revolution against Spain, until Mexico got its independence 1823. From 1846 to 1848 Mexico witnessed the

war against the USA in which Mexico lost much of its territory. This affected the indigenous people the most as they are farmers, moreover they were overloaded by very high taxes regarding their economic conditions.

In 1910 indigenous went for a revolution, demanding for their rights, especially the land which was dominated by whites, and in some cases by mestizos, who became the dominating race after the independence, in this revolution, general Emiliano Zapata appeared as a charismatic leader of indigenous farmers, as he himself belonged to indigenous family, Zapata became the symbol of indigenous in all Mexico, especially after he was assassinated in 1919. In 1920 the civil war ended, left the farmers in the bottom of the society in terms of economics and social needs, till now they are the poorest and the most oppressed class in Mexico. (See appendix 2 statistics on social and economic states about indigenous).

militarists, who won in the civil war, formed the institutional revolutionary party, which has governed until now. thus the political regime in Mexico is based on one-party controls different aspects of the system. in such regime, opposition parties or alternation of power are forbidden. moreover the Mexican government controls the media system completely (newspapers, television and radio), leaving no channels for expression. any opposition or trial of practising the basic freedoms has been oppressed seriously, for example the movement of students of 1968 (which influenced by the movement of students and workers in Europe in general and in France specifically) went for a series of demonstration against the corruption of the administration of president Diaz Ordaz. the reaction of the regime was sending the army troops to Mexico city streets, which resulted in killing about 300 students in few days.

### **The State of Internet in Mexico**

In general, Mexico developed rapidly the sector of the communication infrastructure rapidly since 1994 (AMD report), with the start of internet era in Mexico, 0.04% of population had an access to the internet, the percentage reached 1% in 1998 (Thomasson et al. 2002, Sheel 2002 cited in AMD.com), in 2000 it became 3.7%. even with this rapid development, Mexico is still in a low position in Internet penetration comparing to other Latin American countries. For example, the internet penetration in 2001 in Mexico was about 4%, while in Chile it was 20%,(3,196,182 ), as the population of Chile is about 15,980,912 , in Argentina 8%(3,163,035), as the population of Argentina is about 39,537,943 persons, and Brazil 5%, (9,305,639), as the whole population of Brazil is 186,112,794 ( AMD report). One of the reasons behind this low rate

is the underdevelopment of the telecommunication infrastructure, as Mexico has very low rates of telephone lines, 12% even comparing to other countries of the same level of development. Mobile phone is growing faster; more than 13 million -about 15%- of the people have mobiles in 2002.(Scheel, 2002), yet mobile phones provide slower access to the internet comparing to the normal phone lines. (AMD report).

One of the advantages concerning the internet use in Mexico, is that Mexico doesn't have laws for controlling the use of the internet, so it is easy to receive news, information and other materials from the internet, and to spread them without censorship, which makes the civil work in some countries, like china or Vietnam difficult(AMD report).

Internet users in Mexico are mostly from the middle and the upper classes, according to Rodriguez-Alvez (1999), in 1997, 90 percent of Internet users in all Latin American countries were from the upper-middle class, and 80 percent of users were good in English. Telmex company, one of the highest internet providers in Mexico, charged 120 \$ as a monthly fee for internet connection in 1998, with high rates of poverty and underdevelopment levels most of Mexican people can't afford such costs, although it is diminishing.

As for Internet and gender, it is marked that about 42 percent of Internet users were women in 2002 (AMD report), there therefore is no gender divide in Internet use. However there is a clear ethnic divide as most of the internet users are white, while native people are deprived from internet access, because of the high rate of poverty and digital illiteracy among them. Attached to this ethnic divide is a geographical divide, as the regions where the majority of population is indigenous lack the Internet access, while regions where the majority is white have better conditions regarding Internet penetration. For Villar and Casanueva (2002), this geographical divide in Internet goes back to the unfair infrastructure distribution of telephone lines in Mexico. For example only 3.5 percent of populations have telephone lines in the state of Chiapas, where the majority are Indians, while in Mexico city, the percentage reaches 33 percent. We can see that Mexican Internet users are located in three main centres, Mexico City, Monterroe, and Guadalajara areas. (Scheel 2002). See table 2

Basic Statistics, 2001-2002

Population	98,900,000
Rural population (% of total pop., 1999)	25.80

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity, PPP) (US\$)	8,914
Global Competitiveness Index Ranking (2001-02)	42
UNDP Human Dvlpmnt. Index Ranking (2001, adjusted to GITR* sample)	40
Main telephone lines/100 inhabitants	12.47
Telephone faults/100 main telephone lines	2.22
Internet hosts/10,000 inhabitants	56.55
Personal Computers/100 inhabitants	5.06
Piracy rate (%)	56.00
% PCs connected to Internet	11.18
Internet users per host	4.85
Internet users/100 inhabitants	2.74
Cell phone subscribers/100 inhabitants	14.23
Avg. mnthly. cost/20 hrs. of Internet access (US\$)	24.14

**Source: Centre for International Development at Harvard University**

### **E- Government in Mexico**

An important part, concerning the Internet in Mexico is the e-government. For getting a position on the web, improving its performance, and for getting support from the international and local societies, the Mexican government has adopted about four years ago the *E-Mexico* project. For Eduardo Flores, this project is one of the most advanced e-governments project in Latin America. The project has three branches, e-health, e-education, and e-governmental services. The main aim of this project is to make services available on line for all citizens, for example checking school grades, or printing IDs. The idea behind that is to eliminate corruption as "the less citizens interact directly with public servants, the less corrupt the government will be,

it is harder to grease palms in the cyberspace"(Scheeres, 2002,1). according to Delarbre, a political science prof. in the National autonomous university of Mexico, these kinds of projects are more theoretical than practical, on these governmental websites there is information about how to do things but it is not available to do these things on line. He thinks that government has spent time to make propaganda around this project e-Mexico rather than building the necessary infrastructure or providing the necessary tools for this project effective.

To see a clear example of the results of the project, it may be interesting to present how the project works in the real world. A sub-project of *E-Mexico* is the *E-local : Internet in all municipalities*, the aim of this program, is to improve the contact between the local governments, and their citizens, thus it is mainly guided to local areas or municipalities. The Mexican government had a plan to make all municipalities involved in the project by 2006 which, seems really very ambitious regarding what is achieved till 2003 as we see in table 4 :

**Table 3, E-local program in Mexico**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Development of Municipal Institutions Survey INDESOL-INEGI 2000 <sup>/1</sup></b>	<b>National System of Municipal Information, INAFED, 2003 <sup>/2</sup></b>
<b>Number of municipalities with a telephone line</b>	<b>1954 (80.5%)</b>	<b>2313 (95.2 %)</b>
<b>Number of municipalities with internet access</b>	<b>347 (14.3%)</b>	<b>800 (32.9%)</b>
<b>Number of municipalities with websites</b>	<b>108 (4.45%)</b>	<b>442 (18.2%)</b>
<b>Number of municipalities with director or indirect web</b>	<b>ND</b>	<b>182 (7.5%)</b>

<b>management</b>		
<b>Number of municipalities with computation equipments</b>	<b>2013 (82.9%)</b>	<b>ND</b>

From the table, we can see that a good percentage of the municipalities have telephone lines 80.5% in 2000 the e-local program , and 95.2% in 2003. Also a good percentage of municipalities have computation equipments, 82.9% in 2000, (not defined in 2003, however it is supposed to be increased). However, only 4.45 have websites in 2000, and 18.2% in 2003, as websites are the main tools for the E-local. This means :

In three years, from 2000 to 2003 only about 13% of the municipalities became involved in the program. It is very difficult for the government till 2006 to involve about 81% of the municipalities, which means the government put plans exceeds its ability.

If the above table shows us the quantity of the E-local projects, it is important also to explore the quality of it. According to the model of e-government presented in chapter 2 :

**Table 4, levels of e-government in the Mexican municipalities**

One way information (level one)	395 sites ( 89.4%)
Two way interactivity (level two)	40 sites (9.0%)
Citizens collaboration (level three)	7 sites (1.6%)
Citizens participation	N/D
Integration	N/D

Total	442 sites
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It is clear that the project moves in quadrant one to a wide extent, people can search for information in 89.4% of sites, while only 9.0% of sites are two way interaction- quadrant two- as citizens can e-mail the governmental officials, and only 1.6% of the sites permits people to go in on line forums, and to exchange opinions with government officials, while no data about quadrant four which, refers to the citizens participation and integration in the political process is not defined.

Another example of the e-government in Mexico is *Compranet*, or *buy-net*. This allows the Mexican companies to outbid on the governmental purchases on the web and the aim is to make information about these purchases available to the public, and to decrease bribes. In February 2001 one of the Mexican newspapers published news about the budget for renewing the presidential palaces of President Fox, who came to authority based on ending corruption platform. The newspaper got these news from the buy-net website, the purchases published by the newspaper contained 5000\$ towels and 19000\$ curtains! Which was known that time in Mexico as *towel-gate*, this news raised a strong debate on the political corruption in the country.

From the previous section we can conclude that the perception of the Mexican government of democracy is to make information available to citizens, and to illuminate the administrative- and not the political- corruption. It has succeeded to a good extent in making public information available on line, as in the case of *towel-gate*. However, this cannot be considered enough for the real democracy. It should be followed by procedures for accountability, and punishment. As for illuminating the corruption in the governmental administrations, there is no clear evidence that the corruption decreased. Firstly because the government hasn't taken any real steps to establish the appropriate communication infrastructure, which makes it possible for people to get the governmental services on line, and settled for some theoretical plans. Secondly, illuminating corruption in this case needs, beside using technology, a national strategy for stabilising new principles and new morals for new culture, which refuses the corruption in the society. All individuals, families, schools, universities, the media...etc should be involved in such strategy.

In a word, it seems that the national context in Mexico is not convenient For two reasons: The first is the poor information/communication infrastructure in general and specifically for

indigenous people areas, which makes it difficult or even impossible to use the Internet in the Chiapas jungles. This will be highlighted in details in the next section.

From another side, the nature of the Mexican political system doesn't have real desire for settling real democracy, and so doesn't provide people of real tools for practising democracy.

## **Chiapas, and The Zapatistas**

### **Facts and History**

The state of Chiapas is located in the Southeast of Mexico, with an area of 73.887 kilo meters (see map 2), and a population of about 4,224,800 people (statistics 2005), the state suffers from the highest rate of malnutrition in Mexico which affects 40% of population. The capital of Chiapas is Tuxtla Gutierrez and most people are farmers from Maya roots, who don't speak the Spanish. Spain occupied Chiapas, which belongs to Mayan Indian civilisation, in the 16th century, in the last of 18th century it became part of Guatemala under the Spanish occupation, Guatemala then got its independence in 1823. In 1868 main tribes in Chiapas tried to get independence from Guatemala by launching an armed rebellion but it failed. In 1880 Mexico managed to join Chiapas to the Mexican lands. In the period of the civil war, which lasted till 1920, Chiapas and the southern states in general paid the highest taxes, as the majorities in these states are indigenous people. In 1934 President

Since 1980 three events have taken place, and changed the life in Chiapas: firstly flows of thousands of Indians who crossed the borders from Guatemala to Chiapas, escaping from the Guatemalan civil war. Those Indian were speaking the same language of Indians in Mexico, and transferred huge amount of arms to the people of Chiapas. secondly, in 1983, sub-commandant Marcos came to Chiapas. a mestizo from Mexico city who studied sociology, philosophy and communications and was working as a professor at the university. Marcos participated in the socialist revolution in the beginning of 1980s in Nicaragua and Guatemala, known there as Rafael the Mexican, and it seems that he was influenced by the militant society there, which made him enthusiastic to arm the Chiapas people before announcing the war. for Le Vieil Antonio, the chief of the indigenous community in Chiapas, Marcos is the link between Indian people in the jungles of Chiapas and the external world, because the indigenous do not talk Spanish, while sub-commandant Marcos is fluent in English and French beside Spanish. Marcos now is the spokes man of the Zapatistas and the link between them and



the government

thirdly, and more important, the violation of the Indian cultural rights, especially the collective property of the land, which has threatened the indigenous culture critically and led to the high rates of poverty in the state, even though its richness of natural resources. The culture of the indigenous people is attached to the land, and the property of the land is collective, meaning the land is divided into Ejidos (huge space of land) and owned by communities not by individuals. The constitution of 1920 guaranteed the indigenous the collective ownership of the lands. This enhanced in 1934 when president Lazaro Cardinas distributed 16 million hectares of land among different Indian communities. As Mexico adopted the structural adjustment program in 1980, the government started to privatise the land, and to divide it into small farms to buy it to individuals. it also cancelled article 27 , which guaranteed this right for native people from the constitution of 1920. This was one of the most important conditions imposed by the IMF to let Mexico join the NAFTA (North American free trade agreement). This agreement badly affected the economic condition of the indigenous people, as the lands on which they lived for centuries were taken from them. At the same time this process of privatisation and dividing the land meant the extinction of the Indian culture, as the core of this culture is the collective relation between farmers and the land.

This led to the involvement of many people of Chiapas in the Zapatistas army of national liberation EZLN, or briefly Zapatistas- named after general Zapata-, until 1994 they were preparing, organising and arming themselves, as they decided that the only way to be heard, was to carry arms. In the first of January 1994 the EZLN announced the declaration of war on the federal government, to open the door for a conflict between the group and the Mexican federal government, and in 2003 the group announced the independence of the Chiapas from Mexico while the federal government doesn't admit this independence. In the declaration of war announced by Zapatistas 1994, they specified 11 aims "work, land, housing, food, health care, education, independence, liberty, democracy, justice, and peace". In 2000, and in their annual conference the Zapatistas added other five targets " culture, information, security, competing corruption, and protecting of the environment". These demands were put together because of the bad economic, social and cultural conditions the people of Chiapas suffer from. The next table presents some statistics about the economic and social states in Chiapas compared to the national level.

**Table 5 economic and social conditions on the national level and in Chiapas<sup>2</sup>**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>National level</b>	<b>Chiapas</b>
<b>Number of population</b>	<b>97.483412</b>	<b>3920892</b>
<b>Literate population over 15 years%</b>	<b>92.2</b>	<b>50.5</b>
<b>Houses with electricity%</b>	<b>95.0</b>	<b>87.9</b>
<b>Houses with piped water %</b>	<b>84.3</b>	<b>68.0</b>
<b>Houses with sanitations%</b>	<b>85.9</b>	<b>77.0</b>
<b>Houses with drainage%</b>	<b>78.1</b>	<b>62.3</b>
<b>Houses with separated kitchen%</b>	<b>78.0</b>	<b>66.9</b>
<b>Houses have televisions%</b>	<b>85.9</b>	<b>59.4</b>
<b>Houses have refrigerators%</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>37.1</b>
<b>Houses have telephone lines%</b>	<b>36.2</b>	<b>11.8</b>
<b>Houses have computers%</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>Internet users%</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>0.5</b>

From the table above, we can see that there are differences in the economic and the social conditions between the national level and the state of Chiapas, in the basic needs ( electricity, piped water, and sanitation), there are no tremendous differences. The biggest differences exist in the education sector; about 50.5% literate in Chiapas compared to 92.2% in all of Mexico, and the communication sector, (houses that have televisions, phone lines, computers, and Internet users).

Two things make the movement of Zapatistas different from the other movements, the first feature is that the Zapatistas did not want to work alone or to isolate themselves, but they called different civil society groups, social movements and NGOs and activists to share their struggle.

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<sup>2</sup> When asked about these statistics, Mexican interviewees confirmed the reality is much worse but the Mexican government tries to improve its image by publishing false statistics about indians ;

They tried and managed to build a network of supporters and partners within and outside Mexico. According to Noordin, the Zapatistas have learned from the failure of different models in civil society of Latin America and other developing countries, so they followed a new model, the model of networking, or building a net of supporters, and they launched different initiatives for achieving this goal. For example the "historic convencion nacional democratica" CND, which invited about 6000 of civil society activists to Chiapas in 1994, to explore the situation there and then popularising it along with the intercontinental conference for humanity and against neoliberalism which was attended by more than 3000 activists in Chiapas.

At the same time, the Zapatistas co-operated, and respected other movements in Chiapas, like the OCEZ *organisation campesina Emiliano Zapata* which has fought for the farmers rights in Chiapas for a long time. The highest authority in the Zapatistas is the indigenous committee, which contains representatives of all communities, Tzotzel, Tzeltal, Tojolobal, Chol, Mau and Zoquead. The base of the movement are the peasants, however, it tries to present itself as a movement not only for farmers but it for peasants, students, old, young, men, women, churches, trade unions, Mexican and others outside Mexican. By highlighting the issue of Zapatistas women who are living in very bad conditions, the movement could attract feminist movements, the group highlighted also the issue of environment violation to attract environmentalists, and problems threaten children in Chiapas to attract different social movements (Bradley, 2005).

The other feature, is the extensive use of technology, and specifically the Internet for gaining this support. At the beginning, the Zapatistas resorted to traditional media like newspaper or television to broadcast their issue, but because these mediums are controlled by the Mexican government they had to search for other tools, the alternative being the Internet. The government tried to stop their use of it, and when it failed, it started in threatening and assassinating them, but as they gained international attention, the government failed to stop them( Froehling 1997 cited in Bradley 2005). The two features of the movement of Zapatistas are in fact very connected, this relation can be understood briefly as follow :

The Zapatistas used the technology of the Internet to build a net of supporters and a net of pressures on the Mexican government.

### **3-3-3 The Zapatistas and the Internet**

#### **A Space of Existence**

The movement of Zapatistas was created in jungles of Chiapas since 1983, although they

had very difficult circumstances, they could continue and prepare themselves. For David Gabriel, a Zapatistas supporter, this is due to the good organisation of the Zapatistas, in 1994 they decided to come out of the shadow, they became more active, and they wanted the Mexican government, Mexican society and others to hear their voice.

However, in a country like Mexico where many freedoms and rights are denied, they had to find other place to practice their activities. This place was the internet, they didn't start on it, but they started in the real world, and they insisted on being armed with guns, because they knew that this was the only way to be heard, the internet was a next step, more safe and free place where they and their supporters, could launch campaign, and go for strikes or sit-ins or talk directly to other people, certainly it was an extra place for existence.

For Katty Sanchez, Mexican, and a Zapatistas supporter, the internet as a space of war has helped the Zapatistas to avoid a real war and helped them to avoid using guns which, made the world feel sympathy with them and put pressures on the Mexican government. Moreover, it helped the group and all Mexican to avoid the problems of the real wars, such injured and killed people and instability. Katty adds that many Mexicans prefers on-line activities rather than off-line ones for two reasons: the first, is that Chiapas is located in the south of Mexico, far from Mexico city, and many people-she among them - don't have the time or the money to go there and participate in off-line activities like protesting for supporting the people of Chiapas. The second reason is that the authoritarianism of the Mexican regime makes the people afraid of going to Chiapas where the police arrest people or even kill them, like the massacre of Acteal 1997. Due to the anonymity feature of the Internet, people can participate while they are sure the government cannot discover them.

Petro is also a Mexican, participated in different activities for supporting the Zapatistas on-line and shares Katty's opinion. His family refuses to allow him to go to Chiapas for fear of some penal procedures, but they do not mind at all if he supports Zapatistas on-line. However his parents always ask him not to use his real name, and ask him also to change the computers he uses when practising such activities (for example going to different internet cafés), to avoid any expected problems with the government. He thinks that the virtual space created by the internet is not enough, that there should be off-line activities parallel to the virtual ones, for in the absence of the real activities the group cannot achieve its goals, he thinks that it is important for Zapatistas to have a technological-communication infrastructure, because this enhances their

existence on-line . Sara is Spanish and considers herself a Zapatistas member online, sees that if the internet doesn't exist, she can't support the group, because Europe is very far from Mexico, but the internet makes it easy for her to participate in activities for supporting the group, while being in Europe. For her, the Internet isn't enough itself, but it can be a step followed by other steps, and may be a specific activity, or a group starts on line, and after a while it turns to be effective off-line as well.

### **Popularisation**

The strategy behind the popularisation of the Zapatistas issue, can be understood from the words of the sub commandant Marcos " we must say our words and be heard, if we don't do it now others will take our voice, and lies will come from our mouth without we want them". The aim of the Zapatistas for building all this big net of supporters was to popularise their issue, because more popularisation means more support.

There are around 200 websites who support Zapatistas on the net. What marks most of these sites, is that most of them are blocked. Moreover, the designs are really poor, for example, most of them aren't organised in a way that permits visitors to navigate easily or do not have sites maps. In many cases the parts of websites are not ordered in a logical way, no updating seems apparent, and mostly take long time to be downloaded. When asked about these remarks, Mary, a Belgian student, participates in most of on-line activities for supporting them, sees two main reasons behind those problems. The first, is the Netwar between the Mexican government and the Zapatistas; the government tries to hack the movement's websites as a way to oppress the movement and to disappoint their supporters. The second reasons is that these websites are not designed by professionals, or people belonging to large institutions, but mostly by hobbyists and individuals who support freedom and justice.

However, the Zapatistas used all their tools to popularise the issue, their culture, their symbols, the 1997 massacre and other violent actions from the government towards them...etc. As an early reaction to their popularisation, a poll at the end of 1994 -means in the very beginning of their fight- showed that 59 percent of Mexican city inhabitants had a good opinion of them, and that 70 percent thought their demands were justified.

The clear thing in the websites of Zapatistas, is that they are in all languages Spanish, English, French, German, Dutch and many other languages, this resulted from the wide net of supporters they have everywhere. They also use the symbols of Mayan Indian civilisation to

present a model for all Indians in America, and to make them feel involved in this issue.

This war is clear in the use of the traditional Indian masks and traditional colours like bright green, yellow and red, photos and paintings of very traditional Indian heroes who fought white men when came from Europe and the weapons they used, while the commandant Marcos appears on the internet always with the red kaffieh around his neck, along with the headband that became the symbol for the Zapatistas fighter. On the websites there are also a lot of audio, and video materials: Indian music, Indian songs, dancing and documentaries from the real life of Indians in Chiapas, and even recipes for Indian food. More over there is a recent radio service so websites visitors can listen to the Zapatistas radio.

One of the examples on how Zapatistas use the Internet for popularising their issues, is the case of Commandant Eliza. In October 1995, the Mexican government has arrested a top leader of the Zapatistas, commandant Eliza, and other Zapatistas members for sedition and weapons charge, Immediately more than 20 websites of Zapatistas supporters called for a huge march all over the world, and called people everywhere to demonstrate in front of the Mexican embassies and consulates to call for the release of Elisa, people in different countries responded, especially in Spain, Italy, and the United States where thousands of people went to the Mexican embassies to ask Mexican officials to carry a message to the Mexican government to release Elisa and other Zapatistas leaders. In few days the file of the case has disappeared and Eliza was released.

### **Hactivism**

The idea of using the internet as a space for civil disobedience, or a space for hactivism came after the massacre of 1997, when a military group supported by the government killed about 45 indigenous people. One of the tools of the Zapatistas is EDT -electronic disturbance theatre-which is sponsored by Berkman centre in Harvard university in the USA. It was created by some of the Zapatistas supporters, to help them in their fight for their rights.

The function of the EDT is to launch virtual sit-ins, the idea behind the EDT is based on what is called floodnet. It is a kind of software which is downloaded on computers, and while running, it redownloads a certain URL, tens of times per minute, slowing down the site down, if many people participate in the sit in . According to Ricardo Dom, one of the finders of the EDT " it seems that in a time when almost all the space the United States has been privatised, and free speech zones have been reduced to cages topped with barbed wire, the internet can still serve as a common where people can gather together to create positive social change.

*The anonymous digital coalition*, one of the Zapatistas supporters groups in Italy, chooses every now and then some Mexican governmental websites and calls people to hack these sites. They publish on their site the URLs of the target sites, the times of the operation and the time zones, in the certain time, thousands of activists from everywhere try to download these websites using the floodnet, the repeated reloading of these target websites led to the blocking of them. One of the massive hacking actions by Zapatistas supporters took place on Sunday January 18th, 1998. The group used the e-mail system and WebPages to send messages to supporters of Zapatistas everywhere:

“ In solidarity, with the Zapatistas movement, we welcome all netsurfs with ideals of justice, freedom, solidarity, and liberty within their hearts, to a virtual sit in , on January 29, 1998 from 4.00 p.m. Greenwich mean time to 5.00 p.m., in the following five websites (symbols of Mexican neoliberalism) :

Bolsa Mexicana de Valores: <http://www.bmv.com.mx>

Grupo Financiero Bital: <http://www.bital.com.mx>

Grupo Financiero Bancomer: <http://www.bancomer.com.mx>

Banco de Mexico: <http://www.banxico.org.mx>

Banamex: <http://www.banamex.com>

Technical instructions : Connect with your browser to the upper mentioned websites, and push the button reload several time for an hour. ”

About 100, 000 people responded to the call according to the report published on the group’s website, which led to a whole blocking of the target websites, which showed the extent of support the Zapatistas has globally ,

The websites, which work on hacking in favour of Zapatistas, are, among many, floodnet. Com, unanimous digital group.com, thing.com and others. This enables them to hack many Mexican or neoliberal websites in short times. Among the hacking actions, which succeeded substantially, the sit-in June 18th, 1999, protest the massacre of Acteal where 45 civilians died. That time, the targets were the government websites themselves ( presidential website, ministry of defence, ministry of foreign affairs, and ministry of finance websites). About one million people participated to block these websites.

Finally, some comments about the case study should be mentioned :

Firstly, there is a lack of comprehensive statistics , especially about the native people and more

specifically about the Chiapas people. The statistics presented here were compiled from *instituto nacional de estadística geografía e informática*, which is a governmental institute. But in many topics statistics are not available, moreover we can't be sure that all the statistics presented by the institute are credible.

Secondly, on-line actions mentioned in previous sections are examples of many other actions, however, most Zapatistas' websites do not have archives for on-line actions, and this made it difficult for the researcher to find more information about other actions.

In close, although talking about the Zapatistas and the internet supposes that the Indian Zapatistas themselves uses the internet, the case study shows that regarding the socio-economic conditions of the group, and the political atmosphere, controlled by authoritarian political regime, which denies the political and the civil rights of its citizens, the group doesn't have access to the internet. However the group managed to have many supporters everywhere, especially in Europe and in the USA, who use the internet on behalf of the real Zapatistas, as a place of existence, for popularising their issues, for calling people for supporting the group and for hacking the governmental Mexican sites. In the next section, another case study, the Greenpeace and its relation with the Internet will be presented.

### **3-4 The Second Case Study: Greenpeace**

*"Greenpeace exists because this fragile earth deserves a voice, it needs solutions, it needs change, it needs actions, not empty words." ( Greenpeace fact sheet, 2004, 1).*

#### **3-4-1 History and Facts**

the Greenpeace is one of the movements appeared in the frame of the social movements of the 1960s (environmentalists, feminists, human rights...) their aims were to enhance freedoms, marginalized groups and protecting environment. however, later, they started to ask for more political role. some of these movements already turned into parties such as greens parties, while others prefer to work in the form of NGO or a social movement.

Jane Keys, one of the responsible of the Greenpeace website in the international office, Amsterdam, defines Greenpeace as follow: "Greenpeace is a multinational organisation with offices in 24 countries, it aims to draw attention to the environmental abuse via direct non violent action, science research, and political lobbying and it has used the internet as a communication tool since September 1994" ( Keys, 2003, 1 ).Greenpeace is now one of the most active environmentalists groups in the world its history goes back to the September 15th, in 1971, when



a group of Canadian-American activists took an old ship called " Phyllis Cormack", and went towards the USA nuclear testing zone in Alaska, to contest against the nuclear activities in the USA. They were arrested by the American coastguards, but this news was published in many newspapers in USA, putting the American government in a critical situation, and put pressure on it. After 4 months, the USA decided to cancel the series of nuclear testing ( Greenpeace fact sheet, 2004)

One year later, in 1972, a Canadian group sailed to the French nuclear testing zone at Moruroa Atoll in the South Pacific, but they were banned by a French ship in international waters. In 1973 the same group again tried to go to the French nuclear testing zone, but some French commandos entered the boat and beat the group in a savage way, seriously injuring them. One of the group members took some photos of this crime and infiltrated them to newspapers, which caused a global reaction towards the nuclear weapons testing. During the 1970s the movement launched many campaigns against the nuclear testing, which leading the London dumping convention which called for stopping the nuclear testing, and in 1993 it became a permanent ban.

From the middle of the 1970s, Greenpeace became a civil society group with an organisational level in Europe and in the USA, and in thirty years it managed to have offices in 24 developed and developing countries. From 1971 until now the journey of Greenpeace was not easy or smooth. Greenpeace met obstacles and violent reactions, the most violent in 1985, when the Greenpeace ship *Rainbow warrior* sailed to a French nuclear testing zone, near Newzeland, while sailing, a massive explosion shelled the ship. The investigations proved that the French government planted two bombs in the ship by a unit of commandos, The consequences were the damage and the sink of the ship, and the killing of one of the Greenpeace activists. This accident and others were one the real motivation behind the continuity and the success of the group. ( Greenpeace fact sheet, 2004).

From its beginning the group announced some values on which it has been based, those principles are:

**Independence :**

It refuses money from corporations or governments, making it independent of any pressures. individual donations are the main fund source of the group.

**Non violent direct action :**

The aim of Greenpeace has been to protect the earth from further pollution. To do so it has sometimes forced the industry and the government to follow standards, which guarantee lesser levels of pollution. Although it is a difficult task, Greenpeace uses non-violent and peaceful actions and strategies to create such pressures : protests, campaigns, e campaigns and so on. It is also explores alternative ways or options to be adopted by the industry. the group contacts scientists and researches centres to get consults, and gives these consults to the industry to be used instead of the destructive ways.

**Bearing witness :**

The group follows the Quaker strategy, trying to raise awareness among people and bring public opinion to participate in decision making.

**communication:**

One of its aims is to attract huge audiences and to mobilise people from everywhere to take action, They started out with only two journalists and a photographer! Now the group has equipped ships and many websites to carry its messages to millions of people, and also help the group to launch campaigns on subjects such as global warming, green house gases, anti- nuclear testing, cleaning seas, anti-mineral explosion, genetically modified organism campaigns...etc. (Greenpeace fact sheet,2004).

**3-4-2 Greenpeace and the Internet**

Although it has websites since 1994, its use of the internet goes back to 1988, when a Greenpeace activist "Chico Mendes" was killed in the rainforest by the Brazilian government, the activist's friends who were with him leaked these news to a civil society group in the USA using a computer network ( Epstein, J, 1994, cited in Keys, 2003 ). The group had its first website in 1994, and in May 1996 the number of visitors was of 36000 persons per week and it is supposed that this number is increasing. The next figure shows the increasing average of the visitors' number in the first 98 weeks of the Greenpeace WebPage. Figure 2



The site also has won many awards. however, according to Keys (2003), it is not clear if the huge numbers of visitors to a website or gaining prizes are success indicators. The website wasn't designed by media professionals, but by some hobbyists who were working in Greenpeace international and national offices. These young people were interested in computer and Internet technology, taught themselves how to design WebPages and put the information on it.

Greenpeace has established the cyber centre because it believes the increasing importance of this new media. For Keven Jardin, chief of this centre, the importance of working with the Internet is due to the fact that the Cyberactivism removes the frontiers between local and global, and makes politics available to the public. It is a tool to form a global front for defending environmental violations, and build a kind of community of activists on-line. In this community, people from about 170 countries and territories can share ideas and participate in actions to protect the environment. ( Jardin, 2004). According to Jane Keys, the Internet transfers more powers to the public, and this transferring of powers threatens the dominance of old media tools (radio, television, and newspapers), and that is why the Internet is now the main information and communication tool ( Keys, 2003). According to Jorean Gettemans the responsible for the Greenpeace WebPages in Belgium, the cyber activists are increasing tremendously due the fact that people want to help and to support the group, however not all of them have the money or the time to do that in the real life. moreover young people tend to be lazy and they want easy tasks, at the same time they like to use the Internet, by going to the Internet and do some clicks they help without losing anything.

Greenpeace uses the Internet in different ways: raising funds, popularising their issues, launching campaigns...etc, the group follows the way of launching campaigns. One of the first campaigns was against climate change and global warming. The team of the Greenpeace designed this e-campaign which came synchronous with the climate summit in Berlin, March 1995. it contained a central page with information on the climate change , reports and essays on this topic, some interactive quizzes. This campaign was a turn point in the Greenpeace history, for the first time people from different places and backgrounds could find what they wanted or what they needed: Information, news, reports, essays, questions and answers...etc. in a recent campaign for resisting nuclear weapons, August 2005, in the memory of attacking Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the second world war using the atomic bomb, it was clear that the group adopts more interactive strategies on its websites. there was a community forum that hosted an expert in the

nuclear weapons and it was possible for visitors to ask questions and to get answers immediately. moreover, there were educational movies and documentaries with the possibility of chatting with people about these materials. In the next part these points will be presented in details.

### **Empowering individuals to act**

In June 2000, activists from Greenpeace put a webcam at the end of a pipe for discharging the French nuclear waste under the water, this nuclear discharging was processing by the French agency for nuclear energy COGEMA, the aim of putting this camera was to show the world how France gets rid of its nuclear wastes. Greenpeace broadcasted this documentary directly from the webcam to a large



Danish Environment Minister Svend Auken,  
viewing Greenpeace's OSPAR webcam at the meeting in Copenhagen

screen in the meeting attended by European delegations in Copenhagen, Denmark, to discuss solutions for nuclear processing. At the same time the group broadcasted this documentary on the Greenpeace website. Greenpeace activists could send messages directly to the delegation members and about 2500 messages were sent putting COGEMA in a critical situation, especially with this live broadcasting of the nuclear discharging process. This made the Northwest Atlantic countries call France and Britain to end these kinds of process which destroy marine life.

In its campaign for climate change in 2000, the group investigated the fact that Coca-Cola was the main sponsor of Sydney Olympics, and immediately started a spotlight campaign against Coca-Cola, and its use of refrigerating gases *HFCs*, which may be one of the causes of global warming. The Greenpeace site made it possible for its visitors to send letters to the company. thousands of letters were sent and one month after the beginning of the campaign, Coca-Cola announced it stopped using these gases. For Brian Fitzgerald, director of the Greenpeace information technology department, this campaign put a pressure on Coca Cola company,

because these big companies care for their images in the eyes of consumers, thus Coca cola responded because it was facing a global campaign which, could have a bad impact on its good name ( Greenpeace report, 2004).

In the Internet campaign against the French nuclear testing, the Greenpeace site allowed people to fax President Chirac and to ask him to end nuclear testing. about 40 thousands of people used this active-fax making president Chirac' fax lines out of service. The presidential offices sent to the French telecom, to change the telephone and fax numbers, justifying that by "*electronic pollution from Greenpeace*"( Keys, 2003, 3). Greenpeace also used the site to collect signatures from people and express their refusal of these testings, about 40000 persons signed via the Internet. These signatures were sent to the French presidency.

To help people take more actions themselves, Greenpeace created in its website a software under the title: *Climate prediction, donate computer time*. The function of this software is to run many models and simulations on the global warming, trying to predict the future of the global warming, and climate change. Instead of buying equipments and computers for this experiment, the group decided to benefit from activists' computers! To participate in this activity, the activist downloads the software on his/her computer, and leaves it working (running simulations), after a while there will be a report made, which should be sent to the Greenpeace. this experiment is still very new (July, 2005), so there are no results or data showing if it working or not however the Greenpeace hopes, the participants will be satisfied.

After testing the Internet in many activities, it can be said that the internet is a useful tool in directing people to take real, strong actions and to express their opinions, to the policies and decisions makers. This is important in general for people all over the world, moreover it is more important in some countries like the UK, where Greenpeace surveys proved that people are willing to take action themselves, rather to wait for the big civil society groups, such as the Greenpeace to take them. This trend has also been perceived in other European countries, as well as in the USA. (Keys, 2004).

Gettemans thinks that some times the individuals actions oblige governments to change their behaviour, for example one of the massive cyber actions was the campaign against killing whales in Iceland, cyber activists were asked to e-mail the Icelandic government asking it to stop the whaling industry. about 100000 activists participated in this campaign, threatening the government they would not visit Iceland if the government did not stopped the whaling industry.

hotels, pubs, cafes and restaurants in Iceland started to put pressures on the government asking it to stop this industry which resulted in the end of a decision of the government to decrease the number of whales killed every year from 250 to 25 .

### **Internetworking and Transferring Experiences**

In 1999, Hemant Babu, one of Greenpeace Internet campaigners was sent to India. At that time there were only 3 million computers in India for a population of 1 billion! The first thing Babu thought was to establish a net cafe near a factory, which was accused by the population of producing poisonous gases. In 1984, a gas leak from this factory killed about 16000 persons and left about half million people with permanent health problems. By co-ordination with the mother office in Amsterdam, the Greenpeace experience was transferred to India. Many people who live in this region became members of the Internet cafe, and they started practising Cyberactivism. the first thing they did was to send messages to the factory to stop producing these gases. these messages were not only sent to the factory, but also to the Indian government. When the number of messages reached 3000, the factory shut its mail centre and when it seemed that the factory didn't respond to the campaign, the media published and broadcasted the full story.

According to Babu," this form of Cyberactivism empowers people with modern information technology, to fight against environmental criminals, given their socio economy conditions it is too much to expect that they will come to the technology. So our job is to take technology to them. By doing this we ensure that information technology doesn't remain an elitist concept but reaches the most oppressed strata of the society which is also often the worst affected by environmental degradation ". Broadcasting this story by the media put more pressure on the factory and as more people knew about its dangerous activities the campaign continued, but this time the activists sent messages to the World Bank to stop funding such factories. the surprise was that the World Bank accepted these demands, especially after a meeting with the Greenpeace staff in the New Delhi.

### **Internet and Direct Action**

Greenpeace also uses the Internet to mobilise people and activists in direct actions. on the Greenpeace Austria, website and under the title "Gene detektive" or Gene detective-in English- the site asked citizens to write reports on genetic modified organism food GMO, while doing their shopping. The idea was to make individuals work as observers in the supermarkets and to

write their remarks on which supermarkets sell this kind of food, which kinds of food were genetically modified, the prices of this food and if clients rush upon it...etc. Greenpeace received many reports and information from the Austrian citizens and these reports were used as a database for the group's campaign against GMO. (Greenpeace report, 2003).

In its campaign for the protection of the South American forests, Colombian customers were asked to visit the forests and to write reports about the companies who buy the wood from the forests. This information was also used in the group campaign against the forest exploitation. This campaign succeeded to a wide extent and the British Colombian government passed a law for protecting the forests.

On October 25, 2005, and during the world summit in India, where the Kyoto protocol and climate change issue were discussed, Greenpeace declared on its international and on Luxembourg websites, that Luxembourg was an ESSO free zone and called activists to gather in ESSO fuel stations there. About 600 Greenpeace activists from 31 countries came to Luxembourg to protest against ESSO, the world's biggest fuel company. The 28 ESSO' fuel stations in Luxembourg were surrounded by activists, who protested peacefully, but at the same time prevented the workers in these stations selling the oil for the whole day.

another tool for promoting direct action is the weblog, which was used by Greenpeace activists in South Korea. The activists camped in front of one of the factories producing dangerous gases, they wrote real life diaries and took minute- by- minute photos, and sent these materials to the Greenpeace. The movement held a virtual market where it showed these materials. That way the whole world could follow what was happening in the factory. Greenpeace asked the website visitors to send letters to the Korean government asking it to ban this factory, 52000 letters were sent in one week and in one month the factory was banned.

All these direct actions in streets, were created on the internet, prove, for Fitzgerald that the technology of the internet will play more and more important role as an ally in helping movements and social groups to achieve their aims. And it helped the Greenpeace to convince individuals to take their own actions and whatever these actions they can fight against huge destructive forces. (Greenpeace report, 2004, 4).

### **Funds**

The group claims it does not accept money from governments, or corporations, as this influences its independence. Its only sources of funds are individual donations. In all

Greenpeace websites there are calls for donating or promoting the group on line by paying 10 \$ or more every month. The donator only gives her/his account number and the country in which he/she lives, and the group automatically gets this amount every month. Gettimans sees that the group couldn't attract many supporters through the Internet. that's why the group thinks of new ways for attracting more donators, for example on the international website they put a Greenpeace ring tone and any one could download it for 5 Euros, this campaign succeeded but the donations were for one time and now the group searches for ways to attract permanent supporters

### **Listservers**

The group uses the listservers for communicating with certain groups, like journalists. However this service is not used by the group as much as it could be used, and it hopes to target more and more groups like politicians, decision makers, university students...etc.(Keys, 2003).

Unlike Zapatistas, the Greenpeace has a good context for using the internet, the group enjoys good communication infrastructure, at least in 15 European countries, professional people in using and in designing WebPages, and enough money necessary for using this technology, which is reflected clearly in the websites of the group. The case study shows that the group uses the Internet in empowering individual act, internetworking, calling for direct actions, raising funds, and communicating certain groups through listservers.

This chapter started by a methodological part, following by two case studies: The Zapatistas and the Greenpeace, an overview on the histories and environments of both groups were presented, then sights on how both groups use the internet, to achieve their aims. So what are the findings of the research and the final results? In the next chapter, these findings will be presented.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Conclusion**

The aim of the study was to explore the concept of e-democracy, especially in its relation with the civil society groups, if the technology can be used, to enhance the democratic process and to empower new actors in the political arena. Two cases were presented, the Zapatistas, is local, indigenous movement, in Mexico, and the Greenpeace, is a global environmentalist one. concerning their relations with the Internet, in principal, both of the groups use the Internet extensively, and regard it as an important *thing* for achieving their goals. however, this needs more analysis for understanding the different forms of



relation between the democracy and the technology. In this chapter, the findings of the research and , final conclusions will be presented, and new suggestions for other researches, will be discussed. Thus, section 4-1 presents the empirical findings of the study. Section 4-2 presents the theoretical findings and in section 4-3 new suggestions for other researches will be discussed.

#### **4-1 Empirical findings of the study**

in this part the findings of the case studies will be presented in three points: 4-1-1 the Zapatistas: the internet as a space of war, 4-1-2 Greenpeace: the internet as a tool and section 4-1-3 removing borders between local and global.

##### **4-1-1 The Zapatistas: The Internet as a Space of War**

*we are all the network, all of us, those who talk and those who listen.*

##### *Marcos*

the case study of the Zapatistas shows that the problem of Zapatistas is partly *the existence*. this problem is attached from one side to the nature of the Mexican political regime based on one party and doesn't permit any kind of freedom of expression or opposition. and from another side to the historical position of the indigenous people as a marginalized group in the Mexican society. the internet helped the group partly to exist, to be one of the main players in politics, to have a voice and to be heard. the indigenous are now one of the political actors in the Mexican society and they are called by the Mexican government to negotiate and to go for talks, to search appropriate solution for their problems.

to understand the struggle of the Zapatistas, we should differentiate between two worlds, or two levels of the conflict, the first level is in the internet, the virtual conflict, where the supporters of Zapatistas launch a war against not only the Mexican government but also against the neoliberalism institutions in Mexico and in the USA, what we can call *war by agents*. according to Marcos those who think the traditional war is the only form of wars are very narrow minded, because there are now many different forms, in a hint to the netwar. for zapatistas the internet is simply a metaphor of the network of supporters they could build to help them in their fight and a space where can practice the freedoms they are deprived of in the real life because of the nature of the Mexican political system. this explain why the case of Zapatistas brought to the academic agenda two concepts: the netwar and the electronic civil disobedience, the first, *the*

*netwar* was recorded by Rand corporation one of the American military think tank, and it refers to "different types of wars launched by guerrilla movements on the cyberspace to achieve certain aims". While the second is coined by Critical Art Ensemble in a book under the same title, published 1996, and refers to the sit-ins or the sit-downs on line which are attached to the Zapatistas and their supporters EDT or the anonymous digital coalition.

The other level of the struggle is the fight in the jungles of Chiapas, not only the military fighting -Zapatistas do not use their arms- but also the diplomatic war. in the first of January 1994, the Zapatistas declared the war against the Mexican government, the movement didn't announce the war before they armed themselves. For David Gabriel who lived for a while in Chiapas most of Zapatistas are armed and they say that their real war is on that land (the land of Chiapas) and for getting land "they are real figures with real guns and fight for real aims, and it is wrong to limit all this in the netwar".

from the first day of the conflict, as soon as the Zapatistas announced the declaration of war, the Mexican government sent 12000 armed troops, which forced the members of Zapatistas to withdraw to the jungles. since then the Zapatistas have known that their real war should be supported by a netwar, this war helped them to achieve an aim, which is not announced: getting a global support which put a pressure on the Mexican government. Mexico considered itself always as a model for Latin American countries as a developed country. such kind of Zapatistas fight in Mexico and the facts published about Indians, made Mexico appears as a dictator country, and obliged it to call the EZLN for peaceful talks and for dialogues.

#### **4-1-2 The Greenpeace: The Internet as a Tool**

As for the Greenpeace, which exists and functions in different context, the Internet conceived by the group as an advanced media tool for popularisation and communication. from the history of the group, we can realise that the internet was not a strategic choice, means that the group has appeared and achieved successes before using the internet. so the internet was not one of the group's stakes from the beginning. the political system where the group has appeared and worked permits an extent of basic freedoms which makes the group able to take real off line actions. thus the group does not need the internet as a parallel virtual space, but only as a tool. When asked about the problems Greenpeace faces in using the internet, Gettemans says that Spam, and viruses are the most dangerous problems, because they may destroy the cyber system, and it is clear that these problems are attached to the technical aspects of the internet.

the internet in the case of the Greenpeace helped the group to present itself as a real actor in the international arena and helped it to have more political role. for example when four Greenpeace activists were arrested in Turkey, the group launched a huge cyber campaign asking the Turkish government to release them. the Turkish government did and when asked about the reasons made it release these activists the judge responsible for the case mentioned the cyber international pressures as one of the main reasons.

#### **4-1-3 Removing Borders Between Local and Global**

it is evident that the internet helps in removing the borders between what is local and what is global. the Zapatistas and Greenpeace present us clear models of this idea, however there is a difference between the two cases. while the Zapatistas is a local group tries to present a global model, the Greenpeace is a global one gets part of its legitimacy from working in local societies.

Although the Zapatistas, is initially a very local group, as its members are the Indian inhabitants of jungles in Chiapas, this description was valid till the first of January 1994, after this date, it is difficult to say it is local any more; the net of supporters the group managed to build, made it a global one, at the same time the Zapatistas present themselves, to their supporters, as fighters against neoliberalism, which imposed by international institutions, such as the world bank and the IMF, which threatens different cultures all over the world. In 1996, the Zapatistas held the first intercontinental encounter for humanity and against neoliberalism in the jungles of Chiapas the Zapatistas popularised this event mainly by the internet, about 3000 persons from about 40 countries attended the event for showing their support for the Zapatistas, the different colours, races, languages of the people who gathered in Chiapas that time confirmed the transformation of the group from the local to the global level.

For the Greenpeace, the nature of the aim of the group, makes it easy for removing borders between local and global, as protecting the environment is a local and global demand, the group which is mainly a global one, cares the local cultures in the countries where it works. The Greenpeace doesn't only pay attention to the global issues, such as the global warming or nuclear testing, but it has websites for about 10 non-European, countries among them the Greenpeace websites in Brazil, India, Lebanon and Turkey, of the 24 websites of the Greenpeace, In those websites the movements raises local issues like protecting forests in Latin America, and whales in Asian countries.,

This brings to our minds the term glocalization, refers to the interaction between the

global culture, created and enhanced by the phenomenon of globalisation, and the local cultures and identities. For Robertson (1995 cited in Bradley 2005), the globalisation means that the local contains much that is global, while the global increasingly penetrated and reshaped by many locals. Although the globalisation has in general negative effects on local communities, and local cultures which, are threatened to be melt in the global culture, this globalisation itself brought to the local cultures many tools to be used in their searching for better life, and in many cases those tools are used against the globalisation itself.

#### **4-2 Theoretical Findings**

this part the study presents how the empirical findings of the study reflect on the theoretical part. although the main question of the study is about the internet and the empowerment of the civil society groups, the civil society is not an aim itself, it is being studied as mentioned in the introduction as one of the basis of the democracy. thus the aim is to see how the democratic process can be enhanced. the first chapter ended with problems of the civil society, centred on the problem of threatening the existence of the public space. in the second chapter technology was presented as one of the solution adopted to face this problem, it means to help in creating a public space for the civil society groups. the internet in both cases helped in creating or enhancing the public space. however, the existence of the public space is not enough for having real democracy.

the case studies show that threatening the existence of the public space is not the only problem. another problem is the problem of *recognition*, for Pourtois, to understand this problem, we need to realise that in all societies there is a kind of conflict between the social institutions represented by the public sphere and the political structure of decision making. this conflict results from the structural problem of the representative democracy, which does not take the public opinion, formed in the public space into account when taking decisions. thus the public opinion is not *recognised* by the policy makers., it means it is not taken into account in the decision making process

the Zapatistas had both problems, the existence and the recognition, and they used the internet partly to have a place of existence and partly to be recognised by the Mexican regime. while the Greenpeace which does not have the problem of existence, used it to be recognised by either governments or multi national corporation responsible for destroying the environment. both groups achieved success, however, for analysts such as (Pourtois, Ellul) the real solution for either the problem of existence or recognition is to change the political structures. it means to

replace the representative model of democracy by the deliberative one. this model guarantees real involvement of the public sphere in the decision making process, as for them the real democratic process depends on arguments, discussions and deliberations opened to all points of views of different groups, and not controlled only by the representatives' opinions.

in such model, tools of technology- Internet- may be used to facilitate the process of exchanging opinions, but it does not present a solution of democracy. by definition technology is exclusive, it means some groups and sectors of the society have it and use it while some classes and groups do not. those groups are deprived from participating in the democratic process, which destroys democracy. so it is dangerous to use technology as a main or only tool for solving problems of democracy, without paying attention to the real structural problems.

#### **4-3 Suggestions for Further Research**

in close beside the answers the research got, there are also other questions may be considered suggestions for next researches, those issues are the governance of the internet by the civil society and another issue is the legitimacy of the hactivism activities practised by the civil society.

the first issue, is the managing the internet by the civil society, as presented in the thesis the has become an important tool for civil society groups, however the civil society does not have any control on it. the Internet is controlled by a governmental American organisation called ICANN, and there are increasing demands for giving a role to global civil society groups for governing the Internet. talking about such role has begun in 2003 specifically in the information summit in Geneva from 10-12 December 2003 sponsored by the UN. the aims of this summit were: 1- to deepen the concept of the information society in all countries especially the developing. 2- to get commitments from developed countries to help the developing ones in narrowing the digital divide. 3- seeking a role for the civil society to participate in managing the Internet and to put an end for the USA control on it . the summit failed to achieve any of these aims, however the civil society groups had a very strong situation in the summit and appeared as one front in their defence for a role in managing the internet, facing and the USA government, which led to charging a committee known as the WGIG working group on internet governance, to study this matter and to prepare a paper for presenting it in the next information summit in Tunisia November, 2005. this matter raises again the issue what will be the relation between the civil society and the states concerning the functions and the roles, what will be the relation

between the internet and the societies under the control of the civil society and what are the effects on this development on the digital divide.

another issue is the legitimacy of the hacktivism by the civil society, as we have seen in the Zapatistas case, the group uses the hacktivism as a kind of resistance. the hacktivists are stereotyped as either cyberterrorists or fame seekers (still, 2000), however for Still it seems that this streoypes are wrong and that there are different reasons behind hackers' activities. for example when it had contacts with the Chinese government for establishing a branch of the company there

the open source community announced Microsoft one of the human rights violators, and soon started to produce alternatives for Microsoft software making them available for all. for their increasing role in the political arena, the aims of hackers, their backgrounds, motivations, political cultures, tools and strategies should be studied in details.

### **Appendix 1** **interview script**

- presentation
- the aim of the study
- confirmation that the information got by the researcher is only for scientific aims.

1- what is your position in the group, and since when are you a member and how did you knows about the group?

2- what are the aims of the group? are there any changes in the aims after using the Internet?

3- are they the same since the establishing of the group or there are changes?

- 4- in what (how) do you use it?
- 5- comparing to the period before using it, what are the effects of the Internet use on
  - a- the organisational level of the group?
  - b- the membership of the group?
  - c- the spread of the group?
  - d- the fund sources?
  - e- the co-ordination between the mother group and its branches?
  - f- the communication among the group's members and between the group and the society?
  - g- the functions and the roles of the group?
- 6- how is Internet used developed ?
- 7- how does the group conceive the Internet?
- 8- are there times the group uses the Internet more than other times? when? why?
- 9- are there any campaigns or activities, which started on-line and turned off-line?
- 10-how does the group benefits from the e- government projects?
- 11-how does the Internet differ from the other telecommunication tools?
- 12- what are the problems that face the group in using the Internet?
- 13- can we say that the Internet is a public sphere ?
- 14- how do you think the group can face these problems? is there any role of the state in solving these problems?
- 15- in general, do you think that the Internet helped the group to achieve its aims more effectively?

appendix 2:

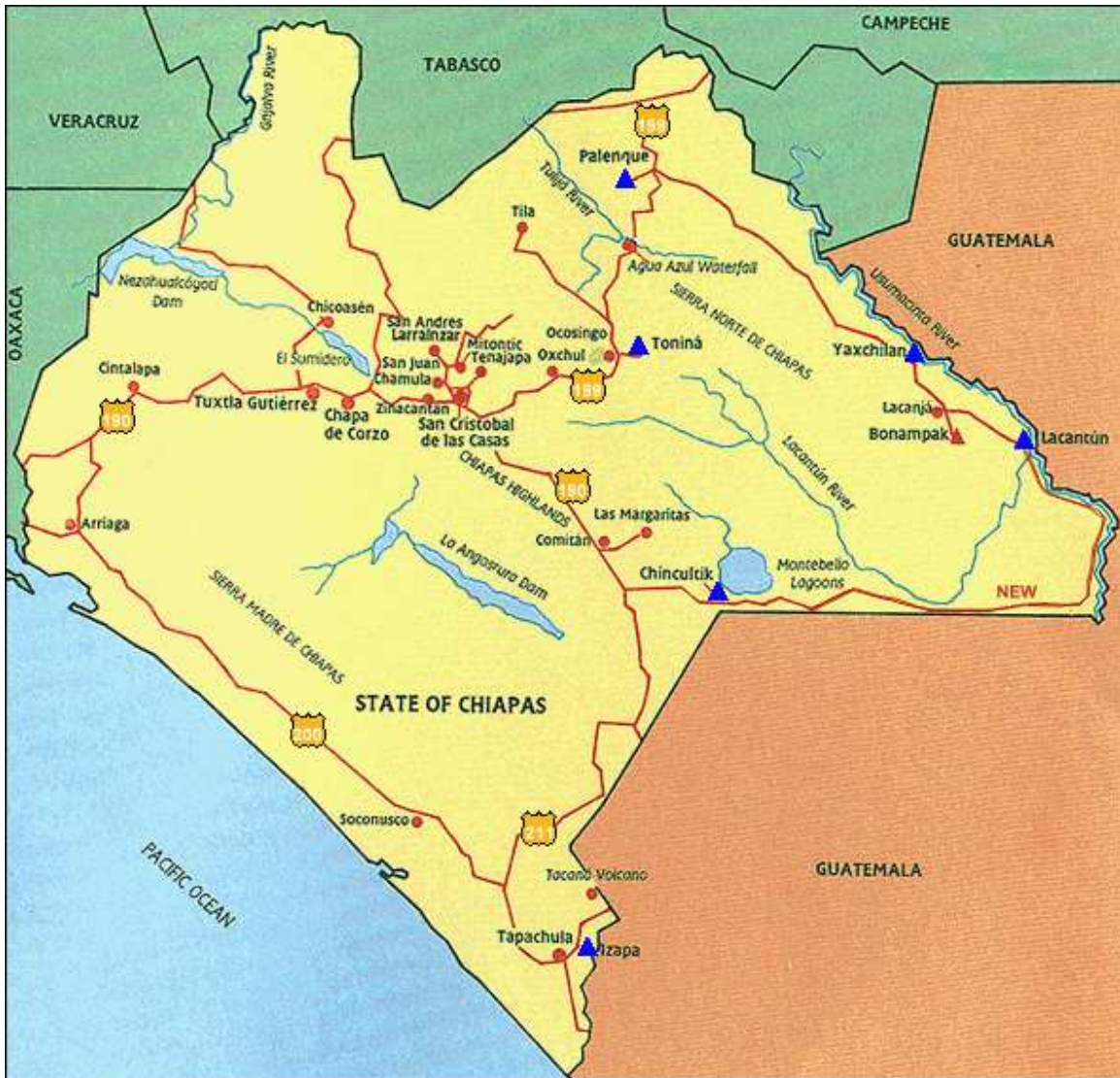
facts about Mexico

Map 1: Mexico





**Map 2: Chiapas**



**Statistics on the social and economic states of indigenous in Mexico**

indicator	indigenous	Non-indige
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		nous
<b><u>Percentage of poor (less than two dollars per day)</u></b>	<b>89.7%</b>	<b>48.7%</b>
<b><u>Percentage of extreme poor (less than one dollar per day)</u></b>	<b>68.5%</b>	<b>14.9%</b>
<b>Average of monthly income (MX pesos)</b>	<b>1.020</b>	<b>3.894</b>
<b>Percentage of people enjoy health insurance</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>43.0%</b>
<b>Percentage of stunted children</b>	<b>44.1%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>
<b>Years of schooling</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>7.9</b>