

Networked Identifications: Constructing Identities and Ideologies in the 2009 Iranian
Election Protests

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Abstract

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This dissertation explores the strategic formation of counter-hegemonic discourses during social movements and their rescaling through mobile social media across networked, translocal public spheres. Through an interdisciplinary approach drawing on critical discourse analysis, communication studies, and social movement theory, this qualitative research focuses on the discursive constructions of identities and ideologies during the 2009 Iranian presidential election protests. Examining activists' discursive tactics in a corpus of Twitter tweets, Flickr photo uploads, and YouTube videos and comparing them with the interdiscursive strategies of U.S. legacy news media texts, I argue that Iranian activists' use of social media and English add to the micronarratives of vernacular globalization while also calling into question Western master narratives about Iran. I also argue that activists' reflexive discursive practices and symbolic recontextualizations help form transnational sociomental bonds that strengthen collective actors' sense of solidarity, though at the risk of informationalizing their borrowed

discourses and constraining their political stance-taking to the level of affect. While the use of new media in recent social movements has attracted scholarly attention in various fields, much of it has been in quantitative and network-mapping studies. This project seeks, therefore, to address the relative lack of qualitative, microlevel perspectives on new media discursive practices in social movements while also engaging arguments on the discursive relationships between cyber-rhetoric and democracy promotion as well as present understandings of how new media discourses shape globalized vernaculars of English.

For Marija and Lukas, always

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Chapter One

Opening: Protesting the Results

In the days immediately following the June 12, 2009 Iranian presidential election, in which the incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won by a controversial landslide victory over the reformist candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi, protests erupted in Tehran over alleged vote-rigging and election irregularities.¹ Though initially peaceful, these demonstrations quickly turned violent as clashes broke out between police and protesters, leading to numerous arrests and casualties. With the protests intensifying, the headlines on reports coming out of Tehran from major U.S. or global news outlets might have read: *Tehran Erupts in Protest* or *Shades of '79 as Demonstrators Challenge Contested Election Results*. Accompanying those reports would have been global press agency images of amassing demonstrators clad in green, the traditional color of Islam, and their clashes in the streets with police and Basij paramilitary forces. Others might have captured the bloodied faces of protesters, some of them young women in headscarves, perhaps a few burning Basiji trucks. Global media outlets' televised news broadcasts and online reports on the Iranian protests might have featured satellite video framed by standup reports from on-the-scene reporters soundtracked with protesters' chants and backdropped crowds amassing in Tehran's Azadi (Freedom) Square.

But in the early stages of the 2009 Iranian presidential election protests, which would come to captivate a global audience and arguably presage the Arab Spring of 2011, those headlines, images, and videos did not appear. The Iranian government had

¹ Spellings of Iranian names sometimes vary due to differing transliterations from Farsi. For the purposes of consistency and clarity, the single spelling *Mousavi* will be used throughout even when it differs from the original secondary source.

banned foreign media and instituted a communication blockade in the attempt to prevent news and images of the protests from being disseminated outside the country. But the news did spread to a global audience, and the first leads and reports to escape Iran on those days in early June 2009 looked something more like this:

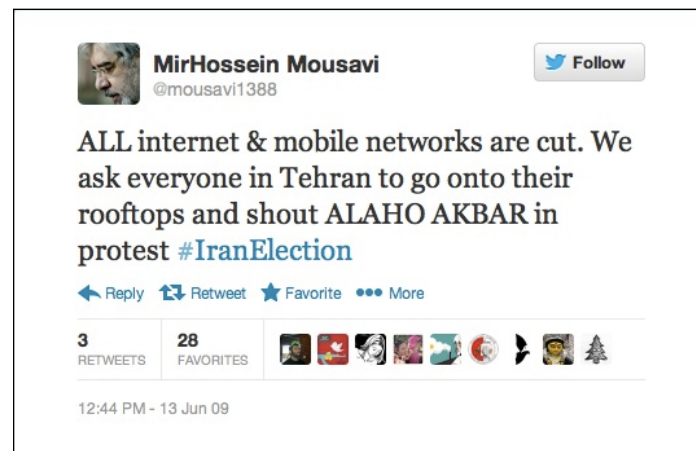


Figure 1.1. Tweet from 2009 Iranian election protests

or this:



Figure 1.2. Iranian activist's tweet from the 2009 protests

Of course, these are not headlines from the *New York Times* or *Washington Post*, but *tweets*, or posts to the microblogging service Twitter. Nowadays, with a cultural status rivaling that of the social networking service Facebook and its ubiquitous embedding in

legacy online news media, there is little need to explain in detail what Twitter is.²

Simply, Twitter is a microblogging service that allows users to write and share with followers posts of 140 characters or less. This brevity has made Twitter especially suited to use on mobile devices, such as smartphones, whose availability and popularity, at least for the global elite, have paralleled Twitter's spectacular growth.³ Since being launched for public use, Twitter has grown from approximately 1,000 accounts in 2006 to more than 550,000,000 in 2013.⁴ Twitter's extreme brevity and links to mobilities have also meant that users' tweets are often little more than a regularly-updated commentary on their everyday lives and on-the-go routines. This focus, some might say, on the fatuous and banal caused early critics of Twitter to dismiss its value as an application (Arceneaux & Schmitz Weiss, 2010). Even as Twitter began to grow in popularity through its adoption by young U.S. entertainment celebrities and professional athletes, many, including the mainstream legacy press, continued to view it skeptically, with some critics even suggesting that, as with text messaging, its constraints were negatively influencing the trajectory of language change and, like other

² By *legacy media* I refer to traditional means of communication, such as newspapers, television, and radio, which existed before the rise of the internet and internet-based *new media*. I prefer this term to others in the literature, such as *traditional* or *old media*, which, in my view, connote a dichotomy that fails to capture the crucial ways those mediums have transformed since the advent of new media. For consistency, I have used *legacy media* even when, in the literature, non-preferred terms have been used.

³ By *global elite* I simply mean here, and elsewhere, those social agents, regardless of their country of residence, with the socioeconomic resources to maintain a status above the social divide between rich and poor. I also use this term to link it to what Norris (2001) and others have referred to as the digital divide that tends to largely correspond with socioeconomic divisions. I prefer this term to past constructions of such divides, such as first- and third-world or industrialized or non-industrialized nations, due to their connotations of hierarchy and negation and their rooting in a sociological perspective based on the primacy of the nation-state. Such perspectives arguably fail to capture the complexities with which the flows of resources and deterritorialization connected with and intrinsic in the processes of globalization have largely obviated distinctions based on nation-states (Albrow, 1997).

⁴ Source: <http://www.statisticbrain.com/twitter-statistics/>

forms of new media, harmful to young people's communicative practices (Thurlow, 2006).

By the time of the 2009 Iranian presidential election protests, however, Twitter had not only continued to grow meteorically, but had also begun to shed some of these negative cultural perceptions, surpassing what Grewal (2008) has called the *threshold of visibility*, or the point when a network grows large enough to appeal to what had been non-users. As many journalists began recognizing the advantages of microblogging's instantaneous updates through mobile phones, the adoption and use of Twitter by legacy media reporters helped reshape news gathering and distribution. Along with various other social media services, it also started playing a notable role in political elections, such as the 2008 U.S. presidential contest, in which, on election night, before appearing on national television, Obama famously announced victory on Twitter to the hundreds of thousands of followers he had acquired during his campaign.⁵

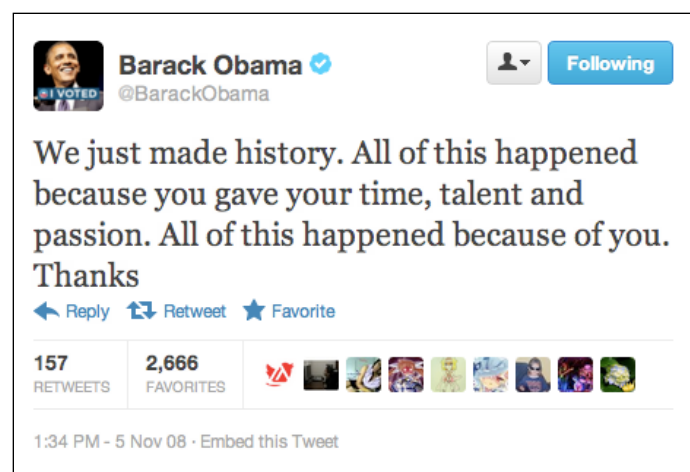


Figure 1.3. President Obama's 2008 victory tweet

⁵ It has been said that then President-elect Obama's historic tweet prompted, in part, the Library of Congress to acquire, in 2010, Twitter's sizable archives, which not only further raised Twitter's cultural status, but also suggested users' tweets were a rich source of social and linguistic research.

And perhaps presaging Iranian activists' use of Twitter during the June 2009 presidential election protests, Twitter had become a critical tool for communication and organization during political protests, including the civil unrest that gripped Moldova in April 2009 (Miller, 2010; Morozov, 2011).

Twitter, though, was not the only social media service that activists and social movement participants started using tactically to coordinate and document collective actions. Photo- and video-sharing services, such as Flickr and YouTube, were also used to disseminate images and video clips, increasingly taken with mobile phone cameras and shared through mobile applications. In Iran, with foreign journalists banned, communications blockaded, and state media coverage censored during the 2009 protests, activists' and witnesses' cellphone photo and video captures, like their first-hand accounts posted to Twitter, became many of the first images of the protest seen by a global audience, such as this photograph uploaded to Flickr:

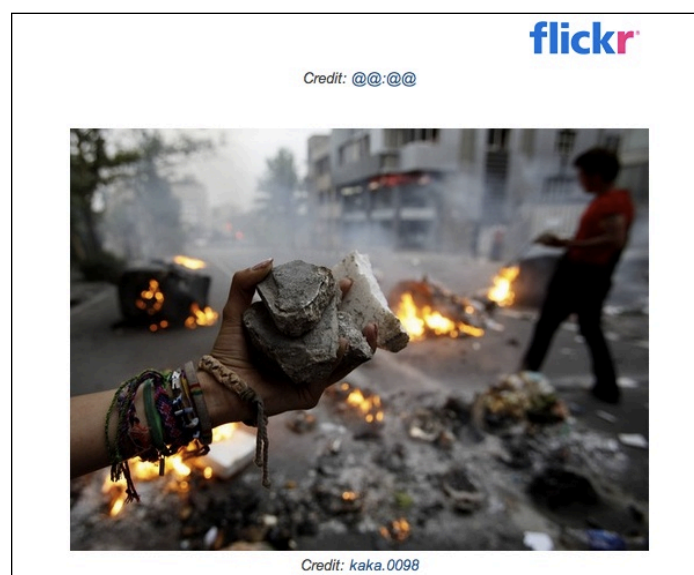


Figure 1.4. Photo of 2009 Iranian protests shared in Flickr

or this video capture uploaded to YouTube:



Figure 1.5. Cellphone video capture uploaded to YouTube

Theoretical Contexts

If these discursive practices demonstrate the important role of mobile technologies in facilitating citizen journalism, they also highlight the ubiquity, centrality, and linguistic character of the internet and information and communication technologies (ICTs) in contemporary society, although predominantly for the global elite (Crack, 2008; Norris, 2001). In particular, they demonstrate what Caron and Caronia (2007) have identified as the mobile turn in communication that has brought about new discursive practices that shape the everyday production of culture. With language infused in this complex and mobile fabric of relations (Urry, 2010), internet-based mobile communications, particularly social media, have helped further liberate users from many of the temporal and spatial constraints that govern their lives (Giddens, 1991). Across global networks, transcultural flows of images and information cross borders nearly instantaneously, bringing distant places in contact and helping form *sociomental* bonds and *translocal* loyalties across nation-state borders (Chayko, 2002). In these global

processes, social relations become *disembedded*, or lifted out, from their contexts and restructured across spans of time-space, producing a *rescaling* of social activity that can work to enact forms of identity in discourse (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Fairclough, 2006; Giddens, 1990). The resulting *detrterritorialization* can also decouple community from place, removing the primacy of locality in sociocultural meaning and allowing, through collective imagination, social life to be a site for multiple, coexisting worlds (Albrow, 1997; Appadurai, 1996). As a dialectical phenomenon, however, this interlacing of social relations at a distance with local contexts also allows for the interpenetration of contexts (Robertson, 1995), novel forms of localization and global identification (Pennycook, 2007), and the mobility of sociolinguistic resources of indexical distinction across different scale-levels (Blommaert, 2010).

But global technologies, despite the capacity to restructure social links and events and reformulate possible meanings, should not be viewed through the lenses of technological determinism at the expense of other processes (Chadwick, 2006; Hopper, 2007). As Castells (2009) has explained, “network technology and networking organization are only means to enact the trends inscribed in social structure” (p. 24). Instead, to examine the effect of instantaneous communicability over space on language practices, we should draw our attention not to networks and ICTs, but to the novel and diverse spaces which have opened up within global networks (Harvey, 1989). Across these sets of interconnected *nodes*, in which information, more than capital or labor, is the most important source of value, *identifications* become social actors’ primary source of meaning (Castells, 1996; 2000). Moreover, communication in a network society is a source of both power and *counterpower* (Castells, 2009). In the

view that power is not absolute but negotiated, the struggle for power today, according to Castells (2010), is ultimately the battle to control minds, the struggle over the way people think. This means, as has been widely argued through the critical studies of legacy news media discourse, that both national and global media outlets have a hegemonic power to confirm ideologies. But when used tactically, ICTs and social media can grant social actors a form of counterpower, a capacity to challenge dominant ideologies and resist institutional control over the flow of information (Castells, 2009; Renzi, 2008). This notion is crucial to my research and is one which I explore, along with other theoretical concerns, in more depth in chapters two and three.

Literature Review

The complex, multifarious, and intrinsic connections between language and the processes of globalization have been well established in recent sociological and sociolinguistic research (Block and Cameron, 2002; Blommaert, 2010; Giddens, 1990; Tomlinson, 1999). So, too, has been the analysis of legacy news media discourse, including its roles in the construction of ideologies (Fowler, 1979, 1991), the establishing of sociopolitical agendas (Fairclough, 1995), the production of cultural identifications (Hall, 1996), the geopolitics of representations (Mody, 2010), and the global cultural flows disseminated through ICTs (Appadurai, 1996; Castells, 2000). Also well-established is the fundamental role that ICTs have played in the development of a network society that, according to Castells (1996), “represents a qualitative change in the human experience” (p. 477). With language at the core of human experience, social researchers have widely considered discourse in relation to a society of open networks. Until recently, however, this was often at macro- and institutional levels, including the

role of ICTs in social movements and online political identifications (Castells, 2000, 2007; Crack, 2008). But as Hopper (2007) and others have claimed, attending only to macrolevel contexts is insufficient to understand how these processes shape culture and identities. Featherstone (1995), for instance, has argued that, in order to understand the effects of globalizations's cultural dimensions, we must pay critical attention not only to institutional discursive practices, but also to the informal spaces that exist between modes of organization and the interstices that marginalized communities often inhabit and communicate within and across. Because, as Bhabha (2004) has claimed, this *interstitial* perspective can be useful when examining identity formations, I have drawn on it when considering activists' identifications within the lattice of transnational public spheres and overlapping social movement frames linked to the 2009 Iranian protests.

In addition, globalization theories of varying perspectives and political commitments tend to account for the relationship between current networks of global interconnectedness across various scales and the current global *lingua franca*, English, as well as the role of ICTs in establishing that connection (Blommaert, 2010; Castells, 2009; Pennycook, 2007). Drawing from these theories is an established body of linguistic research on the more specific relationships between language and the internet. In outlining the conditions that help make English a global language, Crystal (2001, 2003) has described the relationship between language change and spread, including that of English and the internet while Atton (2004) has attended to the everyday practices that construct the internet and its relations to the world. In researching the evolution of internet genres, Bauman (1999) has shown how new online

writing environments demand novel literacies from readers, which, in turn, affect how writers engage in social practices. Boardman (2005) has examined the language of websites through media and communication frameworks to better understand the technological and cultural factors impacting web-based discourse.

Research has shown, however, that this relationship is multidirectional. As Rowe and Wyss (2009) have contended, the relatively recent proliferation of new media has precipitated a rising interest in studying the effects of *technological mediation* on language and on language change. They have noted in particular that media, as catalysts for social action, offer rich opportunities for observing synchronic and diachronic language change, but that research frameworks and coverage in the literature tend to be outstripped by the rapid emergence, innovation, and adaption of new social media forms. Conversely, Baron (2008) has shown, through research on the affordances and linguistics of electronically-mediated forms of communication such as email and instant messaging, that users often transfer established discursive practices and communicative repertoires to novel communicative environments. Thurlow (2006) and Thurlow and Bell (2009) have studied the *metadiscursive* constructions of new media discourse in legacy media as part of the so-called *technologization* of communication. Manovich (2001, 2009) has also examined the language of new media, widening the spectrum of text analysis to include visual and media cultures while questioning what the shift from media to social media means for the relationship between web use and language. In particular, he has considered that shift as both a cultural semiotic and a symbolic token used to initiate or maintain conversation and whether the meaning of social media content, or the 'news' posted there by users, is

less significant than the social act itself. For similar reasons, Brooke (2009) has argued that critical attention should not only be paid to content or textual analysis, but to the interfaces where such conversations occur. Hassan and Thomas (2006) have shown that critical political and social issues, such as the political consequences of new communication technologies and the changing experience of time and space, can be engaged through the examination of new media due to their complex relationships with contemporary culture.

With the rise of new media has been a growing established body of research on the discourse of such new media forms as weblogs, wikis, and text messages (Davis, 2005, 2009; Myer, 2010; Thurlow, 2006). As one of the early forms of social media, weblogs, or blogs, have received considerable attention from linguists. Gurak and Antonijevic (2008), for example, have shown how blogs can serve as a lens to observe how users' discursive practices transform the traditional cultural norms that mediate between the public and the private spheres. Blog research has also been focused toward the argumentation patterns and styles in blog conversations (de Moor & Efimova, 2004), the relationships between bloggers' gender, and language/genre variations and the genre hybridity of blogs (Herring, Scheidt, Bonus & Wright, 2004). Other prominent areas of research on blogs attend to their appropriation by legacy media outlets (Baron, 2008), the role of blogs as archives and new forms of journalism (Rodzvilla, 2002), the use of blogs in politics (Davis) and the blogosphere as an imagined community (Lampa, 2004).

The widening use of prominent social media services such as Facebook in political campaigns and social movements has also attracted linguists' attention. Lim

(2012) has shown, through research on the use of Facebook and other social media during the 2011 Tahrir Square uprising in Egypt, how activists used social media's affordances to expand their social networks, globalize their resources, and negotiate among competing groups through issue framing and the dissemination of symbolic resources. Similarly, Tufekci and Wilson (2012) have argued, based on their study of social media use during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, that online activism through Facebook, Twitter, and other social media services can lead to increased offline participation in social movements.

With Twitter's exponential growth and broader social application has come further research into microblogging linguistic practices. Marwick and Boyd (2010) have studied how Twitter users navigate 'imagined audiences' and the collapsing of the multiple layers of context in face-to-face conversation to single contexts in social media interaction. Arceneaux and Schmitz Weiss (2010) have examined legacy media coverage of Twitter to measure the current social construction of technology. Using Bakhtinian theories and Twitter data in a dual autoethnography, Gillen and Merchant (2013) have examined the dialogic and sociolinguistic aspects of new media linguistic practice while Zappavigna (2011), using Systemic Functional Linguistics, has examined linguistic structure and meaning in a large corpus of tweets. With the increasingly popular use of Twitter in political campaigns, linguists such as Ifukor (2010), using data from the 2007 Nigerian electoral cycle, have analyzed the linguistic construction of tweets to show that access to social media can empower citizens to participate in a democracy while Morales, Losada, & Benito (2012), using Twitter data from an online Venezuelan political protest during December 2010, have mapped the structure and

dynamics of online political networks. Other recent prominent research on microblogging has examined the effectiveness of Twitter use during political campaigns in Sweden (Larsson & Moe, 2012) and, in a large-scale quantitative analysis, activity patterns in Twitter across a variety of communicative events, such as natural disasters, political elections, and televised events (Bruns & Steiglitz, 2012). And the large-scale quantitative analysis by Elson, Yeung, and Roshan (2012) examined Twitter usage in Iran after the 2009 presidential elections to measure mood and public opinion.

Addressing the Research Gap

This recent spate of research on social media has helped establish a foundation for examining emergent new media discourse practices. Yet, there remains a lack of qualitative research on the ways in which actors use such practices to create tactical identifications, especially within social movements and imagined links to networked, transnational public spheres (Appadurai, 1996; Myers, 2010; Rowe & Wyss, 2009). Moreover, as Blommaert (2010) has argued, research on language in globalized processes, such as web-based discourse, often adheres to classic sociolinguistic distinctions and biases, including a focus on static variation or stratified language contact, rather than on an approach framed in terms of transnational flows, networks, and social movements. As a case study, Iranian activists' use of social media during the 2009 presidential elections is, I argue, a compelling opportunity to address this need. Because this use occurred during protests, this case study might also be particularly relevant given the longstanding nexus between social movements and self-identifications, in particular the notion that during social and political conflicts, activists often use and manipulate language as a means of creating novel social identities and

expressing new ideas (Gillan, Pickerill, & Webster, 2008; Poulson, 2005). In addition, the qualitative linguistic research I have done here using a critical discourse analysis approach also stands to complement the quantitative and network mapping research studies discussed above. In doing so, I intend that this work enriches our current understandings of how and why activists used social media as they did to address a global audience while also critically questioning, without necessarily refuting the claims by Morozov (2011), Gladwell (2009), and others regarding the effectiveness and significance, or lack thereof, of activists' social media use during the protests. By offering a response to those claims that considers the potential sociocognitive effects of that use, I also aim to address the ways that critical discourse analysis approaches can further be applied and contribute to the study of new media language while also considering how new media discourse shapes the global uses of English as well as our understanding of them.

In stating these objectives, however, it is important to note that I do not intend in any way to view the 2009 Iranian presidential election crisis and the protests that broke out around it as a convenient case study. Doing so, in regards to activists' use of social media, might be misunderstood as an attempt to justify arguments for the liberatory power of technology or, for that matter, my research approach, CDA. As a researcher working from afar in the West, I also do not intend to use either theoretical and analytical lenses or the telescopic gaze of the internet to saying what is and has happened in the East. As Bourdieu (1990) argued, the subjectivity of the researcher cannot be avoided. I argue that it should not be denied, particularly in view of what Blommaert (2005) has rightly claimed is the imbalance within CDA-based research of

so-called First World researchers training their analyses on First World topics and problems. Furthermore, Iranian media scholar Gholam Khiabany (2010) has argued that precisely what makes Iran interesting, and thus a suitable and valuable focus of this type of scholarly attention, is that the impact and experience of modernity in Iran that makes it not “an exotic or marginalized case but a fascinating example relevant for international communication” (p. 16). Therefore, my intention here has been to avoid the potentially distorting view afforded by the internet’s vantage on distant occurrences and social practices by paying attention to local contexts and the viewpoints of both Western and Iranian scholars. In doing so, I have intended to help address the present insufficient attention by the West to non-Western discursive practices in new and social media while also adding to present understandings of the way English is used vernacularly around the globe.

With these aims and considerations in mind, I have attempted to address in this dissertation three clusters of research objectives. First, regarding the discursive construction of ideology, I have sought to determine how the discursive constructions of both the activists and U.S. legacy media, in their documentation and reportage of the post-election protest, intertextually draw on dominant narratives and images of Iran in the U.S. public imagination (Semati, 2008). Relatedly, I have considered how the *polychronic* interaction (Caron & Caronia, 2007) afforded by mobile social media such as Twitter has helped shape online political discourse and microblogging as a field of social action (Gillan, Pickerall & Webster, 2008). Second, in regards to discourse and identity, I have examined the ways in which Iranian protesters, together with members of the Iranian diaspora and global activists acting in solidarity with them, used social

media to locate themselves—geographically, politically, and culturally—and perform their identities online. In conjunction, I have sought to determine how these identifications might also have been shaped by mobile technologies and global vernaculars of English (Caron & Caronia; Pennycook, 2009) as well as the ways in which their identifications compared with U.S. legacy media outlets' discursive constructions of both the protesters and their use of social media. Third, regarding theory and methods, I have considered whether mobilities and social movement theories could help address the limitations of a sociocognitive approach to critical discourse analysis, specifically in regards to context, and whether network theory helps overcome issues of scale and complexity facing web-based linguistic research, particularly when qualitatively analyzing texts (Brooke, 2009; Zimbra, Chen & Abbasi, 2010).

As a result of working toward these objectives, I have argued that activists' discursive practices in their use of social media during the 2009 Iranian presidential election protests add to the micronarratives of vernacular globalization while also calling into question master narratives about Iran as constructed in U.S. legacy news media (Semati, 2008). I base this central argument on the notion that both legacy and new media, as part of the *ideoscape* in Appadurai's (1996) five dimensions of cultural flows, allow for possible scripts of social practice and thereby a plurality of social worlds. With the imagination viewed as collective, protesters' discursive practices, though ultimately reflexive, that is, addressing an unknown audience of strangers, nevertheless can positively contribute to the formation of transnational imaginaries and imagined communities (Appadurai; Anderson, 2006). The resulting process of networked

identifications can expand social actors' sense of solidarity and thereby encourage further participation, either in ongoing or future social movements (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012). This possibility does not directly rebut the claim by Morozov and others that the statistically small number of Twitter accounts and percentage of mobile phone users in Iran, as well as the ultimate failure of the social movement itself, prove that Twitter and other social media played no significant role in the 2009 protests.⁶ However, it does address the weakness of Morozov's arguably teleological focus on end conditions as well as his failure to consider the effect of participation on the construction of new subjectivities or the enabling of political agency at a sociocognitive level. Moreover, I argue that as a form of symbolic exchange (Lash, 2002), protesters' micronarratives and mobile discursive practices in English challenge the insufficient treatment of English as a mediating standard by Grewhal (2008) and others in analyses of global networks while also questioning established paradigms regarding the use, politics, and teaching of global Englishes.

Project Overview

After opening in this chapter the theoretical, sociocultural, and rhetorical space for my project, I begin to make this argument by establishing in chapter two the macrolevel contexts of my research. As Wodak and Meyer (2009) have argued, the consideration of the broader historical and sociopolitical contexts in which the discursive practices analyzed are embedded is integral to critical discourse analysis. As part of the

⁶ The actual number of Twitter users tweeting from Iran during the protests is unclear. Twitter features allow users to identify their location in their account profile, but activists living outside Iran reset their user location to Iran during the protests as signs of solidarity and to help thwart the government's efforts to identify and locate social movement leaders through their Twitter accounts. This will be discussed in further detail—regarding identifications—in chapter five.

principle of triangulation, analyzing background information, along with considering various data sources and multiple analytical perspectives, not only helps make research more robust, but also works to address some of the potential limitations of CDA-driven research approaches.⁷ This contextual analysis includes a closer look at the events of the protests themselves as well as the crucial sociopolitical and cultural developments in Iran leading up to the 2009 elections. In this chapter I also further establish the theoretical contexts, including definitions of discourse, power, and counterpower in a network society, an overview of key theories on language and globalization, my stance on English as a global language, and my overall methodological approach.⁸

In chapter three, I examine the discursive construction of ideology and protesters' identities in U.S. legacy media coverage of the Iranian election crisis. Working with a corpus of news articles collected from six U.S. newspapers, I qualitatively examine a selection of articles and compare the results with a quantitative electronic analysis of the entire corpus as well as other publicly available datasets. I locate these analyses in a discussion of specific theoretical and sociocultural contexts directly related to both the events and the reportage of them in U.S. legacy news media. These contexts include both current and historical U.S.-Iranian relations as well as an overview of key theories of legacy and new media discourse and the rationale for the sociocognitive approach I have taken in analyzing these texts (van Dijk, 1998, 2009). Based on my results, I

⁷ Well-established as a principle of sociological research, *triangulation* as I refer to it, here and throughout, is Wodak's version of the "quasi-kaleidoscopic move toward the research object [that] enables the grasp of many different facets of the object under investigation" (2009, p. 33).

⁸ This discussion will outline my overall methodological approach and my rationale for choosing it. For the sake of clarity and cohesion, I preface, in subsequent chapters, my results with a brief discussion of the methods used specifically for those particular analyses.

argue that U.S. legacy media, through their communicative and discursive practices, help frame protesters' identities within a perspective that is ideologically biased toward their hegemonic institutional interests in the government-media nexus (Entman, 2004; Fairclough, 1995, 2001; Johnson-Cartee, 2005). In addition, my findings also serve as a point of comparison with the protesters' ideological stance-taking and identifications shown by the analyses and arguments taken up in subsequent chapters.

Chapter four, *Borrowed Language*, examines the intertextual and interdiscursive practices of activists both inside and outside Iran across rhizomatic networks in a reticulated, transnational public sphere (Hauser, 1999; Juris, 2008). This includes qualitative analyses of *retweets*, the forwarding of hyperlinks in protesters' Twitter tweets, and the semiotics of protesters' placards as seen in photos uploaded to and shared through Flickr. I situate these analyses in a theoretical argument that links Bakhtin's (1986) notions of *intertextuality* and *dialogism* to Bourdieu's (1991) concept of *habitus*. Supporting this discussion is a look at relevant sociocultural contexts as a means of locating the protests in a cycle of Iranian social movements and thereby comparing the discursive practices of protesters in 2009 with those of the Islamist revolutionaries of 1979 (Poulson, 2005). In addition, because I specifically analyze protesters' discourse in English, this examination also allows me to engage arguments regarding English as a global language. In particular, I begin to establish my own stance on English as a resource in a global commons that users, as active and empowered agents, can borrow, adopt, adapt, and remix through various creative tactics and repertoires according to their communicative needs and rhetorical situations (Canagarajah, 1999; de Certeau, 1984; Pennycook, 2007).

In chapter five, *Networked Identifications*, I extend and develop the arguments of the preceding two chapters through a further analysis of protesters' Twitter tweets and Flickr photograph uploads together with an analysis of a video poem uploaded to YouTube by activists. The focus of these analyses is an attempt to understand the various identifications that protesters made through their discursive practices in new media across networks for a global audience. By comparing these identifications with those constructed by U.S. legacy media outlets, I develop arguments made in chapter three regarding nation-state ideologies in legacy media frameworks and the potential of transnational imaginaries and public spheres extended through new media (Appadurai, 1996; Renzi, 2008). I also broaden my arguments regarding English as a borrowed language by situating my claims in both an overview of theories on language and identity and a specific discussion of modernity in Iran and the role that new media play in shaping protesters' identifications. I justify these qualitative analyses of protesters' discursive practices in new media through an approach built on established media discourse analytics while, it is my intension, addressing methodological concerns regarding the analysis of internet-based linguistic artifacts (Androutsopoulos & Beißwenger, 2008; Brooke, 2009; Zimbra, Chen, & Abassi, 2010). Following these analyses, I summarize my research through a presentation and reengagement of my arguments and conclusions in relation to the theoretical, sociocultural, and rhetorical space established in chapter one. I also consider the various trajectories of my findings, including possible directions for future research on new media language and global Englishes.

Déjà Vu All Over Again: Conclusions

One of my first political memories is of the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution. Nearly thirty-five years later, I can still recall the evening news reports of those flickering, grainy images showing massive crowds, supposedly the largest ever amassed, demonstrating in Tehran's Azadi Square.⁹



Figure 1.6. Iranian protesters in Tehran, 1979

I was awed by how the crowd swelled and flowed, bewildered by their banners in an unfamiliar, squiggled script and the placards of a gray-bearded man in a black turban. The protesters' raucous, undecipherable chants sounded to me like the squawks over a police officer's walkie-talkie, their refrains resembling the call-and-response of Sunday mass. These sounds and images, projected into my young life by the light of a black-and-white television, frightened and amazed me. *Where was this place, Iran, I wondered, and if it was so far away, why was it being talked about on the news, in my*

⁹ According to Kurzman (2004), these anti-shah demonstrations on December 10 and 11, 1978, are the largest protests in history. Reportedly, six to nine million people, or approximately 10% of the total Iranian population participated, a far greater percentage than the 1% that participated in the French and Russian Revolutions.

house, in a small Pennsylvania town? What could a place with such crowds, who seemed so angry, be like? Why had all these people gathered in this place, and what did they want?

In a sense, although mostly a less naïve one, these were some of the same questions the world, or at least the West, was also asking about this revolution. As Kurzman (2004) and others have argued, both the scale of the Islamic Revolution and its success shocked many Western leaders. This included then-President Carter, who, before the Shah Mohammed Reza fled Iran in January 1979, had promised, under the advice of his national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, to support militarily the U.S.-backed Shah to prevent his overthrow (Keddie, 2003). Indeed, it was the fact of that U.S. support, along with the Shah's substantial military force and powerful secret police, SAVAK, that led many to believe that a successful Islamic Revolution in Iran was unthinkable (Kurzman). But what for many had been unimaginable became a reality. On February 1, 1979, a few weeks before I turned seven, Ayatollah Khomeini, that black-turbaned, bearded man whose drawn, severe face I kept seeing on television, returned from exile. His seemingly stoic and feeble wave from the top step of an aircraft stairway inspired another endless, frenzied crowd, thus successfully completing, in many ways, this cycle of protest and the revolution.

Yet, in both words and image, Iran remained in the news beaming out from the living room television set. Seven months later, on November 4, 1979—my older brother's eleventh birthday, incidentally—a group of Iranian Islamist students and militants took over the American embassy in Tehran, capturing fifty-two Americans and holding them hostage. The implications and complexities of the hostage crisis, like

those of the revolution I had seen on the news in grainy footage months before, eluded my understanding. But I grasped that the frightening and confusing images of blindfolded Americans being led down the embassy stairs, into the streets, and then disappearing into the crowd were something that would be talked about again and again. I understood that, as I saw on the news and in the newspaper, the tally of days the hostages had been held increased by one each day. As a child of divorce, I empathized with what it might mean when interviewed hostages' family members said they just wanted their loved ones to come home. This country, Iran, that had once seemed so strange, which had begun to define *foreign* to me, had started to become familiar, if only in a minor and mediated sense. Without my knowing or fully understanding it, my notions of what this place Iran might be had begun to reshape the boundaries of my world, a world highly mediated and distorted by television news and ideology, and therefore one I needed, and continue to need, to know more about.

In June 2009, when the protests that followed the Iranian presidential elections broke out, both the world and I were sharply reminded of the 1979 revolution that had preceded it. The sounds of anti-Ahmadinejad protesters' shouts "Death to the Dictator!" echoed those of the Islamist revolutionaries at the Shah. Images of massive crowds rallying in the streets of Tehran resembled those of an overflowing Azadi Square.



Figure 1.7. Green Movement rally in Tehran

But when these sounds and images first started reaching the West, they did not appear on the nightly news of the Big Three television networks as they had in 1979 as global news crews had been banned by the Iranian government. Instead, the news was coming from the cell phones of Iranian citizens, who then uploaded their captures to the internet and spread them around the world, circumventing their government's news and communications blockades. For in the years between 1979 and 2009 the media landscape had itself undergone a revolution that included the advent of participatory, web-based new media affordances in conjunction with the further global development of ICTs.

As the global news networks began to pick up protesters' firsthand accounts, images, and video captures, I began to wonder, *Were the protests strong enough to bring down the hardline Ahmadinejad government? Did the support for the more moderate candidate Mousavi signal, a generation after the Islamic Revolution, a shift toward moderation and secularism? How would the U.S., fiercely at odds with Iran over its nuclear program, respond to this situation?* Mostly, though, I wanted to know how

the Iranians themselves were identifying with this struggle, and what significance, if any, there was in their use of social media and English to communicate these events with a global audience. In the U.S., the Iranian protesters' use of social media, particularly Twitter, became nearly as newsworthy as what was happening in the streets of Tehran. Voices such as Frank Rich's in the *New York Times* quickly pointed out the latent American triumphalism, if not cynicism, of the digital evangelists celebrating a "Twitter Revolution" when people were being beaten and killed for what they believed was a just cause. Taking a similar tone, Malcolm Gladwell, writing in the *New Yorker*, argued that compared with the ways in which protesters risked their lives in order to have their votes counted and voices heard, the least important aspect of the 2009 Iranian protest was the use of Twitter.

As an individual, I agree. By choosing this protest as the case study for my research, I by no means intend to exploit events in which thousands of lives were affected in order to make an academic argument, not cyber-utopian, cyberskeptical, or anywhere in between. But as an applied linguist, I disagree with Rich and Gladwell that protesters' use of social media was insignificant, for the exigency of the crisis created opportunities for discursive practices in this relatively new social field of actions. As Blommaert (2005) has argued, we must pay attention to such novel spaces if we are to see and try to understand discursive change. That such practices occurred in a non-Western setting, albeit for a global audience, also resounds Blommaert's contention that discourse analysts should pay more attention to discursive practices in contexts outside the global north. Moreover, these practices demonstrate the mobility of linguistic and sociolinguistic resources across transcultural flows within the processes of globalization.

As such, they allow us to see the creative and ever-changing ways in which social actors innovate existing communicative repertoires across various scale-levels, from the global to the local (Blommaert, 2010). Thus, for those interested in examining the ways in which language is destabilized by globalization and why certain repertoires and communicative resources move more successfully than others in globalized contexts, these discursive practices should be important to us (Blommaert).

Furthermore, it is important for me to say that, although in conducting my analyses I have drawn on approaches to critical discourse analysis, my aim is not liberatory, as some proponents of CDA claim such an approach inherently is and must be. As explained above, I do not deny but embrace the critical aspect of my approach and take the position, as others have, that only a critical approach to language analysis is possible. Nevertheless, I do not seek to make my analyses in support of, or even in respect to, any of the range of positions taken in regards to current U.S.-Iranian relations, which, at the time of writing, are marked by the strains caused by Iran's development of its nuclear program and the U.S.-led embargo against Iran to discourage that program. Rather, I am interested in this as a case study perhaps in the same way that Pennycook (2007) was interested in the discursive practices and *performativity* of Asian and Asian-Australian hip hop acts. Although Pennycook's focus also bears an intrinsic and unavoidable politics, it nevertheless seeks to better understand its subjects, their practices, and the way that English is bound to both, research, in other words, that is part of a larger, ongoing project to promote global understanding (Mingueneau, 2006). This is also my aim, together with seeing whether the confluence of my research and academic interests—in global Englishes, new and

legacy media, discourse and identity—and my way of seeing and expression form a viable and valuable space of inquiry.

Chapter Two

“Down with Potatoes!”: Theory, Methods, Contexts

In the syndrome of processes commonly referred to as globalization, power, knowledge, and ideology are contingently related in what Mittelman (2004) has called “a vortex of struggle” (p. 3). According to Blommaert (2010), the nature of this contentious relationship “forces sociolinguistics to unthink classical distinctions and biases and rethink itself as a sociolinguistics of mobile resources, framed in terms of trans-contextual networks, flows, and movements” (p. 1). Such a critical rethinking would include a reflexive awareness of the links between knowledge and political conditions, diachronic sociohistorical analysis, a decentered perspective that considers the margins as well as epicenters, and an accounting for the formations of counter-discourses (Mittelman). As argued in the previous chapter, the events surrounding the 2009 Iranian presidential election offer an opportunity to attempt this rethinking as a means of engaging globalization in the study of language and understanding further how language is inherent in its processes (Blommaert).

With these aims in mind, I present in this chapter a contextual analysis of the key events of the 2009 Iranian elections and the protests that followed as well as the crucial sociopolitical and cultural developments in Iran leading up to the elections, namely, the sociopolitical reforms of the Khatami presidency of the 1990s and the corresponding sociocultural changes. The aim of establishing this macrolevel context is premised on the understanding that the consideration of the broader historical and sociopolitical contexts in which the discursive practices analyzed are embedded is integral to critical discourse analysis (Wodak & Meyer, 2009), the overall methodological approach I have

taken in this research. After outlining those contexts, I discuss their relevance in regard to the social theories I have drawn on in my research as a means of establishing my project's overall theoretical framework. These theories include considerations of discourse and power (and counterpower) in a network society and the role of language in the processes of globalization, with the understanding that theoretical concepts specific to particular analyses will be presented in the chapters where they occur. In regards to presenting my research methodology, I have taken a similar tact, presenting my rationale for an overall sociocognitive approach to critical discourse analysis both in the examination of context and a dialogic engagement with the key critical arguments levied against CDA as a method of social research, with the provision that methodological concerns specific to particular analyses will be presented in the relevant chapters following this one. In short, if, in chapter one, I sought to open a contextual, theoretical, and rhetorical space for this research, in this chapter I have tried to establish more concretely the foundations for the analyses, discussions, and conclusions that follow.

Shouting from the Rooftops: The 2009 Iranian Presidential Election Protests

The atmosphere in Iran during the run up to the 2009 presidential election had been growing increasingly tense. Of the nearly 500 candidates who had filed their candidacy for Iran's presidency, the four approved by the Guardian Council spent the week preceding the election fiercely campaigning and engaged in live televised debates, which, according to Iranian media reports, were watched by upwards of 50

million viewers (Addis, 2009).¹⁰ Emerging from these heated debates were two leading candidates, the incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the reformist candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi. While Ahmadinejad had maintained a strong lead over his opponents throughout much of the campaign, the former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mousavi began to show strong gains during the election run-up. In the final days before the June 12, 2009 election, masses of Mousavi supporters rallied in the streets of Tehran. According to some reports, there were indications that the rural and urban poor, long a significant source of support for Ahmadinejad, were shifting away from the incumbent toward the reformist candidate. As a result, on election eve, many observers were predicting a close race and speculating that the high voter turnout forecast by the massive debate viewership could tip the result in Mousavi's favor (Addis).

As predicted, and unlike the 2005 election that had brought Ahmadinejad to power, voter turnout on election day in 2009 was extremely high. 85% of the voting population cast 39 million total votes, an unprecedented showing that prompted the Iranian Interior Ministry to keep voting centers open in order to accommodate long lines of those still waiting to cast their ballot (Addis, 2009). Despite this record turnout, the election results were announced less than three hours after the polls had closed, with the Interior Ministry declaring that the incumbent Ahmadinejad had captured 62% of the vote. Given the predictions of a much closer contest, this landslide was viewed skeptically both inside and outside the country. Critics, including Mousavi, challenged the legitimacy of the improbable fast ballot counting while others questioned the high

¹⁰ The Iranian Guardian Council is a twelve-member council composed of legal experts who are responsible for interpreting the Iranian constitution, a duty which includes approving presidential candidates and supervising elections (Keddie, 2003).

levels of electoral support Ahmadinejad had received in the dense urban centers and from Azeri communities known to back Mousavi (Howard, 2010). After the public endorsement of the election result by the Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Mousavi officially contested the results, lodging an appeal with the Iranian Guardian Council against the alleged voting fraud.

Meanwhile, in the streets of Tehran, Mousavi's supporters, joined by other civil society groups and political activists, rallied to protest the alleged election irregularities and, they charged, inconclusive results. Although initially peaceful, the protests quickly grew bloody. Tensions surged as activists, defying government bans on public protest, marched in increasingly larger numbers and, with police and paramilitary forces amassing, shouted anti-government slogans and cries of "Death to the Dictator!" that echoed those of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Bloody clashes broke out, as on June 13, when protesters attempted to set fire to a Basij compound and, in response, the Basij opened fire on the crowd from the compound roof (Addis, 2009). With similar such confrontations on the rise during the week following the election, the violence escalated rapidly, causing numerous casualties in the largest protests Iran had seen since those in 1979 that brought down the Shah Mohammad Reza (el-Nawawy, 2010).

Struggling to control the flow of information. Yet, even as the post-election protests swelled in Tehran and, increasingly, other cities, little news about these dramatic events was known outside of Iran. As before and during the elections, Iranian authorities restricted and repressed reports of the post-election protests in the Iranian media. Additionally, they electronically blockaded foreign news broadcasts, jamming the frequencies of Farsi-language satellite broadcasts from the BBC and Voice of

America. Nearly all foreign correspondents were expelled, innumerable phone lines were blocked, and so-called enemy governments, such as Great Britain's, were publicly accused of spreading misinformation about both the election results and the ensuing crackdown on demonstrations. Using their power over the state-run information infrastructure, the Iranian authorities were able to control the flow of news about the events transpiring after the highly-contested election results, a strategy they had also used in 2005, when Ahmadinejad was voted into power and media blackouts largely suppressed reports of alleged voting irregularities during that election.

Unlike 2005, however, Iranian civil society groups and social movement leaders in 2009 had access to an information infrastructure largely independent of the state (Howard, 2010). Government-led developments during the early 2000s had helped make Iran a highly wired and networked civil society and one of the most technologically advanced nations of the region. At present, there is one mobile phone for every two people in Iran (though predominantly in urban centers) and some 20 million regular internet users (Howard; Kamaliapour, 2010). The Persian blogosphere is one of the world's liveliest, comprised of approximately 100,000 active blogs, making Farsi currently the tenth most popular blogging language globally (Howard). The Iranian blogosphere is also a highly diversified one, with the government and Basij paramilitaries blogging actively alongside dissidents and student activists as well as common users (Howard; Yaghmaian, 2002).

During the 2009 protests, this surge in ICTs and new media in Iranian society weakened the effect of 'old media' censorship strategies by allowing for an alternative flow of information about the dramatic, chaotic events unfolding in the streets of Tehran.

Circumventing both internal media censorship and blockades against foreign journalists, activists readily turned to social media services, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Flickr, to find out what was happening and to coordinate participation. During the peak of the protests, Twitter usage was especially high, with more than 480,000 Iranian Twitter users posting over 2 million tweets between June 7 and June 26. On election day, June 12, Twitter streams peaked at over 200,000 tweets per hour, and Twitter was widely used to coordinate a massive rally on June 15 (Howard, 2010).¹¹ As protesters' social media usage surged, some began using social media to submit firsthand reports and images from the demonstrations to international news agencies (Kamaliapour, 2010). As Howard has reported, during protests in Tehran and Isfahan, Iran's third largest city, there was "a flood of digital content from the Iranian streets: photos, videos, blog posts, tweets, and SMS messages [that] flowed between protesters and out to the international community" (p. 6). Although news of the events was still greatly limited by government media censorship and restrictions, activists' use of this new grassroots information infrastructure allowed them to disseminate news and information, creating a vital alternative information flow for both a local and global audience. Within Iran, the use of SMS text messaging, for instance, helped activists reach two important domestic constituencies: rural, conservative voters who had few connections to the urban chaos and the clerical establishment (Howard). Globally, protesters' reports of events began to spread, converging in social media and reports from the international news agencies

¹¹ The actual number of Twitter users tweeting from Iran during the protests is unclear. Twitter features allow users to identify their location in their account profile, but activists living outside Iran reset their user location to Iran during the protests as signs of solidarity and to help thwart the government's efforts to identify and locate social movement leaders through their Twitter accounts. This will be discussed in further detail—regarding identifications—in chapter five.

picking up those stories. The global audience that emerged became largely empathetic to the rapidly coalescing opposition Green Movement of demonstrators, citizens, and activists that the world would come to identify with the post-election crisis. But more than empathy, this reflexive address of an unknown global audience (the diaspora notwithstanding) suggested a transnational field of reference as the potential frame for their beliefs that decentered their local struggle (Albrow, 1997; Chadwick, 2006; Mittelman, 2004).

As this battle for the control of information intensified, the Iranian government coordinated its 'old media' censorship strategy with a new media one, using its control over the state-run information infrastructure to electronically blockade both local and global information and communication technologies (ICTs). In fact, the government already had a new media strategy in place prior to the election. During the election run-up, the government repeatedly lowered bandwidth and filtered social media sites to foil the opposition (Bray, 2009). On election day, it darkened text-messaging systems, disrupted mobile phone subscribers' services, and took key opposition websites offline (Howard, 2010). To rally support for their incumbent candidate, the government disseminated its campaign messages through pro-Ahmadinejad websites, with the president himself maintaining a popular blog. But despite earlier restrictions on Facebook and Twitter usage, the government had not counted on activists using social media to submit content to international news agencies, and, as the protests grew, were forced respond with increased ICT censorship and more aggressive cyberwar strategies. The government also continued to disrupt mobile phone and internet services and set up their own Twitter and Facebook accounts to spread disinformation.

Basij paramilitants collected digital video and photos of demonstrators and, through their own websites, asked Iranians online to help identify the protesters (Howard). The government also built an internet traffic choke point and an inspection system to slow traffic for content analysis in order to learn opposition tactics and identify social movement leaders (Addis, 2009; Howard). On June 13, the government even disabled internet service entirely, leaving Iran off the global grid for some twenty hours.

To counter this strategy, activists and opposition leaders both inside and outside Iran engaged in an array of creative cyberwar tactics. To circumvent electronic blockades, they organized a supply of proxy servers unknown to Iranian officials, including some built from the home computers of activists around the world. Online pro-democracy activists and international tech-savvy digerati, alongside opposition members of the Iranian diaspora, helped create secure communication networks and instructed protesters on how to use online encryption and anonymizers to avoid detection by government surveillance (Howard, 2010). With proxy servers in place, activists coordinated cyber-attacks on the government's information infrastructure, in particular pro-Ahmadinejad websites and state media portals, creating a cyberwar that mirrored the violent clashes on Tehran's streets (Howard). Moreover, with access to social media restored through proxy servers, more of the protesters' eyewitness reports were submitted to international news outlets, such as CNN, Al Jazeera, and the BBC, bringing further global attention to the crisis unfolding in Iran.

Tactically deploying social media. Global attention and the intensified battle for the control of information caused social media usage to soar. Prominent activists' Twitter accounts such as @persiankiwi and @Mousavi11318 quickly gained thousands

of followers from both inside and outside Iran while, during the height of the protests, tweets *hashtagged* #IranElection appeared at a rate of 30 per minute.¹² Local activists used Twitter to help injured street protesters find safe hospitals, report raids by intelligence agents, and recruit more international cyber-activists while, globally, thousands complained in tweets hashtagged #CNNfail about the lack of international news coverage of the post-election crisis. As news spread about the role of new and social media in the growing Green Movement, Google decided to fast track its Farsi-language translator, and Facebook quickly released a beta translation of its content into Farsi. Even the U.S. State Department, recognizing social media's potential impact on the post-election crisis, asked Twitter to delay a network upgrade on June 16 to prevent a service shutdown during daylight hours in Tehran. News of demonstrators' reliance on Twitter caused the post-election protests to be dubbed the 'Twitter Revolution' while the viral spread through Facebook status updates, Flickr photo uploads, and YouTube of cell phone video captures of the death of a young Iranian woman, Neda Agha-Soltan, captured worldwide public and media attention, further highlighting news of the conflict.

Ultimately, however, as history shows, the movement did not succeed. The election results were certified and Ahmadinejad retained the presidency. But the protests did create a split among the ruling councils of mullahs over how to credibly authorize Ahmadinejad into power (Howard, 2010). For that reason, the direct effects of activists' use of social media had on the protests themselves are difficult to measure

¹² In Twitter, a hashtag is a word or phrased prefixed with the symbol # and used, like a keyword, as a bottom-up means of classifying the message in which it appears. In my research, as I explain in chapters four and five where I analyze protesters tweets, I have limited my data to the #IranElection hashtag, which was one of the most widely used by protesters (and those sympathetic to them) and, at the time of writing, is still active today.

and thus debatable (Morozov, 2011). But does this mean, as Morozov and others have claimed, that they played no significant part in the battle to control minds and information? Despite intense government media censorship, news of both the election irregularities and the post-election protests did eventually reach a global audience and thereby contributed to a transnational public sphere understanding of what had happened. Moreover, as I discuss in chapters 3-5, I argue that, in measuring the effect of protesters' tactical uses of social media, Morozov and others have failed to sufficiently consider the possible ways that the identities and ideologies of activists, both locally in Iran and those participating in solidarity around the globe, were shaped through their engagement and access to a global audience and how that process might contribute to discursive change and, by extension, promote social transformation (Juris, 2008).

The Seeds of Protest: The Khatami Reforms, the Rise of ICTs, and the Iranian Youth Population

Before considering further the possible consequences of the Iranian presidential election protests, however, it is important to examine some of the macrolevel sociopolitical contexts in which their origins might be found. Arguably, many of the seeds of the 2009 protests were sewn in the 1997 election that brought Mohammad Khatami to power. A reformist politician and Shia theologian, Khatami had served as Iran's Minister of Culture during the 1980's and 1990's before becoming Iran's fifth president. Winning nearly 70% of the vote, Khatami not only earned a clear mandate, but also captured global attention for his reformist positions and policies (Keddie, 2003). At the heart of his popular support were grassroots movements pushing for the reform

of many of the hardline social and political policies instituted after the 1979 revolution.

Within the government, there was also an internal movement that had begun to

question the Islamic Republic's past. As Yaghmaian (2002) has explained:

Finding the earlier project of the Islamic Republic incompatible with the dominant global politico-economic and cultural/technological imperative, a group from within the state...called for abandoning the old order, and embracing a new Islamic state embedded in the rational synthesis of modernity and tradition. (p.7)

This synthesis included a restructuring of the relationships between religion and state as well as the rationalization of the role of Islam in society, specifically, the rejection of the *faghih*, the Iranian supreme leader, as the ultimate ruling authority in favor of relocating power in the hands of elected officials (Yaghmaian). Khatami had been elected by a wide and diverse coalition of individuals and grassroots movements advocating for democracy and justice, that is, a democratic Islamic state with “a human face—a new Islamic Republic accepted by youth, disempowered women, and citizens tired of two decades of religious monitoring of the most private aspects of their lives” (Yaghmaian, p. 8). With this popular and political support, Khatami began instituting a series of cultural and political reforms aimed at strengthening the role of democracy within an Islamic republic, including the strengthening of civil society, restoring the rule of law, broadening individual and cultural freedoms, and developing of a more exogenous economy while still retaining the Islamic Republic's commitment to public services and a lack of foreign aid dependency (Keddie).

After decades of political and cultural insularity under the Islamic Republic, this turning outward saw Khatami reopen diplomatic relations with Western European

powers and become the first Iranian president to make top-level diplomatic trips to several foreign capitals. Against the resistance of conservative forces within the Iranian government, Khatami also advanced, through the United Nations and open letters to Western religious and political leaders, his theory of a *dialogue of civilizations* that would counter the *new world order* and *clash of civilizations* theses informing many popular conservative geopolitical theories in the West soon after the end of the Cold War (Keddie, 2003). Within Iran, Khatami's reforms allowed for the rise of a critical press, such as the *Jame'eh* and *Rah-e No* newspapers, which helped create a space, if not a multiplicity of public spheres, where subaltern and marginalized voices could be heard, long-held cultural taboos challenged, and political authorities publicly questioned (Fraser, 1992; Yaghmaian, 2002). The rise of a critical press helped encourage the dialogue and debate around which the July 1999 student protests began. With calls to end the *velayat-e faghih*, or rule by supreme leader, students marched in what were then some of the largest protests in Tehran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. According to Yaghmaian, these were transclass student movements not calling for revolution, but the principles of democracy and, in particular, individual freedoms and civil rights not tied to class and cultural identities. Furthermore, unlike contemporaneous anti-globalization Western social movements, in which activists were rallying against the colonization of the lifeworld (Habermas, 1975), "Iranian youth embraced all symbols of massification and commodification,... creat[ing] forms and sites of collective action unforeseen by the theorists of new social movements" (Yaghmaian, p. 24). But as student protesters refashioned "Down with the Dictator!" chants and slogans from 1979—on this occasion aimed not at political powers

but the theocratic supreme leader—conservative forces within the Khatami government, together with the Guardian Council, began to attack the free press movement, publicly denouncing the media in speeches, threatening and closing various critical newspapers, and hounding journalists into self-censorship (Yaghmaian).¹³ These actions were a prelude to the rise of the forces that would bring the conservative Ahmadinejad into power in 2005 and institute the communications blockades meant to prevent the world from knowing about the protests that would erupt following the 2009 presidential elections that would ultimately return him to power.

The rise of the Iranian youth population. If the Khatami-led cultural reforms of the late 1990s helped create a space within the Iranian public sphere for dissent, the spike in the Iranian birth rate which followed the 1979 Islamic Revolution created the youth population that, twenty years later, would begin occupying those spaces. After the success of the 1979 revolution, the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini encouraged Iranians to marry and produce large families to help strengthen the new republic and ‘make armies for Islam’ (Keddie, 2003). Consequently, the Iranian population has nearly tripled since 1979, and currently two-thirds of all Iranians are under thirty years old. Moreover, with 67% of the Iranian population living in urban

¹³ Though this chant, in Farsi, “Marg Bar Diktator,” is usually translated in the U.S. media as “Death to the Dictator,” some have argued that it should be rendered as “Down with the Dictator.” Accordingly, Iranian protesters’ chants of “Marg bar Amrika,” which are commonly reported as “Death to America,” would be softened to “Down with America.” Some argue that the former translation has been preferred by the media for its polarizing effect, and the ideologies such an effect might support. Interestingly, support for the latter version has come from reports that, in response to Ahmadinejad handing out potatoes to opposition protesters, who, during his 2009 campaign, were rallying against rising food prices, shouted, “Marg bar sibzamini,” or “Death to potatoes.” While ironic, this is a less likely translation than “Down with Potatoes,” though a figurative sense of *death* as, in English, “I’m sick to *death* of these potatoes,” is also possible (Mackey, 2009; Tait, 2009).

areas and an overall high literacy rate, these demographics, according to Semati (2008), favor a trend toward social transformation.

Concurrent with this trend has been the development of the media and ICTs in Iran that began during the Khatami presidency. There are presently more than thirty-six Persian satellite TV channels, plus numerous others in various languages, and although Iranian law prohibits ownership and sale of satellite dishes, the government typically chooses not to enforce this (Semati, 2008). In conjunction with the high penetration of mobile phone usage mentioned above, this meant not only that Iran has become a highly wired civil society, but also that the current populous generation of young Iranians has emerged under the influence of the globally dominant youth culture (Howard, 2010). Although the state, including the Khatami government, has tried to limit Iranian youth's exposure to the flows of global information through state-level media controls, they have largely been unsuccessful (Yaghmaian, 2002). If, in part, efforts to limit access to global cultural flows are meant to preserve local cultural traditions (Hopper, 2007), including many of those instituted during the Islamic Revolution, strict state-level control of ICTs may not be the most effective strategy. As Crack (2008) has shown, ICTs can have an ambiguous role in social transformation. On the one hand, by allowing new opportunities for transnational dialogue, crosscultural engagement, and grassroots political participation, they can facilitate challenges to the status quo by counter-hegemonic forces. For young Iranians, the development of ICTs has meant rapidly increasing access to both global cultural flows and critical information technologies and new media forms, such as microblogs, where, through their everyday cultural practices, they can create and project their identities (de Certeau, 1984; Varzi, 2006). But the rise

of social media use in Iran has included not only the sizable youth population but from all sectors; reportedly, even the Revolutionary Guard has a social media strategy. And while the Iranian blogosphere has become a dynamic public sphere in which young dissidents to debate and engage with global audience, including the vocal Iranian diaspora, particularly in London and Los Angeles (Yaghmaian; Howard), state authorities' online countermeasures to thwart organization and dissent show the double bind of using ICT-based communication for social movements (Morozov, 2011; Robbins & Webster, 2006). That is, if, as Bohman (2004) has argued, ICTs like mobile phones and the internet can help develop a new sort of distributive public sphere that, as a 'public of publics,' decenters traditional public spheres, they can also facilitate state-level surveillance and reinforce centrist power (Morozov, 2011).

Similarly, while the rapid growth of the Iranian youth population has meant an infusing of global flows into local culture, it has also contributed to critical social problems. The Iranian youth population has been very negatively affected by the sharp financial downturn and high rates of unemployment caused by the strong economic sanctions against Iran for developing its nuclear program. The current unemployment rate for Iranians under thirty is approximately 50%, with half living below the poverty line. The lack of work has led to, at one extreme, high levels of brain drain. The IMF has reported that more than 150,000 highly skilled Iranians annually migrate or study and work abroad in places like Dubai.¹⁴ At another, unemployment and poverty, along with a lack of entertainment and cultural activities for young people, have been attributed to Iran having the highest rate of opiate addicts in the world (Varzi, 2006).

¹⁴ Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6240287.stm. Uploaded January 26, 2013.

Moreover, in the wake of the devastating Iran-Iraq War and Iran's relationship with the West reflected in that war, as well as the complexities of Iran's current nuclear program and the U.S.-led economic sanctions meant to thwart it, this youthful generation is not only large, but also highly ideological.

Eventually, some of this ideologically-orientated youth population would withdraw its support for Khatami. While his cultural reforms and outward-looking policies may have helped open both rhetorical and cultural spaces for dissent, not all reforms succeeded. Some were blocked by conservatives, and Khatami himself backed away from others (Keddie, 2003). After allowing police and conservatives to attack student-led protests, Khatami lost support for his reform project and consequently his promises of liberalization were unfulfilled. And while the large youth population that began to come of age during the Khatami era may have been affected by the concurrent growth of ICTs, it is difficult to evaluate the overall effect of connectivity on Iranian politics (Howard, 2010). Furthermore, while a connected youth population did participate in the 1999 protests, they were predominantly students from urban centers, not the rural poor, a pattern of access and participation which will also appear in 2009 and which also challenges lingering cyber-utopian rhetoric of the internet as a new form of democratic decentralization (Barber, 1995; Featherstone & Lash, 1999). Instead, offline institutional and social power dynamics tend to be reproduced online, with the struggle to control communication and information extending into cyberspace and constituting much of what Castells (2009) has called the fundamental battle in society, the power to control how others think.

Communication Power: A Theoretical Research Framework

The above account of the 2009 Iranian presidential election protests, together with the discussion of the Khatami reforms as a potential source of those protests, is more, I intend, than an examination, at multiple scales, of the context in which the discourse I analyzed is embedded. I believe it also shows—and thereby allows me to discuss from a theoretical standpoint—the ways in which the discursive practices I analyze in this research are constitutive of social relations, with social cognition interfacing between the two (Foucault, 1972; van Dijk, 2009). Or, from another perspective, if the analysis of context is essential to the analysis of the discourse embedded in that context (Wodak & Meyer, 2009), it should also, as an intermediary in a dialogic process, shape and delimit the theoretical framework of the research.

As the conflict between Iranian state forces and protesters shows, central to this theoretical framework must be considerations of power. First, for my analyses, I have adopted Castells' (2009) largely Foucauldian understanding of power, which he sees as:

the relational capacity that enables a social actor to influence asymmetrically the decisions of other social actor(s) in ways that favor the empowered actor's will, interests, and values. Power is exercised by means of coercion (or the possibility of it) and/or by the construction of meaning on the basis of the discourses through which social actors guide their action. (p. 10)

In the 2009 Iranian crisis we can observe the ongoing shift from a disciplinary society to social control, with police and paramilitary forces' disciplinary response representing a visible, traditional expression of sovereignty and centrist power in the capacity for violence (Blommaert, 2008; Hardt & Negri, 2000). Moreover, the publicness of this

response, if only locally at first, can be seen as a secondary expression of traditional statist forms of power, coercion. That is, the violent repression of protesters was also meant to coerce would-be participants, whether those passively protesting or those considering joining the protests in the future. In this sense, coercion can also be seen as a cognitive action, an expression of force by one group of social agents, in this case institutional, on the minds of others. Certainly, coercion is also discursive when it is multifariously circulated throughout society in the form of rules, policies, agendas, representations, threats, attested knowledges, and so forth. As Foucault (1978) argued, it is through social relations that discourse is dispersed, circulated, and thereby enmeshed with power. With discourse constitutive of social relations, this understanding of discourse, therefore, is not limited to a group of signs or a stretch of text, the *small-d discourse* of 'talk and text' or 'utterances beyond the sentence level,' as it is often defined in discourse analysis (Gee, 2005). It also includes the *big-d Discourse* of rules, structures, and practices that produce utterances and texts and systematically form the objects they refer to (Foucault, 1972). With dominant power exercised through institutions, power is therefore constituted by discourses, which are strongly bounded areas of knowledge, a complex of statements by which the world is known and by which relationships are deciphered and subjectivities constructed (Mittelman, 2004). Because these forms of power stretch along networks into the smallest and most private aspects of life, setting the parameters of practice, behavior, and thought (Hardt & Negri), this type of force can be seen, in Foucauldian terms, as a *capillary power* formed in discourse that, diffused multi-directionally across society, decenters power yet nevertheless strengthens, rather than weakens, the center. And

crucially, in such forms of systemic power, coercion is no longer its defining characteristic; instead, it is a soft power, one shaped by ideology, and those in control rule not only with force and exploitation, but ideological *hegemony*, or the dominance of ideas and culture in the way people think and feel (Blommaert, 2008; Gramsci, 2003). It is also a networked power, relational and inherent in discourse and in mediating social institutions (Foucault, 1978; Grewal, 2008).

Communication and counterpower. But notions of networked and ideological systemic power need not exclude the power of individual agency. As the events of the 2009 Iranian presidential election protests show, discursive capillary power can circulate not only from institutional forces, such as government and state-sponsored media, but also from social agents themselves. Consider this protester's tweet: "shooting people in Azadi Sq" (@username.twitter.com).¹⁵ Ostensibly, this information, circulated through Twitter under the #IranElection hashtag, was meant to warn local Twitter-using protesters of danger as well as inform a larger Twitter audience of these events. As such, it could constitute—especially when aggregated with other forms of online and offline coordination—a form of counterpower. On a cognitive level, this information, circulated through mobile new media forms as counter-discourses, could also serve as a klaxon call to participation, although the correlation between social media usage during protests and active engagement has not been established (Howard, 2010). At the same time, these counter-discourses might also—and understandably so—discourage participation. In fact, as will be discussed below, while the use of decentralizing, ICT-based networked communications has become integral to the

¹⁵ Here, and in the analyses that follow, I have anonymized Twitter users' account names.

planning and operationalizing of social movements (Juris, 2008), it may also ironically serve the ends of statist or centralized forms of power. Moreover, that this discourse was *informationalized* via its circulation in Twitter risks not only commodification (Lash, 2002), but also, as possible dissuasion, a challenge to the forces of imagined solidarity from networked connectivity, a notion I discuss in more detail in chapters four and five.

The struggle to control minds. Castells (2009) sees the fundamental struggle and decisive form of power in contemporary networked societies as being over the minds of social agents. Social control over how people think determines the fate of institutions, norms, and values that constitute society, with the centrist control over information as seen as essential to sovereignty and a form of network power (Castells; Grewal, 2008). During the protests, as well as in the election run-up, the Iranian government used their control over the state-run information infrastructure to blockade the flow of information, electronically jamming satellite broadcasts, expelling foreign new correspondents, and blocking innumerable phone lines and thereby demonstrating a key form of power in a network society (Castells, 1996). According to Castells, “networks constitute the new morphology of our societies, and the diffusion of networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcomes in processes of production, experience, power and culture” (p. 469). According to the logics of networks, Castells has argued, the flow of power is replaced by the power of flows, and presence or absence in the network is a significant source of both social control and change.

Network power, then, can also take the form of *counterpower*, or the capacity of social agents to resist dominating forces (Castells, 2010). This capacity, though, can be

expressed in various way. The 2009 Iranian protests, made in defiance of anti-demonstration regulations, as well as the protesters' violent responses to government forces' repression, were *hard* forms of counterpower, or, in Gramscian (2003) terms, a *war of maneuver*. In contrast, the symbolic process of amassing in the streets and circulating symbolic resources of social movements across local and global networks constitute forms of *soft* counterpower. In the information technology paradigm of the network society, we also see non-traditional expressions of communication counterpower (Castells, 2009). During the protests, activists and opposition leaders responded to the Iranian government's communication blockade with cyberwar tactics. They organized a supply of proxy servers, instructed in online encryption and anonymizers, and coordinated cyber-attacks on the government's information infrastructure. They also continued to submit eyewitness reports to international news outlets as a means of drawing further global attention to the crisis unfolding in Iran. Though, as mentioned above, some have challenged the effect of these countermeasures on the protests (Howard, 2010; Morozov, 2011), activists succeeded in circumventing the communication blockade to the extent that the world did learn of the events transpiring in Tehran in June 2009 against the Iranian government's explicit intentions. Yet, this success may have been pyrrhic. As explained above, the Iranian government responded with their own cyber-attacks, and with their control over the information infrastructure, they likely tipped what initially had been a successful tactic by the protesters in their favor, especially when they used surveillance of mobile new media communications to identify, locate, and arrest activists (Howard). What is more, the attention from Western global media on protesters' use of new media caused the

Iranian authorities, who had long supported the state-level development of the internet as an engine of economic growth and tool for spreading Islam, to begin to view it as significant threat. Consequently, in the months following the protests, the Iranian government formed a high level cybercrime team tasked with finding any false information on Iranian websites, including increased internet surveillance of Iranians and the Iranian diaspora (Morozov, 2011).

Communication power in a globalized context. Clearly, the above considerations of capillary network power and an information-centered network society, as well as these examples of counterpower, bear crucial aspects of globalization, or the syndrome of global processes and activities which constitute it (Mittelman, 2004). As Castells (2009) has argued, “our historical context is marked by the contemporary process of globalization and the rise of the network society, both relying on communication networks that process knowledge and thoughts to make and unmake trust, the decisive source of power” (p. 16). While an in-depth discussion of the processes of globalization is beyond the scope of the project, it is useful, in establishing my overall theoretical framework, to stake out the critical positions I take within the current, ongoing debates about globalization, particularly as they relate to language and the analyses that follow.¹⁶

Sociologist Anthony Giddens, though widely criticized for defending modernity and its universalizing modes of thought and description, as well as for his associations with some of the neoliberal policies of British New Labour governments, has

¹⁶ As needed, I also discuss relevant theories and aspects of globalization in later chapters as a means to explain my data analyses.

nevertheless offered theorizations of globalization useful for research on how its processes relate with language. As a third-wave, transformationalist theorist of globalization, Giddens envisions globalization as a dynamic, dialectical of global-local relations that ultimately renders the world a juggernaut, “a runaway engine of enormous power which, collectively as human beings, we can drive to some extent but which also threatens to rush out of our control and which could rend itself asunder” (1990, p. 139). This vision stresses the unprecedented nature of current economic, political, and cultural flows and levels of interconnectedness (Hopper, 2007), including the role of ICTs in establishing those links and facilitating those flows (Castells, 1996; Crack, 2009). Two related features central to Giddens’ globalization theory, and related to the role of language in the processes of globalization, are his notions of time-space *distantiation* and *disembedding* mechanisms. As part of the manifold, multidirectional global flows of culture and information facilitated by mass media and global communications technologies, language helps overcome distances, or the friction of space, transforming the social perceptions of place and the institutional relationship between time and space (Harvey, 1989; Tomlinson, 1999). As a result, space has been torn away from place, which disembeds, or ‘lifts out,’ social relations from local contexts or interactions and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space. This emptying of time and space replaces the experience of space dominated by relations of presence with those of absence, creating a *phantasmagoric* sense of place in which locales are thoroughly permeated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them (Tomlinson). Crucially, part of what results from these influences is the *reflexivity* of modern social life, in which social practices, including discourses, are

constantly examined and reshaped in the light of incoming information about those very practices (Giddens, 1990). Such an emphasis on reflexive practices evidences a vision of language as recursive, in which knowledges are constituted as discourses and the symbolic order of language is attributed a central role in social practices reformed within a globe frame (Bourdieu, 1991).

In relation to social structures and processes, language, then, as a social practice exists in a dialectical relation to social structure (Blommaert, 2005). This conceptualization mirrors Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration, a dynamic model of the relationships between structure and agency in which social practice is seen as that which constitutes humans as actors and simultaneously manifests social structures. But because Giddens' dialectical of polarities flattens the dynamics of complex global-local interpenetration, he has understandably been criticized for failing to see the possibility for differentiated locals and plural global cultures in which language contributes to the multiple, contradictory, decentered identities of social agents (Featherstone, 1995). Instead, language, as a social activity and a means of praxis, is at once a mediator and an embodiment of agency.

Furthermore, language, together with global media and communication systems and a world capitalist economy, plays a critical role in the dense network of global interconnections and cultural flows which characterize contemporary social life (Appadurai, 1996; Albrow, 1997). For that reason, it has been primary among the forces of globalization that bring distant occurrences to bear on local events and rescale social activity (Giddens, 1991). In such transformed cultural, social, and economic relations, globalization has arguably weakened or decentralized the nation-state (Robertson,

1995; Scholte, 2005). Together with processes of *cultural deterritorialization* (Tomlinson, 1999), this, in turn, has altered the role of languages in a globalized economy. Whereas once they were seen as coterminous with state boundaries and linked to uniform cultures (Anderson, 2006; Billig, 1995), languages—in particular, English, with its predominant role in global mass consumer culture and its worldliness perpetuated by, among other factors, the global English language teaching industry (Featherstone, 1995; Pennycook, 1994)—can now be viewed as both globalizing and globalized (Fairclough, 2006). What is more, with numerous sectors of the globalized economy based on multilingual or English-as-a-global-language communication (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2007), the traditional opposition between the materiality of economy and commodities and the non-materiality of language, signification, and communication has collapsed, resulting in a transformation of the economic and material impact of language (Gramsci, 2003).

The role of ICTs. Like language, ICTs have played a significant role in intensifying the processes of global interconnectedness. Not only have they helped intensify time-space compression and facilitate global cultural and economic flows, but they have also, through the internet, helped create a networked space of publics, a new sort of distributive public sphere that, as a ‘public of publics,’ decenters traditional public spheres (Bohman, 2004; Habermas, 1991). Furthermore, as a reticulation of public spheres, they can enable the agency of social actors engaged in reflexive, participatory activity (Hauser, 1999; H. Jenkins, 2006). When these actions remain distinct from the exchanges of public authority, they may constitute what Warner (2002) has called a *counterpublic*. Against the background of the public sphere, counterpublics enable

alternative spheres of opinion and exchange that can have a crucial relation to power (Warner). Yet, because these public spheres are both embedded in social practices and the institutions that maintain and preserve public spaces, they must also be viewed through relations of social power. Insofar as information exchanged in such spaces is controlled as a commodity, online public spheres must be seen as reflecting the institutions in which they are embedded, an issue which will be crucial in evaluating, in chapters four and five, Iranian protesters' use of social media and U.S. legacy media's treatment of it (Morozov, 2011). As such, the use of ICTs in the public sphere can both support the hegemonic practices of an oligopolistic global media and facilitate challenges to the status quo from counter-hegemonic forces by allowing new opportunities for dialogue, crosscultural engagement, and grassroots political participation (Crack, 2008). As a result of the latter, ICTs have played significant roles in social movements, from the Zapatista and anti-globalization movements of the 1990s (Castells, 1996) to the Egyptian Revolution and Arab Spring uprisings of 2011. By providing a powerful platform for political autonomy that bypasses mass-media systems, ICTs, in particular mobile communications, can create new possibilities for democratic deliberation in literate public spheres (Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Qui & Sey, 2007).

That said, when considering the role of ICTs both in social movements as well as the larger processes of globalization, it is important to avoid the cyber-utopian arguments popularized during the internet's widespread growth and development (Barber, 1995). While research has shown that ICTs can contribute to greater civic participation, they are only one of various factors (Boler, 2008). Moreover, given their relationship to social institutions, they can also be used to spread disinformation that

can limit participation, as can digital divide issues that see offline social differentiation concerns being replicated online (J. van Dijk, 2005). We should also resist technological deterministic viewpoints on the role of ICTs, either in developing networked public spheres or in the interconnecting processes of globalization. Focusing solely on technology risks neglecting the role of other processes, such as capitalism and modernization (Hopper, 2007) while overemphasizing the impact of technology suggests that technological forms have their own inherent properties, which downplays or negates the role of human agency (Chadwick, 2006).

Nevertheless, communication technologies can be seen as contributing to the formation of cybercommunities in which, through the imagined presences in global cultural flows, connections across and into multiple social spaces are created (Chayko, 2002). Participants operating within these cybercommunities navigate what Chayko (2008) has described as a *sociomental space*, or the mental habitat where, as a cognitive analog to physical space, online (and increasingly mobile) communities gather. Not only do these online spaces allow for a mental mapping of social worlds, but also for the formation of *sociomental bonds* across distances, great or small, in the time-space compression of global interconnectivity (Harvey, 1989). Though these connections tend to be ephemeral, they can also help form the temporary, loose affiliations typical of social movements (Juris, 2008).

Mobilities. Additionally, the growth of mobilities fostered by rapidly developing and spreading wireless communication technologies has helped further overcome the frictions of distance at multiple scale levels (Urry, 2007). As a complication of theorizations of globalization such as Giddens', a mobilities sociological perspective

should be seen as involving not dichotomous but diverse connections involving physical movement constituted through circulating entities (Urry). In this perspective, *presence* can be understood as intermittent, performed, and always interdependent with other processes of connections and communication. As a result, mobile technologies such as cell phones and wireless internet connections can undermine set references of identity (Caron & Caronia, 2007). Whereas identity had come to be for most social actors in network societies the center around which individual and social meanings were organized and sustained across time and space (Castells, 1997), the *delocalizing* effect of mobilities has caused a further reconstitution of identity according to a new logic of *identifications* (Caron & Caronia). That is, being freed from most of the spatial and temporal constraints that govern our lives has changed both everyday interaction rituals as well as our larger shared cultural codes that, as discursive practices, constitute identity, resulting in a performative process of identifications in which language is central. What is more, this instability in the constitution of subjectivities, complicated by global flows and intensified by mobilities, has impelled the work of the imagination as a source of identity (Appadurai, 1996). Images, scripts, models, and narratives flowing through mass media help mark the imagination as a domain of social practice, and thus of agency negotiated against global fields of possibility (Appadurai). Though these symbolic processes are always connected to a physical configuration (Fornas et al., 2002), the imaginary as a social collective can generate both a sense of community (Anderson, 2006) and multiple identifications across various networks, a possibility I explore in greater detail in chapters four and five.

Critical Discourse Analysis: A Contested Research Approach

Because my project, as explained above, engages topics, phenomena, and theories related not only to language, but history, politics, communications, and sociology, I have chosen, in critical discourse analysis (CDA), a research approach that I believe is appropriately interdisciplinary. As Wodak has claimed, “every theoretical approach in CDA is inherently interdisciplinary because it aims at investigating complex social phenomena which are inherently inter- or transdisciplinary and certainly not to be studied by linguistics alone” (cited in Kendall, 2007, para. 30). Not all CDA researchers, however, agree on how that interdisciplinarity should be viewed. Fairclough (2005), for instance, has advocated for a transdisciplinary understanding of CDA that, unlike interdisciplinary perspectives, considers how one discipline may develop through the appropriation of resources and logics of those with which it has been combined. The suggestion that from this process a new theory could be formed presupposes, as he has claimed elsewhere (see Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999), that CDA is both a theory and a method, a position for which he has received considerable criticism (see Henderson, 2005), some of which I will address below. In contrast, van Leeuwen (2005) has proposed an integrationist model of interdisciplinarity for CDA. By integrationist he means not incorporating various theoretical frameworks and methodologies into one discipline, as in the centralist model, or gathering diverse disciplines into a framework as equal partners but without merging them, as in the pluralist model, but integrating disciplines so that they inform each other to address the

complexity of problems.¹⁷ Agreeing with van Leeuwen, I find it preferable that in this model the values and identities of the various disciplines combined are not subsumed into one nor are they merely the sum of their parts, but work together to address complex, interdisciplinary problems while accounting for shortcomings in individual theories and approaches. This is what I have aimed to do by integrating, for instance social movement and new media theories with those of language, ideology, identity, and complementary approaches to discourse analysis, as has been commonly done since the development of CDA as a research tool (see, for example, Fowler (1995) on news discourse, Fairclough (2006) on neoliberal discourse, Thurlow (2006) on new media language, and Pennycook (2007) on global English).

What is CDA? As the discussion above suggests, understandings of what CDA is and how it should be applied vary within its domains of application, even among some of its leading proponents. Yet, most generally agree that CDA is fundamentally concerned with analyzing structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). According to Fairclough (2003), CDA research explicitly aims, through the close analysis of texts, to investigate critical social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized by or in discourse. Similarly, van Dijk (2001a) has claimed that “CDA is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (p. 352). That is, it focuses not only on texts but also requires a

¹⁷ For me, the crucial distinction between van Leeuwen’s integrationist view and Fairclough’s transdisciplinarity is that while the latter propounds that integrated research resources could be fused, rather alchemically, into a new theory, the former only seeks a weaving of theory that can—and maybe should—be undone once the project has ended.

theorization and description of both the social processes and structures which give rise to the production of a text, and of the social structures and processes within which individuals or groups as social historical subjects create meanings in their interaction with texts (van Dijk, 2008a). For Benwell and Stokoe (2006), CDA is:

a Foucauldian-inspired, interdisciplinary branch of linguistics that attempts to explore the ideological workings of language in representing the world. CDA begins from the determinist premise that language is not a neutral or transparent medium that unproblematically reflects an objective reality. (p. 43-44)

Beyond its orientation to Foucauldian theories, CDAs also has its roots in Hallidayan functional systemic linguistics, classical rhetoric, text linguistics, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and pragmatics (Wodak & Meyer) as well as the critical linguistics of Fowler, Kress, and Hodge that emerged in the 1970s. Having developed from a critical view of formal linguistics' decontextualization of language and the corollary need for a new form of linguistics that would examine the relations between language and society (Hodge, 2012), approaches to CDA assume that language is a social phenomenon in which not only individuals, but also institutions and social groups express specific meanings and values in language in systematic ways.

By *critical*, CDA researchers mean the presupposition about the relationship between discourse, power, dominance, and social inequality as well as the analyst's position in such relationships (van Dijk, 2001b). Often focusing on social problems related to power, dominance, hegemony, ideology, class, gender, race, discrimination, interests, reproduction, institutions, social structure, and social order, CDA researchers try to link the micro- and macrostructures of social institutions and societies. In citing

the intersection of discourse and social structure as characterized by dominance, they adopt overt emancipatory positions that are critical of the status quo. In part, this political engagement is rooted in Marxism as a social theory and tradition of critique, although CDA analysts would reject the notion of false consciousness in Marxist approaches to ideology as insufficiently complex (Wetherall, Taylor & Yates, 2001). Instead they tend to favor more complex social theories of power and ideology that would also take into account, for instance, Foucault's formulations of *power/knowledge* and *orders of discourse*, Gramsci's concept of *hegemony*, and Althusser's notion of *interpellation* as well as Giddens' theory of *structuration* (Blommaert, 2005). By doing so, they distance themselves from the descriptivism of other forms of language and discourse studies and foreground their concerns for the social or ideological construction of reality while advocating intervention in the practices they critically examine as a means of support for those dominated or marginalized by the effects of power.

CDA focuses on *discourse*, rather than language, rejecting the notion in formal linguistics of language as a unitary object of study separated from society and thought (Hodge, 2012) in favor of the view that talk and text are the relevant units of language in communication (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). As CDA has developed as a research approach, this understanding of text has extended beyond written and oral modes to include the semiotic or multimodal forms of contemporary communication and interaction (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Much, though not all, of CDA's approach to discourse stems from a Foucauldian orientation, which views discourse as constitutive of society and culture as well as of power relations, that is, a form of historical social

action that does ideological work. Consequently, discourse is seen as a hidden or opaque form of power which CDA researchers aim to make more visible (Blommaert & Bulcean, 2000). Foucault saw discourse not as a group of signs or a stretch of text but as *discursive practices*. By this he meant the processes by which cultural meanings are produced and understood, the actions that construct and reflect social realities and systematically form the objects they speak of. This includes ideologies, power, and identities, which Foucault saw as inscribed in discourses, produced by dominant discourses linked to social relations and practices that constitute subjectivities (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Consequently, the discursive constructions of ideologies and identities, particularly in conjunction with the reproduction of social inequalities, is, together with analyses of power, a common focus of CDA-inspired research.

Criticisms of CDA. This common theoretical ground and range of interests have, to a large degree, established CDA as a research tool and mode of inquiry that, since its advent in the late 1980s, has grown in application and popularity (Hodge, 2012). As the field has matured, the research landscape has diversified, accommodating various approaches, including Reisigl and Wodak's discourse-historical approach, Jäger and Maier's Foucauldian dispositive analysis approach, van Dijk's sociocognitive approach, and Fairclough's dialectical-relational approach. These approaches share common theories, aims, and concerns, but they lack, as critics of CDA have pointed out, a unitary theoretical framework and analytical methodology (Breeze, 2012; Frantz, 2004). As a result, critics contend, despite the specificity of CDA's linguistic focus, its lack of systematic analysis and use of a range of theories of language (relying heavily instead on Hallidayan systemic-function linguistics) both limit

the space and scope of analysis as well as its replicability (Bloommaert, 2005; Toolan, 1997; Widdowson 1998). All CDA approaches, though some more than others, employ a wide range of tools and strategies for close analysis of actual, contextualized uses of language that, supported by sophisticated theorizations of the relationship between social practices and discourse structures, offer rich possibilities to examine an array of factors that exert an influence on texts, including patriarchy, racism, and hegemonic power relations (Lazar, 2005). But the vagueness of particular constructs and eclectic theories present operationalization problems as well as those of mediation, or relating the linguistic and social dimensions of analysis (Breeze; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Consequently, though certain CDA theorists, such as Fairclough, have attracted more criticism than others, the field as a whole has largely been questioned as a legitimate field of academic inquiry.

In response, some critical discourse analysts, including Fairclough, have tried to systematize analytical approaches, though not always with a clear or substantiated backing for that system (Widdowson, 2000). For Jones (2007), this is doubly problematic for several reasons. First, using grammar-based SFL separates discourse from behavior, which, Jones has contended, is where bias, ideology, racism, and other concerns of CDA are located. Second, the inconsistency of communicative behaviors across contexts makes it “impossible to ascribe any general, invariable function value or effects to these acts, contrary to CDA’s assumptions” (Jones, p. 359). This variability, like the charges of a lack of analytical rigor in the approach to text analysis, can make CDA hermeneutic and its findings no more than the analysts’ interpretations (Toolan, 2007), though this problem, according to Chilton (2005), might be mitigated by further

addressing the cognitive aspects of communication, as I have tried to do in this research. In addition, because of CDA's explicit political engagement and advocacy, which contradict principles of scientific objectivity, this interpretative mode, critics have argued, leads to *a priori* findings of questionable reliability and validity while attracting criticisms of bias (Widdowson, 1998; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). As Jones (2007) has also claimed, this critical stance fundamentally skews the analysis of communicative practices. Conversation analysts in particular have stridently rejected the view that an overt political stance should be part of analysis, claiming it produces a 'theoretical imperialism' and 'hegemony of the intellectuals' that may ultimately mean that the analyst is never surprised by the data and thus fails to contribute to describing the world (Schegloff, in Wetherell et al., 2001). Compounding these concerns, critics have claimed, is critical discourse analysts' use of large theoretical frameworks which tend not to fit the data as well as broad contexts to interpret texts and vague positions toward what constitutes discourse (Widdowson, 1998). Relatedly, critics have raised questions regarding problems of scale, citing the lack of an explicit model of the various scales at which discursive practices occur, especially one that would capture the processes of social meaning in a complex, multi-scalar world (Hodge, 2012). Similarly, Blommaert (2005) has argued that, for all its focus on inequality, CDA research has typically been concentrated on objects of analysis from the global north and should have a broader, more latitudinarian approach.

The sociocognitive approach as a way forward. As seen above, the criticisms levied against CDA have been substantial, but perhaps reflect no less a disciplinary 'turf war' than that waged by critical linguists against formal linguistics. If sound criticism,

then, is meant to sharpen, not destroy, as I believe, I argue that it is wise in going forward with CDA-based research to heed these judgments without entirely capitulating to them. Therefore, in my research, I have used a composite interdisciplinary approach that draws on methods and theories of various CDA frameworks. I intend this not to be a further example of CDA's eclecticism and lack of theoretical rigor, but what I see as a means of addressing the weaknesses of one approach with the strengths of others, which is plausible given the common theoretical and methodological ground they share. That is, as van Dijk (2008b) has claimed, CDA is not a method but a domain of scholarly practice, a cross-discipline distributed all over the humanities and the social sciences, integrating many different methods of research, depending on the aims of the investigation, the nature of the data studied, the interests and the qualifications of the researcher, and other research parameters. I also take the position that CDA scholarship should not follow the approach of any particular researcher and instead be multidisciplinary, integrating the best work of various researchers from different disciplines and research trajectories (van Dijk). Therefore, I have formed the basis of my research framework on van Dijk's sociocognitive approach and complemented it with the strategies and methods of other leading CDA researchers whose work is relevant to research topic and questions as well as my datasets and their contexts.

The sociocognitive approach considers social cognition as the interface between society and discourse. Not only does this mitigate the general micro- and macro-concerns of social research, but also addresses one the key theoretical shortcoming of most critical discourse analysis research, the neglect of social cognition (van Dijk, 2009). If the aim of CDA is to relate society and discourse, it is therefore necessary to

also analyze the role of social representations in the minds of social actors (van Dijk). Integrating cognitive linguistics with a critical approach to discourse analysis also reinstates the mind into meaning (Hodge, 2012) in a way that might address Jones' (2007) concerns regarding behavior, not language, as the locus of ideology, bias, racism, and so forth. Similarly, as Hart (2012) has argued, cognitive linguistics provides a set of tools, as SFL does for linguistic analysis, for examining psychological strategies of manipulation in discourse that, when supporting CDA, can help make CDA more revealing and its claims better attested. For those reasons, to supplement my linguistic analyses, I have drawn on Chilton's (2004, 2005) cognitive-based approach to studying political discourse and, in particular, Hart's (2008) methods of analyzing metaphor based on conceptual blending theory, as I discuss in detail in chapter three.

In addition, while the sociocognitive approach requires a solid structural-functional linguistic basis, I have complemented its techniques and approaches of text analysis with Fairclough's (2001) orientation towards linguistic meaning and identity as social constructions and Foucauldian notions of power as reticulated and relational. As a potential counterweight to the interpretive nature of CDA's findings, I have also drawn on, for the analysis of legacy media discourse, corpus linguistics methodologies. The electronic text analysis of a corpus of news articles in chapter three has arguably allowed me to broaden my empirical base while offering a quantitative perspective that can complement—or balance—the qualitative approach of CDA (Mautner, 2009). While the decontextualized language of corpus data is no substitute for context, it can, as Mautner has contended, still serve as comparative evidence. Furthermore, as March and Taylor (2009) have shown, while combining corpus linguistics with CDA offers

neither guarantees of validity or neutrality, it can offer researchers analytical depth and creative potential, or, as Adolphs (2006) has argued, a quantitative analysis as “a way into a more qualitative, functional analysis” (p. 119). Additionally, when analyzing the visual rhetoric and social semiotics of protesters’ Flickr and YouTube uploads, I have drawn on the approach to analyzing multimodal discourse outlined by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001).

Although the sociocognitive approach foregrounds the importance of context, Weiss and Wodak’s (2003) triangulatory method offers perhaps a more rigorous way of handling the various contextual layers involved in this research. Following their approach, I have accounted for four levels of context: 1) the microlevel linguistic analyses of the texts; 2) intertextual and interdiscursive relationships; 3) the extralinguistic sociological variables in a specific context; and 4) the broader sociopolitical and historical contexts in which the discursive practices are embedded. As a further move toward integrative interdisciplinarity, I have also supplemented my approach with the social movement research design and cyber-archeology for text collection method advocated by Zimbra, Chen, and Abassi (2010). Their framework has three phases: 1) identification of research focus (social movement of interest, associated virtual communities, and target cyber-artifacts); 2) artifact collection; 3) and analysis from social movement theory perspectives, in my case, the theoretical framework of social movement cycles outlined by Poulson (2005). Yet, because the emphasis of my research is less on the Iranian election protests as a social movement and more as an opportunity to examine discursive practices and global vernaculars in transnational public spheres, I have focused in the third phase on how protesters, as

collective actors, used symbolic resources and globalized vernaculars to discursively construct their movement together with their ideologies and identities within it. Finally, I intend that by focusing on discourse circulating out of both Iran and multiple global contexts, I have worked toward addressing Blommaert's (2005) concern regarding the typical global north insularity of CDA-based research.

The criticisms of CDA discussed above are well-considered and important, particularly the claim that results solely based on interpretation are neither replicable or generalizable. Certainly, in many disciplines, this would make CDA-derived findings little more than a set of conjectures, grounded in and informed by theory, but not scientifically objective. While these postulations might echo or reinforce those made by other researchers, perhaps like claims from the interpretation of history or literary texts, they could also contribute to reification or the stabilizing of attested bodies of knowledge (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). It would seem, then, that findings of CDA-based research hold little scientific value, that CDA is, at best, a 'soft science.' If so, why should analysts even bother? First, it must be acknowledged, both by proponents and critics of CDA, that observer bias is unavoidable, even in scientific disciplines. That is, arguing against the possibility of true objectivity is, in my view, little more than pandering to notions of philosophical relativism, with any arguments made regarding truth necessarily understood less as judgements and more as the bringing to bear of an informed individual perspective on a particular issue in the public sphere. Moreover, I hold that any attempt at denying subjectivity and reflexivity in research fails to account for the complex relations between discourse and society in which the researcher is inextricably

enmeshed (Bourdieu, 1990). Instead, CDA researchers should simply account for their biases in their research, as van Dijk (2001a) has argued:

Crucial for critical discourse analysts is the explicit awareness of their role in society. Continuing a tradition that rejects the possibility of a 'value-free' science, they argue that science, and especially scholarly discourse, are inherently part of, and influenced by social structure, and produced in social interaction. Instead of denying or ignoring such a relation between scholarship and society, they plead that such relations be studied and accounted for in their own right, and that scholarly practices should be based on such insights. Theory formation, description and explanation, also in discourse analysis, are sociopolitically 'situated', whether we like it or not. (p. 352)

Second, value-based interpretation is accepted in other disciplines, including cultural and literary studies. What this comparison perhaps, then, suggests is that CDA is not a science but a way of knowing among other ways of knowing, a mode of inquiry which, like other modes of inquiry, suggests an understanding of certain phenomena rather than indisputable facts about the world. Accordingly, the findings of our studies, including this one, might therefore be seen as arguments made in an ongoing conversation about the world and, specifically, the global transformation of society (Maingueneau, 2006). That is, though speculative, the claims of CDA retain their critical 'power' by suggesting the connections between social practices and interests, whether of dominating or dominated groups, as directions for other forms of social research and praxis (Maingueneau). Like the findings of ethnographic studies, they might even be formative of social theories, providing a measure of empirical support (van Leeuwen,

2005), just not theories themselves (Widdowson, 1998). In short, I see CDA's weakness less in its lack of methodological rigor, which can at least be partially addressed, than in the overvaluing of its findings, though that does not negate its value as a research tool, a claim I take up in chapter five.

Counterpower and Coercion, Winners and Losers: Conclusions

Activists' use of social media during the 2009 Iranian presidential election protests arguably extended their relational capacity—among each other, the Iranian diaspora, and empathetic activists around the globe—and thus became a source of counterpower. Moreover, it challenged the coercive force of the state's non-social relationships, lodged in both the government and the ruling mullahs, and its structural domination backed by violence. In a sense, although the anonymity and profligacy of social media often minimizes or obviates social actors' individual identities, the repetition of discursive practices across social media forms can both aggrandize protesters' collective agency and, perhaps ironically, humanize that counterpower. For even when networks become large and seemingly faceless, they remain social, and network connections, whether at the busiest nodes or an outlying, fractal edge, are social connections premised on communication. On the contrary, the relational capacity of an institution, such as a state government, whether viewed in its capillaries or its *dispositifs*, coheres in discourse, through practice across time and space, unhinged from individual actors and collective social imaginaries. Indeed, this somewhat spectral dispersion of power throughout society is what made such power so effective, encompassing, and, one might say, insidious.

Yet, as a potential form of resistance against this perfidy is the possibility of communication power as a form of counterpower. As Castells (2009) has argued, “to challenge existing power relationships, it is necessary to produce alternative discourses that have the potential to overwhelm the disciplinary capacity of the state as a necessary step to neutralizing its use of violence” (p. 16). Certainly, such alternative discourses could circulate in the spaces for rhetorical dissent created, in part, by the Khatami reforms. Communication within these spaces can invigorate a public sphere or, when paralleling the rise of online culture and new media, multiple, reticulated public spheres networked both inside and outside nation-state boundaries, even though it may not directly lead to social action or change (Howard, 2010). Nevertheless, as this discourse circulates across *rhizomatic networks*, pulsating at the nodes, vibrating across the transnational imaginary worlds of social agents (Appadurai, 1996; Juris, 2008), it may generate possibilities for new identifications that could influence future actions, a consideration at the heart of the analyses in the following chapters.

To examine the discourse inherent in and constitutive of these complex social relations and possibilities, I have made the argument that CDA offers suitable theoretical and methodological purchase, albeit, as its critics have justly shown, a sometimes precarious one. That a sociocognitive approach to CDA which dynamically blends top-down cognitive mental models with the bottom-up understandings of meaning making as social action seems especially pertinent to understanding the role of discourse in shaping the *sociomental spaces* of social movements in which networked identifications might be formed. But whether these understandings, or the interpretative findings of CDA research upon which they are founded, can be said to be truly liberatory

if they offer little reliability or validity, they nevertheless can be of significant critical value. By pointing out directions for other forms of research in the human and social sciences as part of the larger global project of transforming society (Maingueneau, 2006), they help sustain the belief that the social production of meaning is more influential and important than social production of coercion (Castells, 2010). Yet, perhaps a more important consideration of value is that of the protesters and activists' discursive practices I have examined. According to Blommaert (2010), globalization has created:

new and complex markets for linguistic and communicative resources...[that] include winners and losers, and many people nowadays find their linguistic resources to be of very low value in globalized environments. (p. 3)

If so, why, then, were many of the activists and protesters who used social media, at least from a communicative standpoint, 'winners'? That is, were they only successful in communicating across cross-contextual networks by using elite conduits within those global flows? Was it only because those addressing that global audience did so in English, the current 'network standard' (Grewal, 2008)? Or did their networked identifications resonate with ideological interests that allowed their mobile voices to be readily amplified by mainstream Western legacy media? And if so, does that complicate the potentially liberating process of opening up sociomental spaces in collective imaginaries through this communication? These are some of the questions I take up in the following chapters.

Chapter Three

Discursively Constructing the Protesters' Identities in U.S. Legacy Media

When news broke of the Iranian activists' use of Twitter and other social media during the post-election protests, prominent blogger Andrew Sullivan, then writing on June 13 for *The Atlantic*, was quick to dub the movement 'The Twitter Revolution,' citing the microblogging service as "a critical tool for organizing resistance" (n.p.). With a series of reports that examined the role of web-based new media in both the election campaigns and the protests that followed, legacy media outlets in the United States, such as the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, readily shared some of this initial enthusiasm, rejecting Sullivan's vainglorious epithet as cliché but extending the election news frame to accommodate the social media micronarrative and consider its possible relevance within the context of the election crisis. In his book *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of the Internet*, Evgeny Morozov (2011) has countered Sullivan's (and many other's) moment of jubilant cyber-utopianism, along with the somewhat more tepid conjecture in the initial legacy media reports, with a strong dose of skepticism about the potentially liberatory and democracy-promoting capabilities of social media which, coincidentally, happen to originate in the U.S., arguing:

the irrational exuberance that marked the Western interpretation of what was happening in Iran suggests that the green-clad youngsters tweeting in the name of freedom nicely fit into preexisting mental schema that left little room for nuanced interpretation, let alone skepticism about the actual role that the internet played at the time. (p. 5)

For Morozov, these interpretations reflected both a triumphalism and sense of Western superiority that has existed since the fall of communism in 1989. Viewed from perhaps an even wider perspective, we might also see, as argued in chapter two, how these interpretations of the Iranian protests index the ways in which globalization, power, knowledge, and ideology are caught up in a vortex of struggle (Mittelman, 2004). And not only in this struggle can we arguably see the contingent links between knowledge and political conditions, but also the discourses of modernity and tradition that have shaped Western perspectives of Iran and other Islamic countries (Rajaei, 2007). At the nexus of these discourses are, among other notions, identities and technology, including the ways in which, as discussed in chapter two, technology, in a network society, can generate both communication power and counterpower. But before considering the ways in which Iranian protesters constructed their own identities in discourse and whether their localized use of social media as acts of microresistance granted them any legitimate measure of counterpower during the election crisis, it is important to try to establish first how, within the forces of communication power expressed in the government-media nexus, protesters' were created as subjects within in the ideological discourse of U.S. news media covering the 2009 election crisis.

With these aims in mind, I present in this chapter a critical discourse analysis of a corpus of U.S. legacy newspaper articles on the key events of the 2009 Iranian elections and the protests that followed. Following the sociocognitive approach to CDA discussed in chapter two, I analyze a corpus of news reports, focusing on the discursive constructions of subjectivities and subject positions for the protesters and the defeated reformist candidate and opposition leader Mir-Hussein Mousavi. Through my analyses,

which I attempt to triangulate with the contextual analyses presented in chapter two and the selected use of corpus analyses, I intend to show that shifts in the protesters' discursive subject positions arguably index larger ideological constructions in the news discourse. Specifically, I argue that Iranian activists' identities are discursively constructed to positively correlate with hegemonic Western perspectives in ways that suggest particular U.S. responses to the Iranian election crisis. Before presenting these analyses and arguments, I first give a brief historical overview of U.S.-Iranian relations. In doing so, I aim to show how this context could constrain the news discourse and shape readers' uptake according to their ideological perspectives. Afterwards, I present the theoretical and methodological arguments for analyzing ideology in discourse.

A Contentious Couple: An Overview of Recent U.S.-Iranian Relations

In a June 13, 2009 report on the Iranian election crisis, the *New York Times* pitted the “conflicting claims” of Ahmadinejad supporters calling for order and the ratification of the election results against those of opposition demonstrators charging “election irregularities” (Worth & Fathi, 2009, June 13). The following day, as clashes broke out between protesters and government forces in what was called “the most intense protests [in Iran] for a decade,” their coverage broadened to include scenes of violence and “turmoil” in graphic language that added expressive force to the established news frame (Johnson-Cartee, 2005; Worth & Fathi, 2009, June 14). This frame was further expanded a few days later, first, with reports of complaints in Twitter feeds regarding CNN's lack of coverage on Iran, then, on the growing use of social networks in the demonstration, though it rejected Sullivan's ‘Twitter Revolution’ label as

“cliché” (Stelter & Stone, 2009, June 18).¹⁸ Although Twitter had largely inspired negative responses from legacy media before 2009 (Arceneaux-Schmitz Weiss, 2010), the *Times* did not dismiss the microblogging service as a whole. Instead, it identified some of the most popular feeds and hashtags being used in conjunction with the protests while also explaining what Twitter was and how it worked, an inclusion that might have indicated how far at that time Twitter had penetrated mainstream culture. Other mainstream media sources began covering the demonstrators’ use of social media, adding consonance to the newsworthiness of this subnarrative of the larger news frame, which, in turn, magnified the subtle indexing of the link between the opposition demonstrators and, through their use of U.S.-based social media, the West (Entman, 2004; Johnson-Cartee, 2005). In fact, despite the *New York Times*’ perhaps more cautious referencing of the Twitter Revolution as cliché, this narrative in the election crisis news frame expanded in scope, both in legacy and new media outlets, with Sullivan continuing to tout Twitter’s value as a critical organizing tool and activists encouraging Twitter users to set their backgrounds to green as a sign of solidarity with the Green Movement.

However, not all mainstream media agreed that ‘the revolution would be tweeted,’ as Sullivan had claimed, nor did they all see this coverage as just another angle in a larger news story. For *New Yorker* columnist Malcolm Gladwell (2010, 2011), the use of social media during the Iranian protests and Arab Spring uprisings was the least interesting aspect of these movements, given that Twitter and Facebook use is

¹⁸ The ostensible reason given for this gentle scoff is that the epithet had already been used to describe the April 2009 protests in Moldova, during which, it was reported, activists also used Twitter as an organizing tool. However, it is suggested that the label might also be an overstatement, at the very least, because a revolution had not occurred and did not appear imminent.

relatively low in countries where these protests occurred and, more importantly, the risks opposition demonstrators undertook in protesting. Echoing these sentiments, *New York Times* opinion columnist Frank Rich (2011) argued that mainstream television news, who, he claimed, “can’t get enough of [the Twitter Revolution] cliché,” focused on the role of social media in the protests out of commercial and economic interests as they sought to compete with the rising power and cultural cachet of web-based media—to seem ‘in the know’ about social media such as Twitter so as to appeal to the demographic most actively using it then. Even more vocal in challenging the cyber-optimistic evaluations of the role of social media in the protests was writer and researcher Evgeny Morozov (2011), who lambasted the media’s Twitter Revolution labels as cyber-utopian, arguing:

If anything, Iran’s Twitter Revolution revealed the intense longing for a world where information technology is the liberator rather than the oppressor, a world where technology could be harvested to spread democracy around the globe rather than entrench existing autocracies. (p. 5)

If Morozov is right, if the celebratory media clichés declaiming a Twitter Revolution is a further instance of capitalist triumphalism in a globalized information society, then it might also point toward what Russell and Echchaibi (2009) have claimed is the West’s post-Cold War sense of superiority toward the rest of the world. Morozov’s claim for a similarly ideological reading of the 2009 Iranian presidential election protests also indexes the complex historical and political relationship that has existed between the United States and Iran. This relationship intensified after World War I, as the United States began to assert itself further on the global stage, and Iran, after it ceased to be a

British protectorate in the 1920s, turned to the U.S. for aid and backing, which was readily offered in exchange for access to oil (Keddie, 2003). This influence grew during the Second World War, when Allied pressure forced the Shah Reza, the Iranian monarch and political leader and father of Mohammad Reza, to abdicate, after which Iran was divided by the Allies into zones of influence and control. As American troops arrived with war supplies, American officials took charge of key Iranian economic departments while American oil companies, along with the Soviet Union, began negotiating in Iran for oil concessions (Keddie). After the war, the U.S. maintained its political and economic interests in Iran, with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) participating in the 1953 *coup d'état* that brought about the overthrow of a democratically-elected government, converted the Shah Mohammed Reza from a constitutional to a absolute monarch, and shifted control of half of Iran's oil production to the hands of the world oil cartel companies (Kurzman, 2004). In Iran, the CIA's involvement in the coup, along with that of the British, was widely known, causing Iranian public opinion toward the U.S. to plummet dramatically while helping to ensure a quarter century of authoritarian rule. With the U.S. heavily influencing the Iranian government and military through advice and support, the Shah Mohammad Reza established oil and strategic policies that would favor U.S. political and economic interests. American oil companies, controlling up to 40% of consortium sales of Iranian oil, profited heavily, as did manufacturers of sophisticated military equipment, which the Shah began purchasing heavily (Keddie). A well-armed Iran served the U.S.'s regional Cold War interests, fighting communist rebels and helping to maintain stability in the volatile Middle East.

That stability ended when the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution toppled the Shah Mohammed Reza, America's best ally in the region at the time. Led by exiled spiritual leader Ayatollah Khomeini, the revolution came as a shock both to the U.S. and the West given the Shah's substantial military resources and well-armed internal security forces, along with his U.S. backing (Kurzman, 2004). Blaming the U.S. for Iran's problems, a student group affiliated with the revolution overran and occupied the U.S. Embassy in Tehran on November 4, 1979, taking 52 Americans hostage and capturing the world's attention by humiliating one of the world's superpowers (Keddie, 2003). The resulting 444-day hostage crisis brought U.S.-Iranian relations to its lowest point. In Iran, after initially wanting to distance himself from the students' actions, which he had not approved beforehand, Khomeini ultimately used the student takeover as a political opportunity to advance his political vision for Iran (Keddie). After taking the role of Supreme Leader, Khomeini rebuffed U.S. efforts to obtain the hostages' release, causing the U.S. and its allies responded with economic sanctions. But with the U.S. seen globally as humbled and geopolitically weakened as a superpower, then-President Carter ordered a rescue mission for April 24th, 1980. The mission, however, failed, leaving eight military personnel dead and creating a further huge embarrassment for Carter and the U.S. But with Iran surrounded by hostile nations, it needed sanctions lifted in order to buy weapons for self-protection, giving the U.S. some political leverage in negotiating for the hostage return (Keddie), as did the July 1980 death of the Shah Mohammed Reza, who died of cancer in exile in the U.S., which eliminated the Iranians' demand for his return. Though negotiations would continue to stall through the last days of the Carter administration, an agreement was finally reached thirty-six hours

before Carter was to leave office, though Iranian delays meant that the hostages were not released until twenty seconds after President Reagan was sworn in, causing a further humiliation of an American president by a foreign leader (Kurzman).

During the Reagan administration of the 1980s, U.S.-Iranian relations were largely marked by, on the one hand, the Iran-Contra Affair, in which the U.S. sold arms to Iran and funneled profits to finance the Nicaraguan Contra rebels after Congress had cut off legal funding, and, on the other hand, the devastating Iran-Iraq War, during which the U.S. supported the Iraqis. This intervention created widespread resentment among an Iranian population deeply scarred by the terror and tragedies of a war in which Iran suffered devastating economic losses and upwards of one million casualties, some to chemical weapons. Few Iranians survived untouched by a conflict that had made their generation a highly ideological one, with anti-American resentment high for the support given to their opponents. This feeling abated, though only slightly, during the 1990s with the election of the moderate, outward-looking Khatami to the Iranian presidency and the Clinton administration's adoption of a dual-containment policy toward Iraq and Iran that included partial economic sanctions against both countries while fending off Iran's hostility toward the Arab-Israeli peace process. After 9/11, Iran supported the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan in its fight against the Taliban, which indirectly supported U.S. interests, suggesting a possible détente between the two countries. However, when, shortly after, then-President George W. Bush aligned Iran with those countries he dubbed the 'Axis of Evil,' any feeling of trust or respect in Iran toward the U.S. rapidly dissolved into enmity.

Currently, U.S.-Iranian relations remain severely strained. This is largely due to the U.S opposition to current Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's hard-line stance, which includes provocative threats toward regional U.S. allies, particularly Israel, and economic and military support for Hezbollah, the Islamic militant group and political party currently based in Lebanon, in conjunction with Iran's continued development of its nuclear program despite massive global economic sanctions. As a result of Iran's refusal to comply with United Nations Security Council resolutions aimed at halting its development of weapons-grade enriched uranium, the somewhat softened discourse of the early stages of the first Obama administration, which sought diplomatic engagement with Iran, has grown increasingly strident. President Obama has called for further crippling economic sanctions and a 'nothing off the table' diplomatic policy that could include military intervention should Iran continue to resist full compliance with U.N. resolutions. This geopolitical tension, along with U.S. pressure on its allies, including the European Union, to uphold crippling sanctions, has polarized domestic Iranian views. On the one hand, because of what seems yet another attempt by the West to influence and control Iran, some Iranians have hardened their anti-U.S. stance while supporting their national nuclear program. On the other hand, the largely negative experience of clerical government has produced an attitudinal shift that has seen, in certain sectors, an increasingly favorable opinion of the U.S., with some, fueled by the Iranian diaspora, feeling nostalgic for the cultural freedoms of the Shah Mohammed Reza-era (Keddie, 2003). Yet, after struggling against foreign control for more than a century, and having been burned by the U.S. in the past, that upswing in popularity remains tenuous. Meanwhile, in the U.S., persistent media labels of Iran as a theocratic

or fundamentalist society or, in Bush-era discourse, a ‘rogue nation,’ continue to feed hegemonic U.S. and Western narratives about Iran that would appear to serve ideological purposes (Semati, 2008).

Discourse in Mental Spaces: Theoretical and Methodological Frameworks for Analyzing Ideology in Media Discourse

Despite the various critics who claim ours is a post-ideological age, that concepts and considerations of ideology are part of an outdated epistemology, Slavoj Žižek (1994) has argued that ideology nevertheless “seems to pop up precisely when we attempt to avoid it, while it fails to appear where one would clearly expect it to dwell” (pg. 3-4). If so, perhaps the question is not whether ideology still exists, rather what, in a network society shaped by the cultural logics of transnational flows of capital and information, *ideology* might still mean? In a neutral sense, ideology could be defined as a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view (Hodge & Kress, 1993), while pejorative connotations, such as those in contemporary discourse, would also index the polarized biases that mark contemporary U.S. political and cultural debate and division. Either way, this definition feels unsatisfactory from a socioconstructivist and cognitive perspective. Though the notions of *system* and *organize* in this definition imply the underpinnings of institutional processes and power, it nevertheless pivots on the concept of *ideas*. But the notion of a *body of ideas*, though vaguely reminiscent of Foucault’s theory of capillary power, still conceals ideology’s complex relation to institutions and individuals. In contrast, for Žižek, ideology:

can designate anything from a contemplative attitude that misrecognizes its dependency on social reality to an action-oriented set of beliefs, from the

indispensable medium in which individuals live out their relations to a social structure to false ideas which legitimate a dominant political power. (pgs. 3-4)

Though this definition is itself not without limitations, we can nevertheless see traces of broader considerations of ideology that, when unpacked, offer a useful theoretical purchase for the analysis of the discursive construction of ideology in U.S. legacy media discourse which I present later in this chapter.

In his definition, Žižek (1994) points to both institutions and individuals, structure and agency, as the loci of ideology. For Althusser (1972), ideology was in fact the relationship between the two, or, more precisely, the material practices in which that relationship is expressed. His notion of *interpellation*, the process by which an individual is 'hailed' by ideology to be a subject, encompassed what he saw as the two primary functions of ideology: recognition and misrecognition. The process of an individual recognizing himself in society's ideological ideas and beliefs is nothing more than ideology's functioning, that is, a process by which an individual is discursively constituted as a subject by seeing himself as what others say he is. Yet, this process is actually one of misrecognition because, as Žižek has also claimed, it coerces individuals into falsely seeing themselves in relation to a presentation of reality systematically organized by others, namely those in power. For Gramsci (2003), this was an expression of soft power, of an ideological hegemony by which rule was maintained not only by exploitation and force, but through the cultural dominance of ruling-class ideas that worked to control minds and thus behavior. It is in this process that ideology is naturalized, that is, becomes—or seems to, in popular understandings—

non-ideological—the normal state of affairs that shapes a group’s commonplace assumptions about the world (Blommaert, 2008; Fairclough, 2001).

Enmeshed in social relations, language has inevitably been seen as bound up with ideology. As both a form of social practice and a system of categories and rules, language is based on assumptions about the world, which constitute thought, and therefore, given the arguments above, can also be an ideological instrument of control (Hodge & Kress, 1993). Moreover, given both the primacy of language in social action as well as our dependency on commonsense assumptions when using language, ideology can be located at the level of discursive practice (Fairclough, 2001; Voloshinov, 1973). Put another way, if discourse consists of the structures, rules, and practices that produce utterances and is thereby constitutive of social relations, it is also a system of concepts and images, of ideas organized in relation to perspective, a way of understanding texts and thus ideological (Fowler, 1979). This means that if ideology is dispersed in discourse throughout social relations, it is not, as some have argued, hidden and opaque, but manifest and apparent (Hall, 1977). What is required, then, to see what can be readily seen—what is hiding in plain view—is an analysis not of language or text themselves, but the assumptions, as well as the processes that form them, in which ideology is located.¹⁹ From a structuralist perspective, this means that ideological factors, not subjectivity, determine the range and type of subject positions available to a speaker (Pêcheaux, 1982; Wallis, 2007). But poststructuralists have

¹⁹ This is to say that ideology is socially constructed through language, or discourse, but does not necessarily reside in it. That is, contra some assumptions about the hermeneutics of CDA, the goal of analysis is not to unlock meaning, or in this case, ideology, but try to indicate the process by which it is formed. If ideology is a set of organized assumptions or beliefs about the world, this suggests, as I expand on below, the need for a cognitive dimension to the analysis of ideology in discourse.

argued that individuals retain the agency to work creatively within those limits or resist and revise them (see Butler, 1990) with the view of language as discursively countering divisions between structure and agency (Talbot, 2007). How, then, to reconcile these two views, theoretically and methodologically?

One way might be to consider that ideologies, as systems of commonly-held assumptions, that is, of ideas and beliefs, are neither entirely structural nor individual, epistemological or performative, but are simultaneously social representations and cognitive constructs. Van Dijk (1998) has argued that mental models, as a theoretical construct, can serve as “an interface between socially shared representations and personal practices, that is, a theoretical device that enables us to connect social (semantic) memory with personal (episodic) memory and their respective representations” (p. 79). Built upon concepts of *schemata*, organizations of belief-clusters, and *scripts*, what people know about stereotypical cultural events, mental models consist of both personal beliefs and situated instances of social beliefs and thereby link the personal and social (Chilton, 2004; van Dijk). Moreover, because these mental models consist of both individual and social beliefs, they contribute to the formation of generalized inferences about situations. As evaluative, these inferences can help form, on the personal level, individual opinions, or, on the social level, the attitudes and values that come to constitute the ideologies that social actors and groups formulate and express in discourse. In addition, because these beliefs are formed in the mind as sets of knowledge and opinions shared by a group, ideologies can therefore be viewed as both mental and social, with mental models serving as the starting point of ideological discourse (van Dijk). With cognition, then, as the interface between society

and discourse, ideology might also be thought of as the basis of the social representations shared by members of a group, that is, not simply a systematically organized perspective, but the foundation of the abstract social beliefs that actors discursively construct as ideologies. Working from this definition, we can see that such expression could include both the discursive construction of social groups and how different groups can express their ideologies as a means of serving their interests.

Therefore, I argue that the examination of ideology in discourse—and, in particular, how groups are discursively constructed in the news—must examine the ways talk and text contribute, on a cognitive level, to the construction of these mental representations. This stance warrants my adopting a sociocognitive approach to CDA as the basis of my overall methodological approach, as explained in chapter two. As I have also argued, the top-down nature of this approach can be balanced with SFL-based, bottom-up approaches to CDA, such as those commonly used to study media discourse. But before applying that approach to the critical news discourse analysis that follows, it is important to explain, in both theoretical and methodological terms, the specific foci of a sociocognitive approach to ideology and the ways in which the analysis of news frames and metaphor fit and support that approach as well as how corpus linguistics can complement CDA.

In van Dijk's sociocognitive approach, ideology is produced discursively through the ways that text and talk contribute to the construction of mental models. This could come through the direct expression of ideological discourse or attitudes, as in manifestos or propaganda. It could also occur in the instantiation of ideological beliefs in, on the microlevel, mental models of episodic memory and/or on the macrolevel,

event models that represent general ideological attitudes in discourse about concrete events (van Dijk, 1998). This latter form of discursively-constructed ideology can be seen in the news media in the way contexts are constrained and situations defined according to conventional categories in both schematic structures and global discourses. Analysis of ideological discourse structure might also focus on the topic or semantic macrostructures that define discursive coherence expressed as commonsense facts in mental models together with rhetoric, style, and meaning, both implicit and explicit.

Metaphor. Long seen as central to linguistic expression, metaphor has been widely discussed in such domains as literary and orality studies, but its treatment in approaches to discourse has been uneven. Those approaches have tended, in part, to draw on the Hallidayan perspective of grammatical metaphors as instances of meanings typically carried out by one language choice being realized by less typical ones (Eggins, 2004). Discourse analysts have also considered metaphors as perceptions that can privilege certain language uses, for instance, referential over non-referential, or vice versa, over others (Johnstone, 2002). But in the way that perception can be a slippery concept in discourse studies, the analysis of metaphor has been inconsistent if not largely neglected in most approaches to CDA generally due to the lack of a theoretical framework within CDA to accommodate metaphor (Chilton, 2005; Hart, 2008).

In other disciplines, the analysis of metaphor, which is fundamental to human understanding, tends to emanate from a cognitive perspective: that metaphor constructs a mental framework of social knowledge and worldview in which a cognitive link emerges from the mapping of conceptually concrete source domains onto conceptually

abstract target domains (Chilton, 2004; Croft & Cruse, 2004; Kövecses, 2010). The resulting transfer of meaning produces entailments that formulate our understanding of the concept and, through the linking of common attributes, novel cognitive connections about a topic or issue (Johnson-Cartee, 2005). In this sense, metaphors both relate to reasoning and operate indexically, signaling ideology implicitly through the transfer of the ontological meanings of subjects, topics, and issues into conceptual frames more consistent with ideological purposes. (In saying that, however, it is important to note that frame representation can affect how metaphors are understood, a point which I will expand on below.) Consequently, metaphors can be considered ideological in that they help define what is taken as reality, and thus should be considered when examining the discursive construction of ideologies.

Yet, most approaches to CDA, rooted in socioconstructivism and developed, in part, as a response to the cognitive psychology of Chomskyan linguistics, tend to shy away from these cognitive considerations. But this may be a weakness of CDA, given that metaphor, like discourse, is concerned with a coherent view of reality (Hart, 2008). To reconcile, then, the bottom-up socioconstructivist underpinnings of CDA with the top-down theories of cognition, Hart has suggested employing concepts developed in cognitive linguistics to understand how metaphor works in discourse. Common approaches to metaphor, such as that of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), have typically centered on *conceptual metaphor theory*, in which source domains are mapped onto target domains, as explained above. But because target domains tend to be abstract, this approach can be conceptually problematic (Hart). Conversely, in approaches to metaphor analysis based on *conceptual blending theory*, linguistic choices are not

understood as pointing to specific elements, such as concepts, actions, or processes, but instead open up mental spaces, or “small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action” (Fauconnier & Turner, 1996, cited in Hart, 2008, p. 95). In metaphorical discourse, two different concepts are brought together into a space, or *blend*, which networks with other spaces, creating new relations of meaning (Hart).²⁰ As these relations become entrenched diachronically, metaphors become conventionalized much in the way that discourses become stabilized. It is arguably in this sense that the bottom-up socioconstructivist perspective of CDA and the top-down cognitive approach of blended theory can be seen as compatible (Hart). Because both conceptual blending and discourse occur in short-term memory but play out against conceptual forms in long-term memory, they can plausibly both be said to contribute toward the social cognitions that reside in semantic memory. As such, within CDA, in particular within the sociocognitive approach, blended theory can help link the ideological properties of metaphor with those of other discursive formations.

Ideology and news framing. Developed in communication studies (Goffman, 1974) and drawing on cognitive concepts, the concept of news framing offers a theoretical ancillary that further helps link texts—in particular, news texts, such as those analyzed below—with both the mind and ideology. In the news media, the process of framing refers to highlighting or selecting specific aspects of a news story or linking

²⁰ The emphasis here I intend to make is on relations of meaning, instead of the more coordinated meanings of conceptual metaphor theory. I see this distinction as important because, perhaps not unlike the poststructuralist qualms about Saussure’s *langue* and *parole*, a discourse-centered approach to language analysis is, in my view, more likely to accommodate, or be reconciled with, networked relations of meanings than mappings.

them in particular ways as a means of promoting a certain understanding or view of that story (Entman, 2004). As Johnson-Cartee (2005) has argued, “by framing social and political issues in specific ways, news organizations declare the underlying causes and likely consequences of a problem and establish criteria for evaluating potential remedies” (p. 26). News frames can either be substantive, which define effects, identify causes, convey judgment, and endorse response, or, most commonly, procedural, in which the legitimacy of social actors is evaluated through representations (Entman). These representational cues and devices are expressed in multimodal news discourse not only in language and visuals, but also through attention to themes, length and frequency of coverage, and types of stories, for example, hard news, features, opinion columns, or blog posts (Mody, 2010). When experienced, they prime or activate schema, our mental interpretive processes networked in clusters and nodes of ideas and beliefs stored in long-term memory (Entman). On the microlevel, this process can affect what individuals know or are aware of, what they believe regarding a certain topic or issue, and how they respond emotionally to it; on the macrolevel, it can work to maintain status quo attitudes, structures, and institutions (Johnson-Cartee, 2005). For these reasons it has been argued that news frames and narratives can also have a normative role that helps legitimate the right of groups to exist as public actors and to continuously shape discourse in sociopolitical contexts (Christians et al., 2009). This normative effect, which arguably parallels many of the ideological concepts discussed above, is strongest when frames are repeated within and across news media outlets, and thereby amplified in magnitude (Entman).

News discourse. That news discourse is a worthwhile object of language study has been well established in approaches to critical language studies, including CDA (Fairclough, 1995; Fowler, 1979, 1991; Talbot, 2007). Along with education and government, media is a key public domain of language use, with media discourse paramount in the construction of identities and circulation of shared meanings across society (Johnson & Ensslin, 2007; Talbot). With the development of communication media enmeshed in the ways modern societies have transformed, studying the media is of central concern to understanding social and cultural change (Thompson, 1995). As in other applications of CDA, the analysis of news discourse, including its articulation of ideology, means examining texts' propositional content, typically through Systemic Functional Linguistics-driven clause analysis, as well as their specific textual properties, including lexical choice, grammar and cohesion, presuppositions, implicatures, metaphors, and aspects of genre structure (Talbot).

But before discussing how best to approach the analysis of news discourse that follows, it is important to consider in more depth my rationale for doing so. In an early study of the cultural functions of the modern media, Hall (1977), working from a neo-Marxist perspective, saw ideologies, like knowledge, as materialized productions embodied in social organizations and spread through language. The media contributed to this process by selecting and privileging certain social knowledge, images, and ideologies to *encode*, in symbolic form, the preferred meanings and interpretations of the dominant social group. These preferred codes, through their selection, transmission, and reproduction, come to seem natural and universal and thereby work to shape our beliefs about the world in the ways discussed above. Moreover, as a

systematic tendency, this ideological reproduction through the media can come to classify the world within the discourse of dominant ideologies and thus contribute to reproducing structural domination.

Also informed by neo-Marxism, Fowler (1991) has argued that because news is a social construction of the world in language, it is in the media where we encounter the most common and familiar kinds of discourse that present the social ideologically. Working from Halliday's principle that linguistic form is shaped systematically by social context, representations and categorizations in discourse, such as stereotypes, can be seen as relating systematically and predictably to the context of that discourse and thus indicative as well as constitutive of it. Similarly, Hodge and Kress (1993) saw language as a potential instrument of control and therefore, by extension, with language central to the media, media as linked with the processes of discursively constructing ideologies. In particular, they claimed that the study of grammar, especially syntax, should move beyond the Chomskyan orthodoxy of linguistics as a branch of cognitive psychology to consider further the social uses of language. In doing so, it could help relate language and the mind with language and society and thereby the ways in which discursive processes constitute ideologies. In particular, they saw the critical analysis of language as providing an accessible way of analyzing the system by which individuals are categorized, through language, into the classification system of their society.

Furthermore, media discourses, according to Fairclough (1995), have the power to influence knowledge, beliefs, values, social relations, and social identities. That they do this around implicit assumptions in texts which work to construct social relations and identities in particular ways also renders them ideological. To help make these

ideological presuppositions more visible, Fairclough has called for the systematic linguistic analysis of text that, based on Hallidayan SFL, center on clauses, which roughly correspond to propositions, and the local coherence between clauses that can show in elaborations, extensions, and enhancement the nature of social relations and identities. But Fairclough concedes that this analytical approach is limited because it focuses on only a few texts and thus should be combined with a complimentary form of analysis, as I have, for the reasons given in chapter two, with both corpus linguistics and van Dijk's sociocognitive approach.

Fairclough, however, is critical of van Dijk's approach for the strict focus on representation at the expense of social relations and identities, and so, in the spirit of interdisciplinarity that both Fairclough and van Dijk have advocated for, combining the two approaches seems optimal. Furthermore, van Dijk does not call for intertextual analysis, which Fairclough sees as a vital way of moving beyond the limitations of linguistic analysis. Although, Fairclough (1995) has contended, that "language analysis can help anchor social and cultural research in a detailed understanding of the nature of media output" (p. 16), it is also important, he goes on to say, that we consider such discursive processes as intertextuality, which provides a view of language users' relations to texts in which they are variously positioned as social subjects (Scollon, 1998; Talbot, 2007).

The concept of *intertextuality*, developed by Julia Kristeva, indicates that all texts are in ongoing dialogue with past and future texts, a process by which textual meanings shape other texts (Kristeva, 2002). Underpinning this concept are Bakhtin's ideas of *dialogism* and *heteroglossia*, according to which there are, because of the social nature

of language, multiple voices in a single utterance that, when their everyday associations interact dialogically, shape texts and their meanings while producing new associations. Fairclough has employed Kristeva's theory to illuminate the relational nature of discourse by extending her definition of intertextuality into the formation of discourses (Mills, 2004). This means placing intertextuality within a social context and emphasizing its role as a mechanism of discursive change. According to Fairclough (1992), intertextuality "points to the productivity of texts, to how texts can transform prior texts and restructure existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones" (p. 103). Fairclough further distinguishes between two types of intertextuality, manifest and constitutive. While the former refers to the ways in which quoted utterances are selected, changed, and contextualized in texts, the latter describes how texts are constituted by heterogeneous elements, such as style, register, generic conventions, and discourse types. According to Fairclough, this distinction is crucial because it helps discourse analysts account for how texts are produced in relation to specific social and discursive practices. For this reason, intertextuality can illuminate how certain discourse types come to dominate discourse along with the strategic effects behind them, which would include ideological assumptions, as demonstrated by Wodak and Meyers (2009), who utilized intertextuality to trace the constitution of anti-Semitic stereotypes in an Austrian presidential campaign. Similarly, Li (2009) has explored how various linguistic features of a text and numerous aspects of its organization are shaped by intertextuality and thereby show how the discourse of conflicts represented in daily newspapers works to establish social relations and construct national identities. Given

the relevance of this approach to my analytical aims, I have drawn on it, together with the methods and theories above, in the analysis that follows.

A Fluid Continuum of Ideologies: U.S. Legacy Media Analysis

As discussed above, because the news is a social construction of the world in language, it can arguably be linked with the discursive construction of ideologies. Accordingly, early news discourse theorists, such as Hodge and Kress (1993), contended that the media could help relate language and the mind with language and society in ways that support dominant social groups in charge of the media. In this belief, Lash (2002) has argued that “the media are weapons of ideology through which the dominant class can enforce a system of beliefs on the subordinate social classes that will reinforce the domination of the dominant classes” (p. 67). That is, with dominant groups in charge of the media, the media could be a potential instrument of control.

But the widespread and profound social transformations that have produced increasingly dense global networks of connectivity and communication have both accelerated news circulation across the globe and decentralized news gathering processes (McNair, 2006). As a result, long-established legacy media hierarchies and strategies have become integrated with, if not undermined by, new media mobilities and tactics (Boler, 2008). For McNair, this has necessitated, in the sociology of news, a shift from a control to a chaos paradigm. Whereas a control paradigm emphasized the maintenance of social asymmetries through the communication of elite hegemonic ideologies to a passive audience, a chaos paradigm, though continuing to acknowledge the elite’s desire for control, sees that control as interrupted and challenged by the

potential of an active audience's dissent from elite accounts, in part, through participatory forms of new media. Not only has this destabilized existing legacy media hierarchies, but controlling ideological hegemonies of the news have given way to ideological competition in a chaotic news environment defined by plurality and unpredictability (McNair). That is, the media no longer tend to set ideological agendas, but follow them (el-Nawawy, 2010). Admittedly, in a U.S. media environment currently marked by explicit ideological polarities and unabashed efforts in those media outlets to shape discourse, political or otherwise, the notion of a fluid continuum of ideologies may seem counterintuitive, especially when looking at the poles, where, as Saunders (2007) has said, the 'braindead' ideological megaphones are turned up the loudest. But in legacy media outlets such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, which tend to position themselves as centrists, the fluidity, as I intend to show in my analyses, is, though oblique, more apparent. It is also, therefore, arguably more complex in that, without the clear stance-taking at the outer-reaches of the politico-media complex spectrum, the subtle and implicit ideological shifting, especially within the hard news genre, can be harder for readers to process cognitively. That is, in a chaos paradigm, the center of so-called centrist media outlets is more fluid than fixed, and thus more difficult for readers to identify ideologically. For this reason, when analyzing news discourse, we can no longer justly say the news is wholly manufactured or constructed, but instead is emergent and contingent, with consensus giving way to dissensus and old 20th-century bipolarities yielding to the more fluid ideologies of a globalized network of information and cultural flows (McNair).

To try to account for this shift from control to chaos and support that theory with evidence, I have analyzed, as a case study, a corpus of news articles and reports in U.S. online newspapers on the 2009 Iranian presidential election. My approximately 200,000-word corpus consists of 217 news articles collected through the LexisNexis Academic search tool from six leading U.S. newspapers: *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Daily News*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*. With the exception of the last source, all are among the top ten daily newspapers by circulation.^{21,22} All the articles were published between June 1-30, 2009, a date range chosen to include the final days of the election run up, the election itself on June 12, and the election certification by the Iranian Supreme Council on June 30.²³ For my linguistic analyses, I have strived for balance by selecting texts from each source in the corpus, though I have inevitably looked at a higher number of *New York Times* and *Washington Post* articles simply because they published a larger number of reports on the topic during that date range. As further linguistic backdrop for both this evidence and as a potential counterweight to the interpretative findings of CDA-based analyses such as mine, I have compared, when applicable, my analyses with results from the electronic text analysis of my entire corpus as well as the BYU

²¹ Source: Alliance for Audit Media. <http://www.auditedmedia.com>

²² Though not as widely circulated as the other newspapers in my corpus, I have included *The Christian Science Monitor* for the sake of balance, which, as Adolphs (2006) has argued, is crucial to corpus construction. By balance here, I mean not in this newspaper's political orientation; rather, that legacy media outlets such as this not necessarily trying to compete directly with high circulation newspapers might offer alternative perspectives that could help favorably diversify the corpus.

²³ Note: For the sake of consistency and comparison, I have used this same date range when constructing the Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube corpuses analyzed in chapters four and five.

Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).²⁴ In the analyses that follow, I look for evidence of the fluid ideological conjecture discussed above, first, in the shifting discursive positioning of the reformist candidate Mousavi as an opposition leader; then, in the apparent strategies with which protesters' identities were discursively constructed, with an emphasis on the interdiscursive links between the protesters and their use of social media. In analyzing my research corpus around these particular themes and keywords, I aim to complement existing analyses of media discourse about this event, such as the comparative textual analysis of CNN and Al-Jazeera English coverage by el-Nawawy (2010), in which, it was concluded, CNN's more biased coverage reflected the historically tense U.S.-Iranian relations.

Fluid ideologies. In the run up to the June 12 election, reformist candidate and former Prime Minister Mir-Hossein Mousavi had emerged as the primary challenger to incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Given Ahmadinejad's open hostility to the West, especially to the U.S. and its regional ally Israel, together with the U.S.'s regional geopolitical aims discussed in chapter two, it is perhaps unsurprising that, in ideologically-framed news discourse, the hard-line incumbent, as Ahmadinejad is typically labelled, is less preferred to the reformist Mousavi. In the June 12 *New York Times* election-run up report "In Iran, a Real Race, and Talk of a Sea Change," Mousavi is labelled as "pragmatic," an adjective which appears in connection with Mousavi eleven times in the corpus, or as frequently, as *theocracy*, *politician*, and *vote-rigging* (see Figure 3.1).²⁵

²⁴ For the electronic text analysis of my research corpus I used the Simple Concordance Program (v. 4.09), a concordance tool freely available for download from the internet.

²⁵ See Appendix A for full-text versions of analyzed articles from the U.S. legacy news research corpus.

pragmatic	
52	/oreover, in an attempt to be pragmatic, Obama wants to keep
230	moral course; it is the most pragmatic and realistic./4./une
345	moral course; it is the most pragmatic and realistic./10./une
1757	around the world has become a pragmatic politician who firmly
1775	from a revolutionary to a pragmatic manager," said Masoud
2109	is a third group of more pragmatic military and security
2207	back down, establishing the pragmatic tone he would set on
2812	evolved over time to a more pragmatic view, analysts say./
3546	hard-liners and the more pragmatic conservatives. This time
4009	of government, wanted a more pragmatic approach to the economy
4351	analysts say. He is more pragmatic than Mr. Khatami, and

Figure 3.1. Election corpus KWIC results for *pragmatic*

As the COCA corpus data in Figure 3.2 shows (as well as line 1 of the key word in context data in Figure 3.1) the adjective *pragmatic* has also been used in the media to describe President Obama, who had, at the time, recently won a historical election.

Within the Iranian election news frame, this lexical choice, then, could cue both episodic and semantic memories that might suggest, if not equivalence as change agents, then perhaps political compatibility.

I roommate Lisa were psychotherapists. # Both Alinsky and **Obama** are highly **pragmatic**, self-described change agents, too. lesire for a full freeze. # But when **Obama**, following his **pragmatic** instinct, gave George Mitchell, his special envoy to the omise and bipartisan cooperation and scoffed at the claim that **Obama** was a **pragmatic**, post-ideological, post-partisan, post the evidence of his actions. The " **pragmatic** " **Obama** is only interested in " what works " as long as " what works " Since his start in the Illinois legislature, calling **Obama pragmatic** has been a handy way of capturing his conciliatory tone, his ance was hardly necessary. After all, everything **Obama** does is **pragmatic**. His adviser David Axelrod let it be known just af knowledge gained through action over theory and concepts. **Obama** has been **pragmatic** in this sense when it comes to, say, t st part, though, Duffy said, **Obama** sounded like the **pragmatic** technocrat and steady intellectual that he is. " It was ll, that people are growing weary with **Obama's pragmatic** humility overseas: A mini-furor erupted in the U.S. when he bowe better represent the kind of **pragmatic** coalition-building that **Obama** espouses. Wynn worked to convince voters that he had ner military advisers could prove smooth and productive if **Obama** takes the **pragmatic** approach that his advisers are indica

Figure 3.2. BYU COCA KWIC results for *Obama* collocated with *pragmatic* n±4.

That is, this label might also be seen as a means of constructing Mousavi as the candidate most likely to be amenable to the policy of diplomatic engagement with Iran proposed by the Obama administration early in his first term and thus, by entailment, legitimate a particular U.S. response to the Iranian election crisis. Moreover, by

entailment, if *pragmatic* is understood as evaluative and thus, from a Western perspective that values secular rationality over theocratic traditionalism or, at its extreme, radical dogma, it arguably might also imply that Obama, as a fellow pragmatist, should support Mousavi, first, as a candidate and, later, as the election crisis began and the news frame grew, as an opposition leader (Silverstein, 2003). That is, for readers who share this set of beliefs, this type of description plausibly creates not only Mousavi as a subject, but also subject positions for both him and, through interdiscursivity, Obama to occupy.

Cohering with this label were the descriptions in June 4 and June 12 *Washington Post* articles of Mousavi as “a painter and architect” and “an urbane, soft-spoken architect,” in which these post-positional appositives create a sense of equivalency between agent and noun phrase (Fairclough, 2003). Cohering with the pragmatist label, this discursive construction of Mousavi as a rational, level-headed candidate, as both a renaming and a definition, sets up an implicit comparison with the widely established discursive constructions of Ahmedinejad as the volatile, hard-line incumbent. A similar strategy can be seen in a June 12 *Christian Science Monitor* article, in which a quotation from an opposition supporter who calls Mousavi a “a correct thinker” is pulled into a subhead. Not only does this label seem to cohere with the *Times*’ construction of Mousavi as “pragmatic,” but it amplifies the emphasis already given to this reported speech by creating a powerful intertextual reference in which the Mousavi supporter’s words are appropriated into the text’s macrostructure.

Such constructions, which could be seen as positively correlated with hegemonic Western perspectives, are extended in a June 8 *New York Times* article in which the

contentious run-up debates and campaigns are described as a “carnival,” a description which is repeated in a post to its news blog a day after the June 12 election.²⁶ This metaphor suggests that Iranian politics are unruly, loosely-regulated and, perhaps irrational. This conceptual blend coheres with other representations of the pre-election events, as in the June 8 *New York Times* article which described the final presidential debates as “raucous” and an evening rally in Tehran as a “screaming, honking bacchanal.” From Western perspectives, the IRANIAN POLITICS AS IRRATIONAL metaphor, while arguably deprecating and condescending, could work, through entailment, to implicitly call into question the legitimacy of the election process and, by extension, the notion of democracy in Iran (Chilton, 2004). If so, under the presupposition that legitimately democratic governments are rational, this mapping would suggest that, on the one hand, it is possible that any doubt raised about the democratic practices and/or legitimacy of an Ahmadinejad government could serve as further justification for a U.S. response.²⁷ This could include maintaining the lack of formal diplomatic relations with Iran and its status under George W. Bush as a ‘rogue nation’ as well as the strong economic sanctions levied against Iran for defying United Nations sanctions regarding its nuclear program. Even more, a discourse of delegitimization, whether explicit or implicit, could become a pretext for military intervention, a consideration that had in fact been raised during the Bush-era and was debated during the 2008 U.S. presidential elections. On the other hand, if this metaphor

²⁶ *The New York Times*’ blog *The Lede*, like the blogs on many online newspapers, offers regularly updated news coverage alongside the news reports and articles which appear in the print editions.

²⁷ Prior the 2009 Iranian election, concerns about election had been raised by the U.S. State Department, given the charges of voting irregularities the accompanied the first Ahmadinejad election in 2005.

is, as I argue, operating indexically, it could also be questioning, from a different ideological stance, the value and rationality of nation-building as part of American global geopolitical strategy. In fact, this latter interpretation gathers some weight as after the election, both in the *New York Times* and other sources in the corpus, the very notion of democracy as compatible with a theocratic Iranian society is questioned, as in the June 18 editorial “Reading Tea Leaves in Tehran” in the *Christian Science Monitor*:

This basic tension between an *Islamic dictatorship* and the popular principles of democracy has kept Iran in *political turmoil and economic backwardness* ever since the 1979 revolution. Yet even if the candidate backed by the protesters, Mir Hossein Mousavi, should somehow take power, it is likely the country would shift only slightly toward more tolerance of popular will and openness while the *top clergy would retain ultimate powers* [emphasis added]. (p. 8)

Like the Bush-era labels of Iran as a fundamentalist society or rogue nation in the ‘Axis of Evil,’ metaphorical descriptions of Iranian politics as ‘irrational’ could cohere to established U.S./Western ideological discourses of Iran as a theocracy run by ‘mad mullahs’ (Semati, 2008). Given how conceptual metaphorical blends can both network with news frame representations and shape reasoning (Chilton), this type of discursive construction, in the fluid ideological context of a chaos news paradigm, might influence the stores of structured cultural knowledge and social beliefs needed to support a variety of political—even military—responses to Iran and the election crisis.

The semantic meaning of Mousavi as a pragmatist in a carnivalesque political atmosphere is extended and deepened when, in the same June 8 *New York Times* article, Mousavi is described as “less confrontational” than his rival. Against the

backdrop of the IRANIAN POLITICS AS IRRATIONAL metaphor, the more favorable notion of a rational pragmatist is further established, with the comparative structure working to further contrast the stances of the two leading candidates. While this move is understandable in a news analysis that seeks to present the leading presidential candidates to a foreign audience potentially unfamiliar with them (at least in the case of Mousavi), the negative comparative form collocated with the emotionally-charged *confrontational* could index a preferred view of passivity and rationality that would likely suit a Western hegemonic agenda (Chilton, 2004). Considered metaphorically, that is, POLITICS AS CONFLICT, this lexical choice also opens up a space in which Mousavi, as a pragmatist, is networked with nodes of semantic meaning related to Middle East stability and relations between the U.S. and Israel, its strongest regional ally and the target of numerous aggressive verbal threats from the Ahmadinejad regime, as summarized in Figure 3.3.

Political Metaphor	Examples of discursively linked and related terms
IRANIAN POLITICS AS IRRATIONAL	<p>"Islamic dictatorship" (<i>Christian Science Monitor</i>)</p> <p>"political turmoil and economic backwardness" (<i>Christian Science Monitor</i>)</p> <p>"top clergy would retain ultimate powers" (<i>Christian Science Monitor</i>)</p> <p>"carnival" (<i>New York Times</i>)</p> <p>"raucous" (<i>New York Times</i>)</p> <p>"screaming, honking bacchanal" (<i>New York Times</i>)</p>
POLITICS AS CONFLICT	<p>"lesser of two evils" (<i>Daily News</i>)</p> <p>"ease tensions with the West and especially with Israel" (<i>Daily News</i>)</p> <p>"less confrontational" (<i>New York Times</i>)</p> <p>Mousavi as a (non-confrontational) "urbane, soft-spoken architect" (<i>Washington Post</i>)</p> <p>"the only serious alternative for those who oppose the policies of Ahmadinejad" (<i>Washington Post</i>)</p> <p>"the only guy who can beat Ahmadinejad" (<i>Washington Post</i>)</p>

Figure 3.3. Political metaphors with linked and related terms from the U.S. legacy news corpus

Arguably, these metaphors and the network of discursive entailments that help form them work to link the wider shared representations of social/semantic memory with personal/episodic memory in a way that could shape social beliefs toward a particular ideological perspective. Moreover, a lexical choice like *confrontational* can activate schemata linked to U.S.-Iranian relations, currently centered on the political standoff over the Iranian nuclear program and historically marked by tension and mistrust. As such, indirectly raising the nuclear standoff topic within the election news frame could function ideologically by clustering beliefs about the present with those in readers' episodic memories, thereby shaping, on individual levels, mental models about the election crisis and larger sociocultural beliefs regarding Iran. What, in turn, would result from these more favorable descriptions of Mousavi in the pre-election reports is the discursive construction of a candidate possibly more amenable to U.S. geopolitical aims for the region and thus the candidate the U.S. should support, a suggestion that would underscore the ideological constructions in the media discourse discussed above. Arguably, this could also index the government-media nexus, in which the mesh of interdependence between the media and politics creates cognitive constraints in which traditional geopolitics shapes representations of foreign events and media discourse becomes a space in which global elites can negotiate political positions (Mody, 2010).

Further evidence of this stance might be seen in the explicit representations in a June 13 *Daily News* article in which Mousavi is described as “the lesser of two evils” for the U.S. Supporting this label is the reported speech of an opposition supporter who dubbed Mousavi “our Obama” and the positing of the prevailing conventional political thinking of unidentified “experts” who have said that “a Mousavi victory might ease

tensions with the West and especially with Israel.” Some might argue, and justly so, that the tabloid-format *Daily News*, whose infotainment factor is noticeably—and, perhaps, purposefully and explicitly—higher than in broadsheets like the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, is a less reliable source for measuring the seeming opacity of ideological media discourse. Nevertheless, the institutional power of the *Daily News*, through its wide circulation, remains similar to the broadsheets and thus relevant to understanding how these meanings are constructed and circulated both in discourse and their fluid ideological context.

Representations of Mousavi, however, began to shift in the days immediately following the election, as the contested results brought opposition supporters onto the streets and into conflict with government and paramilitary forces. In a June 8 *Washington Post* article, Mousavi was described as largely unknown to the Iranian youth population:

Each night, tens of thousands of youths gather in Tehran's main squares to cheer their support for a man who just a month ago they barely knew by name. Mousavi has emerged as *the only serious alternative for those who oppose the policies of Ahmadinejad*, who has the support a small group of *hard-line clerics* and some influential members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps.

"Mousavi will make us free," a girl shouted from a car Saturday night, waving at the masses of young supporters. "I don't really know who he is. But he is *the only one that can beat Ahmadinejad* [emphasis added]. (Erdbrink, 2009, June 8, p.A6)

After the June 12 election, however, as the crisis began to develop, Mousavi is discursively positioned as the face of a ‘wired’ opposition, as can be seen in the evidence summarized in Figure 3.4.

Source	Date	Example
<i>Washington Post</i>	June 14	Mousavi, who had said on Friday that he won, posted a statement on his Web site rejecting the vote tally as rigged.
<i>Christian Science Monitor</i>	June 16	it seems [Ahmedinejad supporters] have underestimated, not only the crowds, but Mr. Mousavi
<i>New York Times</i>	June 16	A couple of Twitter feeds have become virtual media offices for the supporters of the leading opposition candidate, Mir Hussein Moussavi....Mr. Moussavi's fan group on Facebook has swelled to over 50,000 members, a significant increase since election day.
<i>New York Times</i>	June 18a	the opposition candidate Mir Hussein Moussavi was using his public profile page on Facebook to organize protests scheduled for Thursday
<i>New York Times</i>	June 18b	...dismissive toward Mr. Moussavi, when he has become a symbol of freedom and democracy in Iran....Mr. Moussavi, who is rapidly becoming a political icon in Iran...

Figure 3.4. Research corpus evidence of discursive links between Mousavi and social media/technology.

In the notion that identities can be discursively constructed according to ideological beliefs not only through descriptions, but also representations of actions, roles, and affiliations (van Dijk, 1998), the conjoining of Mousavi with references to the web and social media services originating in the U.S., as seen in the examples in Figure 3.4, could plausibly create a cognitive link between them. In addition, the establishment in the news frame of semantic links between technology, democracy, and the opposition helps further cohere the cluster of meanings and associations of Mousavi’s globally-oriented, modern identity discussed above. Furthermore, the implicit connections established in the parallel clause structure in the second example could create a local

cognitive coherence in readers' mental models between the reformist candidate and the protesters, in particular the urban youth activists who are thought to be an ideological, highly wired generation open to the influence of Western culture and ideas, as discussed in chapter two (van Dijk, 1998).

While these constructions of Mousavi's identity in the evolving news frame may have reflected the context and political realities of the election aftermath (Johnson-Cartee, 2005), in which opposition supporters rallied more specifically behind Mousavi, and Mousavi himself actively took up the mantle of populist opposition leader, this shift in the media discourse nevertheless can be seen as working to create an identity for Mousavi—wired and popular with the youth—that, as argued above, resonates with characterizations of then newly-elected President Obama, whose use of social media during his historical 2008 campaign was widely reported. As Morozov (2011) has argued, the linking of technology with the spread of democracy is not only an example of cyber-utopianism, but also highly problematic because of how it obscures the ways authoritarian regimes, such as Ahmadinejad's, use technologies in repressive ways. Furthermore, this construction of Mousavi's identity helps create a micronarrative within the larger news frame: the rational pragmatist of the political carnival steps forward as an advocate for democracy by resisting the alleged vote-rigging of the authoritarian regime on behalf of the *demos*. By arranging readers' comprehension process in this ideological way (van Dijk), the identity of Mousavi, the defeated challenger, is reconstructed in the discourse as an opposition leader in a manner that, during a crisis over the legitimacy of Iran's presidential election results, works to legitimate his position according to U.S. hegemonic perspectives.

‘Murky motives’: Shifting subjectivities. As the election crisis developed, however, and the main legacy media election news frame started to grow with the appropriation of other micronarratives, earlier constructions of Mousavi’s identity are complicated and, to an extent, problematized. In a June 18 *New York Times* article profiling Mousavi as the challenger around which the opposition had rallied, he is described as:

an *accidental leader*, a moderate figure anointed at the last minute to represent a popular upwelling against the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. He is *far from being a liberal in the Western sense*, and it is not yet clear how far he will be willing to go in defending the broad democratic hopes he has come to embody.

Mr. Moussavi, 67, is *an insider* who has moved toward opposition, and his motives for doing so remain *murky* [emphasis added]. (Worth, 2009, June 18).

Similarly, in a June 17 *Washington Post* editorial, Mousavi is defined as “a veteran of the 1979 revolution who promised a restoration to its true principles.” While factually accurate, the link to the Islamic Revolution in Iran, by that time well-established in the news frame through descriptions of the opposition crowds being regularly described as the largest in Tehran since 1979, works to complicate identifications of Mousavi as a pragmatic leader whom the U.S. might be able to engage diplomatically to defuse the ongoing standoff over Iran’s nuclear program. Furthermore, taking up the view of van Dijk (1998) that “lexical and grammatical style is one of the most obvious means speakers have to explicitly express or subtly signal their ideological opinions about events, people, and participants” (p. 272), the lexical choices *restoration* and *true principles* arguably index the conservative orthodoxies with which Iran is typically

framed in Western news media reports (Semati, 2008). If so, this construction would destabilize earlier ones which distanced Mousavi from the hard-line Ahmadinejad and aligned him more closely with rational Western views. In their place is the construction of a “murky” subjectivity linked, through the past, to the Islamic Revolution and, in the present, to possibly opportunistic, and therefore, cynical motives. Admittedly, this historically contextualized portrayal of Mousavi could be seen as an effort within the media, as the election crisis unfolded, to develop and expand the earlier less nuanced constructions discussed above. If so, it would allow readers to form a more complex understanding of both Mousavi as a political actor and his role in the evolving news story. Nevertheless, it is also possible that in a chaotic media environment, identities can be readily rendered as abstractions that, through the subtle process of shifting signals I have traced above, are then more easily manipulated according to ideological purposes.

These shifts, summarized in Figure 3.5, show how the changing, or complicating, labels discussed above work to construct Mousavi in relation to dominant U.S. ideologies. With the +/- of the y-axis referring to values and ideals commonly associated with the West, such as pragmatism and democracy, it appears that, as the election crisis unfolded, Mousavi was constructed as a leader increasingly less likely to be amenable to diplomatic engagement and nuclear talks. If so, this might help legitimize—or create new arguments for—a certain response by the U.S. to the election crisis. Moreover, as the connecting lines intend to show, these labels create clusters of networked meaning that index a complex set of social beliefs. In some instances, as indicated by the dashed lines, they also cohere across clusters such that the mental

representations signaled by these constructions could reflect shifting and various political interests in the media discourse. While, to a certain extent, in a context in which both information about the election aftermath was compromised by the Iranian government's communication blockades and censorship policies, and understandings in the U.S. of local events in Iran is colored by political and historical strains, past and present, between the two countries (Johnson-Cartee, 2005; Mody, 2010), a changing, even contradictory, understanding of Mousavi, as challenger-cum-opposition leader, is understandable. Nevertheless, I argue it is hard not to see the bearing of certain interests encoded in these discursive constructions of Mousavi's identity. These could range from the apparent wholesale skepticism of the *Christian Science Monitor* toward any popularly-elected Iranian leader or the cautious optimism of the more centrist New York Times, a position that for the most part paralleled that of the Obama administration's in contrast to Republican' generally more triumphalist, 'Twitter Revolution' rhetoric. Moreover, this flux might also substantiate McNair's (2006) claims that U.S. legacy media, drawing at least initially on reports coming from Tehran through new media, have become less constitutive of and more responsive to the discursive construction of ideologies. If so, this would not discount legacy media's power to shape ideologies and identities, but it could ask important questions about the reach or effects of that power in a decentered news environment. It might also force us to consider how we analyze both that power and the discourses that work to constitute it.

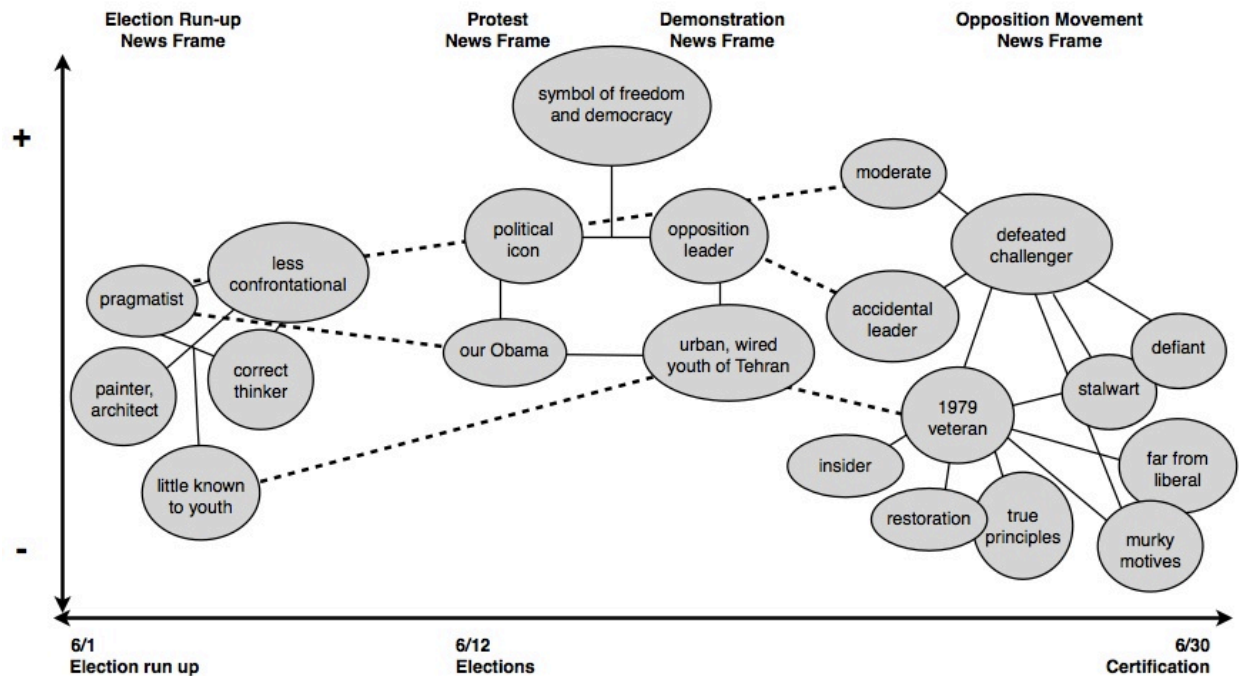


Figure 3.5. Conceptual blending networks of constructions of Mousavi in U.S. legacy media.

Discursive constructions of the protesters. Like the ideologically-shaped representations of Mousavi discussed above, the labeling of protesters in U.S. legacy media also suggests implicit interests favorable to U.S. geopolitical aims. During the immediate election aftermath, early reports of confrontations between opposition demonstrators and government forces emphasized the violence of those clashes. Graphic lexical choices describe scenes of unrest, chaos, bloodshed, repression, and resistance that charge the reports with an affective power which may reflect the tendency of media discourse to increasingly conflate news with entertainment (Fairclough, 1995; Scollon, 1998; Silberstein, 2004). If so, this might, in the case of the early coverage of the opposition, construct readers as sympathetic toward protesters as underdogs being repressed by powerful government and paramilitary forces. This, however, is not to suggest that all U.S. media representations of the protesters in the

early stages of the election aftermath carried this particular emotional valance, as seen in the examples presented in Figure 3.6.

Source	Date	Example
<i>Washington Post</i>	June 14	Supporters of defeated candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi burned dumpsters, threw stones and clashed with police in the worst rioting in Tehran in many years
<i>Daily News</i>	June 16	Showing inspiring courage , hundreds of thousands flowed onto Tehran streets in a rage over the preposterous result of Friday's election.
<i>New York Times</i>	June 14	...clusters of young men hurled rocks at a phalanx of riot police officers...

Figure 3.6. Examples of agentive identity constructions of the protesters in the research corpus.

Whereas passive clausal constructions in discourse can deprive social actors of agency, the active constructions in these examples works to represent the protesters as agentive. However, in these examples, agency could plausibly be understood as either empowered and (though enraged) bravely resistant, as in the second example, or violent, as evidenced in the expressive value of emotive active verbs such as *burn* and *hurl* and the nominative *riot* in the first and third examples. Arguably, constructions of empowered protesters challenging the disputed election results would likely resonate with a U.S. audience, whose civic and political enculturation rests on historical mythos of resistance against oppression in the struggle for democracy. That is, by implicitly indexing readers' mental models and episodic memory in which civil protest, as inherent in the rights to free speech and assembly, is an attribute and positive condition of democracy, such representations could help create an audience sympathetic with the protesters and the opposition movement. If so, it might also index a wider ideological

discursive construction of U.S. geopolitical aims and strategies that cohere around theories of spreading democracy and nation-building. But descriptions of protesters' unrest could also establish what Boykoff (2006) has called the *violence frame* that tends to dominate mass media coverage of social movements. According to Boykoff, legacy media's cueing of the violence frame within the larger news narrative of the social movement may clash with the impetus for the demonstrations themselves, in this case the disputed election results. What is more, once a violence frame is established in the discourse, as Boykoff has shown, it can be easily re-evoked, even through entailment when protests are reported as peaceful, that is, non-violent, as was the case with subsequent demonstrations organized by the Iranian opposition movement. How these various potential interpretations might index particular ideologies is not definite. But regardless of interpretation, these representations suggest the potential for larger unrest, if not revolution, an implicit syllogism made plausible by news frame references to the 1979 revolution that had caught the world by such surprise (Kurzman, 2004).

As coverage of the growing opposition demonstrations expanded over the following days, representations of individual resistance and, at times, violence tended to give way to depictions of mass gatherings, with the lexis *crowd* appearing with greater frequency later in the research corpus for a total of 66 tokens. Cohering to metaphorical mappings common to the descriptions of crowds, the mass gatherings of protesters are repeatedly referred to as a *sea*, as seen in the data from the research corpus presented

in Figure 3.7, which also shows examples of non-metaphorical usage of sea, as references to the Caspian Sea, which borders Iran to the north.²⁸

sea	
238	Moses on the shores of the Sea of Reeds, his staff raised
636	Vali-e Asr Street amid a sea of green, the opposition's
671	between the oil-rich Caspian Sea and the oil-rich Persian Gulf
1124	Sq. will turn into a sea of green, biggest march in
1474) Street, the march became a sea of people eight across and
1512	and unrest in the Caspian Sea city of Rasht and the central
1689	pouring into the tunnel, a sea of women with sunburned faces
1856	in Roodsar, near the Caspian Sea./Things like bombs on airplanes
1917	is great.'/'There was a sea of people and the crowd stretched
2088	a nuclear problem./his is a sea change. Iran has been denuclearized
3353	and samizdat video showing a sea of people at least tens of
3464	of people is unbelievable - SEA OF GREEN -/ am returning to
3494	posted one hour ago:/oday - Sea of Green - Imam Khomeine Sq
3684	- Mousavi will lead Sea of Green - #Iraelection RT
3720	were hundreds of thousands of Sea of Green -/hanting 'my brother
3800	Haft Tir - 7 Tir Sq for sea of green - reports afterward
4340	a Real Race, and Talk of a Sea Change BYLINE: By ROBERT F
4429	followers, who formed a human sea of people that blocked traffic
4852	victory yesterday after a sea of voters swamped polling stations
4876	NEWS (LENGTH: 494 words/ sea of Iranians deluged polling

Figure 3.7. Concordances of sea in the research corpus.

As the examples from the BYU COCA in Figure 3.8 show, *sea of people* is an established collocation and metaphorical construction. In that corpus, the highest frequency of overall occurrence (32%) is in the fiction genre while within the newspaper genre (11% of all tokens), the highest frequency of occurrence is in the lifestyle sections. Arguably, this data suggests support for the trends in media, as mentioned above, toward entertainment and conversational discourse.

²⁸ The lexis *green* in the corpus data refers to the color largely adopted by Mousavi and opposition supporters and worn during demonstrations as a symbol of unity and, given that green is the traditional color in Islam, identity.

2010	SPOK	Fox_Beck	A	B	C	, it's one mile from the Capitol back to the Monument. And that sea of people goes all the way! That's one mile long!
2009	SPOK	CNN_Cooper	A	B	C	weighing in on Iran; that as the world -- the whole world watches a sea of people marching and at least one person
2009	SPOK	CNN_Cooper	A	B	C	weighing in on Iran, that as the world, whole world, watches a sea of people marching and at least one person dying
2009	SPOK	CNN_Cooper	A	B	C	President Obama weighing in on Iran. That as the whole world watches. A sea of people marching, and at least one
2009	SPOK	Fox_Hannity	A	B	C	. Why would they continue attacking the American people? Why would they diminish the sea of people out there this
2009	NEWS	CSMonitor	A	B	C	, and the light crowd intensified. By daylight, they were trapped in a sea of people , with even adults and teenagers c
2008	SPOK	CBS_Early	A	B	C	Ms-FERNANDEZ: Slow dancing was fun. Ms-YANIZ: Yeah. RODRIGUEZ: In that sea of people that night, there was or
2008	NEWS	Houston	A	B	C	. I stake out a place in a corner of the upper gallery in a sea of people and listen to something such as Alopecia (yo
2007	SPOK	CBS_SunMorn	A	B	C	dream when I was younger was I wanted to have -- I just wanted a sea of people to sing the words that I was singi
2007	NEWS	Atlanta	A	B	C	for the phone to ring and the tiring search for your soul mate in the sea of people . # My parents, grandparents, aun
2006	SPOK	CNN_OnStory	A	B	C	for you to be standing up in the middle of all these people, a sea of people , particularly journalists who are meant to
2005	SPOK	NPR_Morning	A	B	C	, the hotel Royal Palm. All the people ran away. XAYKAOTHAO: A sea of people were seen running toward the hills i
2005	NEWS	Houston	A	B	C	so he got into her car and headed to the Astrodome. Inside was another sea of people . In the cavernous Dome, the

Figure 3.8. Examples of the phrase *sea of people* in the BYU COCA.

In the research corpus, this CROWD AS FLUID metaphor mapped by the source domain *sea* creates a blended space in which other fluid-related lexical choices can cohere to the established metaphor, as seen in the examples in Figure 3.9.

Source	Date	Example
<i>USA Today</i>	June 15	The parallels between the present outpouring and the 1970s uprisings
<i>Washington Post</i>	June 16	the march became a sea of people
<i>Daily News</i>	June 16	Showing inspiring courage, hundreds of thousands flowed onto Tehran streets
<i>New York Times</i>	June 18	tens of thousands [of protesters] who again flooded the streets
<i>New York Times</i>	June 19	Hundreds of thousands of silent protesters flooded into the streets.... As the streets filled with protesters for yet another day
<i>Washington Post</i>	June 25	a sea of green

Figure 3.9. Examples of CROWD AS FLUID metaphors in the research corpus.

That the fluid metaphor also appears in the active verbs *flowed* and *flooded*, as well as in the nominalization *outpouring*, could work to establish a more complex network of metaphorical meanings that, through this interdiscursive linking of representations, strengthens and stabilizes its meaning through coherence (Fairclough, 2001). Though

this metaphorical construction is common, its operation in media and political discourse may have ideological underpinnings. If we consider, as Kövecses (2010) has argued, that EMOTION IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER is a typical conceptual metaphor that characterizes feelings, the cluster of meanings mapped by this metaphorical construction, particularly those networked to the CROWD AS FLOOD metaphor, offers the possible interpretation, through implicit entailment relations, of overflowing emotion. While that sense of emotional overflow might, in general, carry a positive or negative valence, that is, be either joyous or enraged, either associative link would connote a lack of control, a sense somewhat at odds with pragmatic rationality. In addition, given the descriptions of the protesters' riotous actions within the established violence frame, this entailment could also plausibly include an imminent violence. In the chaos media paradigm, in which the constructions of ideologies tend to be more fluid than fixed, the CROWD AS FLOOD metaphor could be viewed by a U.S. audience as cohering with the instability of the IRANIAN POLITICS AS IRRATIONAL metaphor discussed above. It might also readily link to the established comparisons between the election protests and the 1979 revolution, during which the deposing of the U.S.-back Shah Mohammed Reza and subsequent taking of U.S. hostages was, as discussed above, a political debacle that both risked American lives and weakened foreign views of U.S. power. Within these contexts, this metaphorical construction of the protesters' identities could help shape reasoning and views about the crisis and thus contribute to the formation of ideologies as well as a particular U.S. response (Chilton, 2004). In fact, as reported in a June 19 *USA Today* article, hawkish conservative (and, at the time, recently-defeated presidential candidate) Senator John McCain used the news of protests against the

regime that had brought this instability to suggest a firmer response from President Obama, saying—in a tweet, no less—"Mass peaceful demonstrations in Iran today, let's support them & stand up for democracy & freedom! President & his Admin should do the same."

Linking the protesters to social media. That McCain, defeated by the famously-tweeting Obama only months earlier, would use Twitter to criticize the president for his response to the Iranian election crisis and the social-media 'empowered' opposition protesters is clearly political theater, not irony. Nor does it seem ironic that, as news of the protesters' use of social media increased, the protesters' identities frequently became conjoined with the use of technology. Arguably, for U.S. readers, this identification coheres with the dichotomous constructions discussed above of the conservatism of hard-line Ahmedinejad and his large, working class and rural poor electoral base with the 'urbane' Mousavi and his support among the wired, urban youth. Even before the elections and the subsequent protests, there is evidence of this micronarrative within the overall election news frame, as in the June 9 *Washington Post* article titled "In Iran Election, Tradition Competes With Web," in which Ahmadinejad supporters are presented as traditionalists:

More than 100,000 backers of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad *gathered in traditional fashion at a central mosque*, arriving in buses organized by members of the *baseej*, Iran's voluntary paramilitary force. The *crowds were so dense* that Ahmadinejad's vehicle was unable to reach the stage. Wearing a headband in *the colors of the Iranian flag*, the symbol of Ahmadinejad's campaign, Leili Aghahi, 17, waved at the president [emphasis added]. (Erdbrink, A4)

Not unlike McCain's rebuking tweet, the Ahmadinejad strategists' decision to rally at a central mosque and employ the nationalistic symbolism of the large crowds waving the flag of the Islamic Republic is clearly a tactic of political theater. But how this event is represented in media discourse through comparisons with the Mousavi rally and supporters can be seen as invoking the tension between traditionalism and modernism, that is, discourse which has extensively shaped Western understandings of Iran and other Muslim countries (Rajee, 2007; Vahdat, 2002). The description of Mousavi supporters in the same *Washington Post* article illustrates this tension:

Supporters of Ahmadinejad's main challenger, former prime minister Mir Hossein Mousavi, had to be *more inventive* to find a place for their rally. Over the weekend, a government organization refused permission for his campaign to use Tehran's 120,000-seat Azadi Stadium for a rally originally planned for Sunday. But in less than 24 hours, *using text messages and Facebook postings*, thousands of Mousavi backers gathered along Vali-e Asr Avenue, Tehran's 12-mile-long arterial road [emphasis added]. (Erdbrink, A4)

In this description, the comparative construction *more inventive* not only creates a potentially negative view of the Ahmadinejad supporters' use of traditional symbols of religion, politics, and culture, it also suggests an identification that indexes the notions of innovation and development inherent in many Western understandings of modernity. In addition, the rhetorical arrangement of the comparison could establish the traditionalism of the Ahmadinejad supporters, presented first, as a kind of normative baseline of archetypical (if not stereotypical) Western representations of Muslims as theocrats—the 'mad mullahs' trope of religion and politics intertwined, as discussed above—which the

Mousavi supporters, presented second in the report, then seem to eclipse, at least according to secular Western perspectives. This rhetorical arrangement of events in the *Washington Post* report could create a comprehension for readers that would indirectly structure their mental models about the election and, by extension, their beliefs about Iran (van Dijk, 1998).

In the same excerpt, the references to activists' use of text messaging and, especially, Facebook, which, by 2009, had already become hugely popular in the U.S. and, in July of that year, would reach 250 million users worldwide, could be seen as working to further establish constructions of Mousavi and his supporters as linked, or perhaps more aligned, through their use of mobile technology, with the global north, that is, from where social media such as Facebook originate.²⁹ Within the fluid ideological constructions of U.S. legacy media discourse, references to technology such as these might be viewed as an example of what Szerszynsky and Urry (2006) have called *banal globalism*. Based on Billig's (1995) theory of *banal nationalism*, in which the ideological symbols of nationhood, often through metonymic imagery, are *enhabited* in contemporary daily life and thereby become part of social agents' *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990), banal globalism extends the symbolic realm to the global. In this case, the use of a global form of social media and communication like Facebook could conceivably be seen as metonymy for a cosmopolitan citizenship and participation in a global community. If so, this construction might signal, on the protesters' part, an affinity with or desire to participate in global culture. Conversely, as I consider in later chapters, it might simply be the tactical application of technological tools for specific communicative

²⁹ Source: <http://www.web-strategist.com/blog/2009/01/11/a-collection-of-social-network-stats-for-2009/>.

purposes. Either way, and more importantly, the metonymic association, functioning cognitively like metaphor but at the level of association rather than substitution, could work to construct for readers the protesters' identities as more aligned with U.S. cultural and political hegemonies. That is, in this instance, the ideological indexing comes not from the protesters' practices, but in how those practices are made available in discourse to readers and the subject positions that discourse creates for the construction of the protesters' identities (Jaffe, 2009). When compared to the nationalism of the flag-waving Ahmadinejad supporters rallying *en masse* outside a central mosque, it is not hard to imagine which group—in a comparison abstracted in the media discourse as a symbolic way of being (Szerszynsky & Urry; van Dijk, 1998)—might appear more amenable to U.S. foreign policies and geopolitical aims for a post-9/11 readership contemplating the complications and potential ramifications of a nuclear standoff with Iran. Put another way, the protesters could be viewed as examples that many U.S. readers might make a larger set of conclusions about: if we must choose to support one side, it is likely that someone using Facebook shares more of my beliefs than someone waving a foreign flag outside a mosque. Though that interpretation risks oversimplification, I argue it nevertheless demonstrates the ways in which this type of discourse, for both the subjects it works to create and the positions for those subjects to occupy in a coherent narrative or understanding of a news-mediated event, can help shape ideological perspectives and show how ideologies can constrain and shape discourse (van Dijk).

These identifications grew stronger and more frequent after the protests broke out and reports of protesters' use of social media as organizing and citizen journalism

tools entered the election crisis news frame, examples of which can be seen in Figure 3.10.

Source	Date	Example
<i>USA Today</i>	June 17	Tech-savvy protesters can also reach Twitter using proxy tools readily supplied for free at proxy.org, notes Chris King, director of product marketing at Palo Alto Networks, a network security firm.
<i>Washington Post</i>	June 17	to avoid disrupting communications among tech-savvy Iranian citizens as they took to the streets to protest Friday's reelection of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
<i>USA Today</i>	June 19	" Obama may well feel a kinship with the protesters , who, like his own supporters, tend to be young and use the latest communications tools to get their messages out." (quoted speech of Fariborz Ghadar, a vice minister of the Iranian shah in the 1970s)
<i>Wall Street Journal</i>	June 25	...urges Obama to find new model of diplomacy that incorporates wired dissidents

Figure 3.10. Constructions of the protesters as networked with technology and the West.

As can arguably be seen, the use of adjectives such as *wired* and *tech-savvy*, when pre-positionally modifying the nouns *dissidents* and *protesters*, can work as labels that create group identities for the protesters while also delimiting their subjectivities. According to some established sets of beliefs, they might also suggest a sense of logical equivalence between the concepts of *technology* and *justified protest*. In this sense, labels such as these could work metaphorically to create a blended space in which the construction of the Iranian protesters' political subjectivities is networked with the use of technology. If so, this construction would grant technological forms typically associated with the global north the status of liberating forces of democracy, especially when conjoined with references to the current U.S. president. Furthermore, in a global network society that prizes technology, if the pre-positional adjectives are considered

evaluative, and thus judgment-indexing, they might also work metapragmatically to create the presupposition that being “wired” and “tech-savvy” are components of political savvy or success (Silverstein, 2003). Substantiating this interpretation is the indirect quotation from Ghadar (example 3 in Figure 3.10) that links the opposition supporters to Obama and thereby also extends the Iranian election crisis news frame to include U.S. politics and thereby create a potential commonsense coherence between them.

The Twitter micronarrative. Similar identity constructions of identity appear in the June 17 *Washington Post* article titled “Twitter Is a Player In Iran's Drama; State Dept. Asked Site to Keep Running.” References to “tech-savvy Iranian citizens” form part of a report on the U.S. State Departments’ request to Twitter to delay routine maintenance that might limit or slow service during daylight hours in Iran’s time zone. The article is careful not to overstate the influence of Twitter in the protests given the unknown number of Twitter users in Iran at the time and the fact that the tweets were written in English. But it does go on to say that Twitter, along with Flickr and YouTube, was being used to disseminate information and images outside of Iran to other activists, members of the diaspora, and a global public sphere, including reporters. This report, like a similar *Washington Post* article on June 21 and numerous in the research corpus, helped further establish Twitter and other social media both in the election news frame and in conjunction with the protesters’ identities. Overall, the keyword *Twitter* appears in the research corpus 244 times and frequently collocates with protesters’ use of it and other forms of social media, as the sample of concordance in Figure 3.11 shows:

```

3066      services like Facebook and Twitter -- are being used to foment
3219      using Internet sites like Twitter would be subject to retribution
3226      to public forums like Twitter -- offering them as so-called
3240      Their signs, slogans and Twitter postings say nothing about
3307      -- are being thwarted by Twitter and the Internet. While
3316      such as those tweets on Twitter.com, depends on the Internet
3339      Web sites like Facebook and Twitter, which have become vital
3381      Zahedan."/pdate | 6:21 p.m.A Twitter feed that seems to be associated
3387      posted this message on Twitter late on Thursday:/ea of
3409      :13 p.m. A blogger writing on Twitter reported one hour ago:
3453      from England points out on Twitter that the same YouTube user
3462      reliable information on Twitter writes that the rally in
3484      slogans are passed round via Twitter, social networking sites
3493      update from a blogger using Twitter says that another mass
3528      reportedly using Facebook and Twitter to locate them; Mr. Ahmadinejad

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Figure 3.11. Sample concordance of *Twitter* in the research corpus.

As mentioned above, though there was a high volume of Twitter use during the election crisis, it is debatable whether Twitter had any measurable effect on the outcome of the protests. According to qualitative research done by the Web Ecology Project, more than 2,000,000 tweets about the Iranian election were posted between June 7 and June 26, 2009. But whether those tweets were directly related to the ongoing demonstrations or simply the protest *topos* as a “trending topic” on Twitter is unclear.³⁰ As Howard (2010) and others have argued, there was in fact a small number of Twitter users located in Iran at the time of the election. And for those tweets coming out of Iran, it is difficult to determine whether they were actually posted by Iranians or activists who, as discussed in chapter two, had changed their geo-location settings to Tehran both to show solidarity with the protesters and to help foil Iranian government surveillance efforts. Still, some research has shown that for those Iranians with access to them, Twitter and other social media services did help disseminate information about the crisis and address a global audience. Based on her research, Snow (2010), for instance, has claimed:

³⁰ On Twitter, “trending topics” are algorithmic measurements of the most popular, emerging topics of discussion at a particular time. Source: <http://support.twitter.com>.

Twitter revealed public frustrations in real time, like a street-level focus group. Twitter comments reflected a population of Iranians who were pro-West, social media savvy, and global-media conscious. Tweets skewed overwhelmingly toward Ahmadinejad's main challenger, Mousavi, who was not just a real challenger, but also a symbolic representation of a new Iran. (p.100)

In Snow's claim, the notion of Twitter as both a semiotic and symbolic resource is a potentially a powerful one that coheres with my arguments above regarding the ideologically-charged network of meaning established in the media discourse between Mousavi, the protesters, and the use of social media, as I have shown in Figure 3.12.³¹

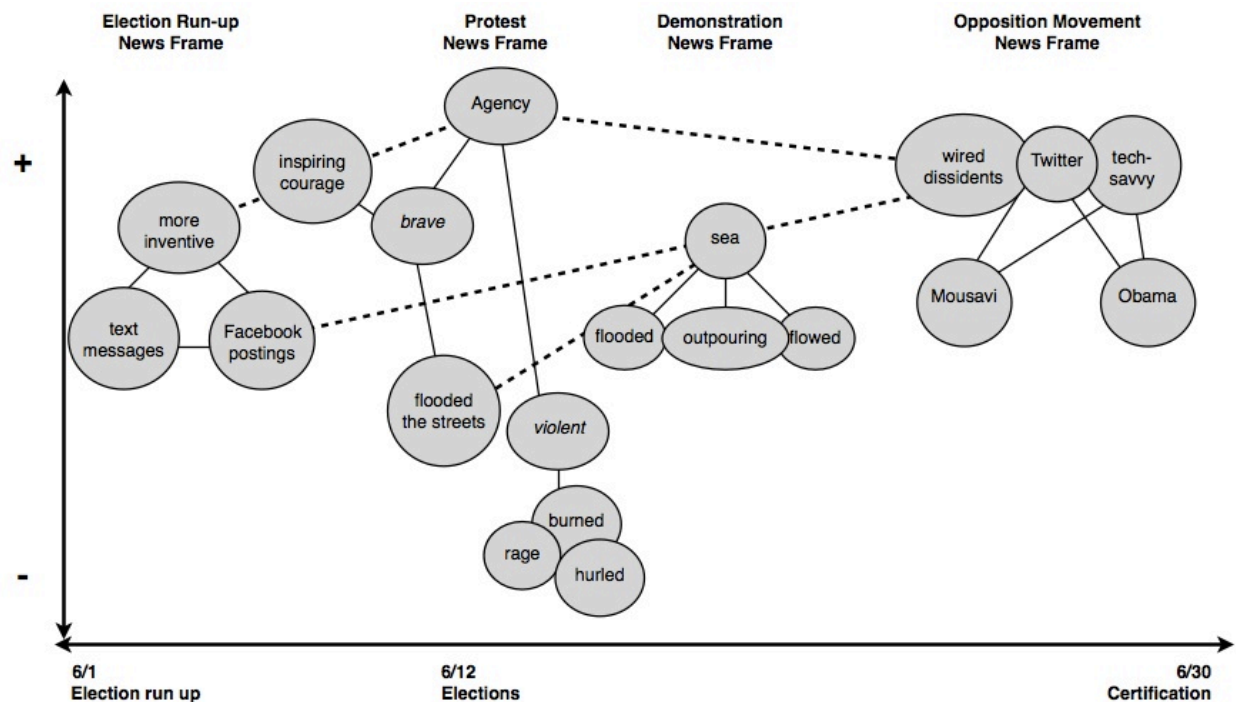


Figure 3.12. Conceptual blending networks of constructions of Iranian protesters in U.S. legacy media.

³¹ In chapters four and five, I discuss in detail the potentially symbolic aspect of protesters' use of Twitter and other social media.

Though the chart in Figure 3.12 reflects my interpretations of the data, I argue there does appear to be a shift both across the overall election news frame and from subframe to subframe in the positioning of protesters' identities. That shift seems somewhat less than the movements traced in Figure 3.5 of the constructions of Mousavi's identity. Certainly, such shifts, whether strategic or not, are part of a discursive change that might also be mapped within a control paradigm of news discourse. Working, however, in a chaos paradigm, in which the news environment is marked by pluralities and unpredictabilities, the rapid and arguably angular shifts and coherences might be seen as reflecting the emergent and contingent ideologies of contemporary news discourse. That said, within the apparent dissensus there still appears some degree of consensus. After the election crisis broke out and the so-called Twitter Revolution micronarrative began to develop into its own news frame, there were reports, for instance, that compared protesters' use of Twitter and other social media to Cold War-era Radio Free Europe broadcasts and the *samizdat* grassroots publications circulated then covertly by Soviet-bloc dissidents. As interdiscursive links, these comparisons index pre-1989 ideological polarities in a way that, from certain hegemonic perspectives, might cause the Iranian opposition movement to seem to represent a polar struggle between traditionalism and modernity, as I have summarized in Figure 3.13 below.

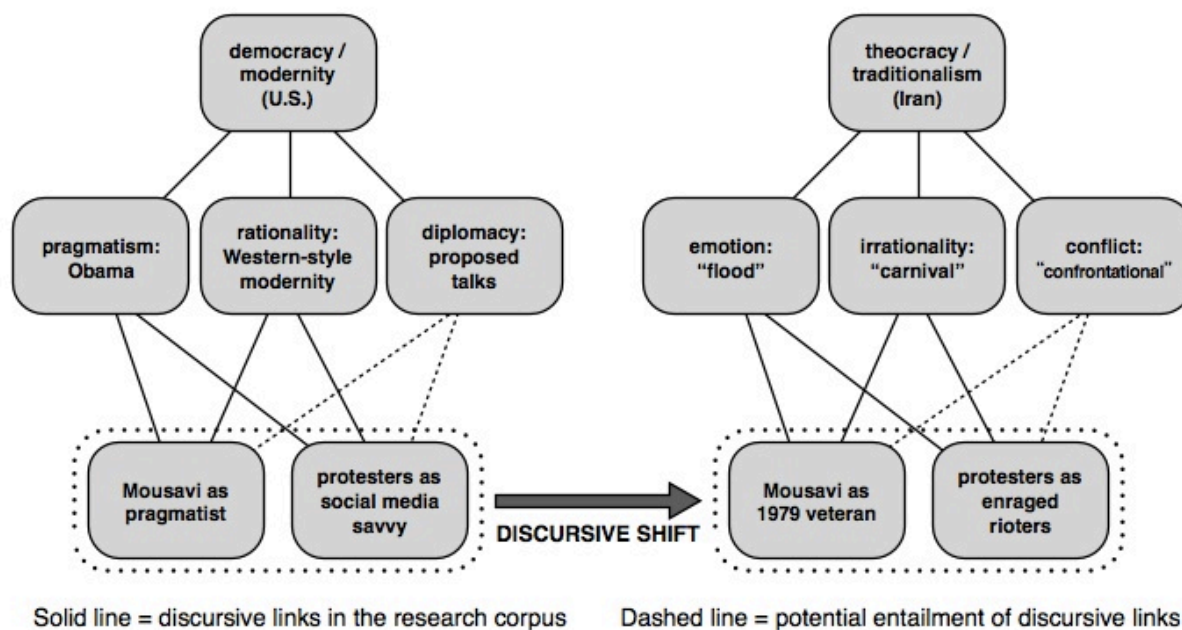


Figure 3.13. Summary of discursive shift in U.S. legacy media toward polarized ideological constructions.

This discourse was, in turn, linked across various texts to references and comparisons to the 1989 student-led protests in Tiananmen Square. This connection would locate the 2009 Iranian opposition movement in a narrative of global youth democracy movements wherein the capitulation of the authoritarian Ahmadinejad government to protesters' accusations of election fraud would be another domino to fall in the triumphant march of democracy around the world. Though those wider discursive links are compelling and relevant, tracing them extends somewhat beyond the scope of this current project. Nevertheless, their seeming coherence helps underscore the process and strategies of these discourse formations I have analyzed above. In particular, these discursive shifts seem to show how the construction of ideologies in a decentered media environment appear, in one sense, to reflect the flux of meaning typical of both a chaotic news paradigm, as McNair (2006) has claimed, and the overall struggle for meaning in a vortex of globalized flows (Mittelman, 2004). In another sense, however, it

could also be that, over time, there is a tendency for that flux to settle along existing coherences, or ideologies, both old or new. That is, in the chaotic battle with new media contenders to tell the news, legacy media outlets might resort to established, ideologically-charged narratives as a means of maintaining their share of a fractured audience. While, at this point, somewhat speculative, that notion might be nevertheless be important to understanding the contemporary processes by which, in a decentered new environment, ideologies come to be discursively constructed in the media.

Plural Interpretations of Modernity: Conclusions

In light of the arguments and analyses in this chapter, as well as claims made in chapter one, Snow's (2010) analysis above of Twitter's role in the protests, like the inclusion of the social media micronarrative in the overall news frame, seems to reflect in at least some of the current media scholarship a cyber-utopian viewpoint. As cyberskeptics such as Morozov (2011) have charged, this perspective is undergirded with Western hegemonic perspectives about technology, democracy, and the role of the global north in the world. Morozov has labelled this triumphal cyber-utopianism the *Google Doctrine*, a geopolitical vision shaped by an "intense longing for a world where information technology is the liberator rather than the oppressor, a world where technology could be harvested to spread democracy around the globe rather than entrench existing autocracies" (p. 5). Like Snow's analyses, reports in the research corpus such as the June 18 *New York Times* article "Stark Images of the Turmoil in Iran, Uploaded to the World on the Internet" support Morozov's analysis of the pro-Western ideology inherent in cyber-utopian visions. In the report, activists' use of social media to upload accounts, images, and cellphone video captures of the demonstrations and

clashes with police is cited as a successful tactical means of “circumvent[ing] the shroud of censorship their government was trying to place over the unfolding events” (Stelter & Stone, p. A14). While factually accurate, this description could be interpreted, as I argued above, as linking interdiscursively with Cold War discourses. In fact, in another June 18 *New York Times* article covering the Iranian crisis, the cellphone captures uploaded to YouTube are described as “samizdat video.” It could be, then, that in a post-Cold War era bereft of the ‘certainties’ of polarized ideological worldviews, the notion of a collision between reactionary traditionalism and integrative modernism offers, in a vortex of discourses, illusions of coherence (Barber, 1995; Mittelman, 2004). Instead of Radio Free Europe broadcasts mythically soaring over communist walls to liberate the Eastern bloc, Western social media are skirting the repressive “shroud” of traditionalism to deliver democracy 140 characters at a time.

But celebratory visions of the supposedly liberatory functions of technology, either in legacy news reports or by Western policy makers enmeshed in a government-media nexus, crucially fail to imagine the unintended consequences of the new digital environment (Morozov, 2011). Morozov has contended that the U.S. State Department’s request that Twitter delay its service maintenance, which was widely covered in the news and arguably legitimized, both for the legacy media and their readers, Twitter’s role in the demonstrations, caused Iranian authorities “to respond with aggressive countermeasures that made using the Web to foster social and political change in Iran and other closed societies considerably harder” (p. 25-6). Yet, this misrepresentation may be even more significant than the resulting surveillance of and cyber-attacks on Iranian activists. It may also point toward a continued trend in the

West to fail to acknowledge a plurality of interpretations of modernity, especially in the Muslim world. In Iran, the struggle to come to terms with the *exclusive secularism* of modernity has shaped the major events of its recent history (Rajaei, 2007). As Vahdat (2002) has claimed, the Islamic Revolution of the 1970s was a “dialectical attempt to challenge the discourse of modernity” (p. xiii). And as I argued above, the subsequent shifts between moderatism and conservatism seen in the Khatami and Ahmadinejad presidencies suggest that struggle continues.

Yet, within that encounter with modernity, Iran has seemed to find in technology some purchase between East and West. Between their religion-inspired traditions and the colonial forces of exploitation stands the internet, which can be used not only as communication tool but a means of spreading Islam (Varzi, 2006).³² This *secondary production*, in which colonials are using, in technology, a colonizers’ object differently than its original intended use, shows, according to Varzi, that “the fact that an Islamic country is on the internet (in what many believe to be a sign of ‘secular’ Western modernity) does not mean that the country is necessarily buying into Western notions of modernity” (p.123). Surely, the protesters’ use of Twitter and other social media to organize, coordinate activities, and disseminate information during a social movement to a global audience is not the same as spreading the word of God to the faithful. Still, U.S. legacy media’s representation of this use of technology—which I have tried to show may, in fact, have been a misrepresentation on multiple levels—can plausibly be seen as extending the election crisis news frame to fit established sets of beliefs about

³² See chapter two for a discussion on the Iranian government’s policies and funding of the widespread growth and development ICTs in Iran and the rise of a youthful “wired” generation.

modernity and faith, traditionalism and technology, and the spread of democracy around the world. Moreover, whereas previous controlling ideological news frames and media discourse allowed for a more facile construction of hegemonic narratives underpinned by dichotomous ideologies, the present entropic environment of global media and information flows means master narratives are more easily contested, challenged, and fractured by micronarratives pulsing across diverse and divergent networks. In this vortex, identity has become the organizing point of meaning. While this has helped break down hegemonic narratives, uncouple center-periphery mental models, fuel opposition groups, and open spaces for subaltern identities (Castells, 1997), it may also have meant, as I intend the above analyses to show, that still powerful hegemonic forces such as U.S. legacy media outlets can work within the fluidity of a chaotic news environment to create shifting, abstract constructions of agents and events that are more readily and subtly manipulated (McNair, 2006). This is not at all to say that subjects encoded in media discourse within a control paradigm were also not readily positioned and manipulated (Hall, 1977). Rather, that as the contexts and conditions of production in which media discourses are produced and circulated have changed, so must the ways in which we try to understand the discursive construction of identities in the fluid ideological environment of a chaos news media paradigm (McNair).

Chapter Four

Borrowed Language: Recontextualizing Symbolic Resources and Discursively

Constructing Stance

As during prior Iranian social movements, leaders of the 1978-79 Islamic Revolution utilized traditional networks of communication largely based in the mosques and bazaars to spread their messages and coordinate collective action (Keddie, 2003). Significantly different, however, were the tactical ways these networks were enhanced and extended by the then-innovative use of what Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi (1994) have dubbed *small media*: the photocopied leaflets and audiocassette tapes of revolutionary, anti-Shah messages from the Ayatollah Khomeini, the movement's exiled spiritual leader. This tactical use of small media was important, they have argued, because it helped create a political public sphere through which new networks of participation could be built upon longstanding cultural nodes of communication. Through these networks, revolutionary leaders and activists alike could disseminate oppositional discourse and mobilize the movement on a massive scale (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi). As a result, the revolution's organization transformed from a hierarchical structure centered on a cadre of leaders into a *rhizome* formed around the counterpower of networked communications (Castells, 2009; Juris, 2008). Just as the mass demonstrations in Azhadi Square punctuated by anti-Ahmadinejad cries of "Death to the Dictator" in June 2009 evoked the slogans and symbols of the revolution that had toppled the Shah Mohammed Reza thirty years before, it is hard not to see parallels between the use of small media in 1979 and the protesters' use of social media in 2009 to micro-coordinate collective action and report,

as citizen journalists, the events to a global audience. In fact, as Keddie (2003) has claimed, this similarity could already be seen during the Khatami-era student protests, when the use of the internet and information and communication technologies (ICTs) “parallel[ed] previous uses of contemporary communications technology for oppositional purposes” (p. 311). These correspondences suggest, then, that activists’ use of social media in 2009 cohered both with the discursive and organizational practices of past social movements and, more importantly for my arguments, the recontextualization of symbolic resources and repertoires from the master framework of protests in modern Iran (Jaffe, 2009; Poulson, 2005).³³

We might also see parallels between 1979 and 2009 in how technology and the media—big or small, legacy or new—are bound up with Iran’s ongoing struggle to free itself from Western influences and embrace a form of modernity compatible with its cultural values and experiences. Given the well-established roles that technology and media have played in cultural modernization, it is not hard to understand the strong push the Iranian government has shown in developing its national technology and information infrastructure—often at a pace that has outstripped its efforts for universal national literacy (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994). But given the Western cultural associations seen by some as bound up with technology, some conservative forces in Iran have tried to limit the negative cultural influence, or *westoxification*, that technological development is thought to incur by striving for a positivist modernity

³³ By choosing here the term *recontextualization* rather than *recontextualization*, which in some literature are used synonymously, I intend not only to use the term preferred by Jaffe (2009), upon whose work on stance I have based my analyses in this chapter, but also to emphasize the movement of texts across languages, modes, and genres over the movement of contexts, necessarily entailed in the former by the inherent situatedness of discourse.

congruous with its local cultural and religious beliefs (Vahdat, 2002). In the way, therefore, that the populist use in 1979 of small media in an urban setting suggested a heterodox, 'Third World' model of revolution (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi), the opposition movement's appropriation of social media and *translocal* symbolic resources in 2009 appears to reflect less the competitive logics of the marketplace than the participatory logics of the *commons*. By the commons I mean our collectively held and shared translocal resources, knowledge, and information as well as the rules and ethics according to which these resources are shared (Kluitenberg, 2010; Walljasper, 2010). By operating according to this logic, the activists, I argue, also seem to be further questioning and complicating the nexus of cultural tensions that have shaped much of Iran's recent political trajectory. Moreover, if periods of social conflict like the 2009 Iranian election crisis are symptomatic both of deep shifts in social logic and the rise of new ideas and social identities (Melucci, 1996; Poulson, 2005), the examination of activists' tactical cultural borrowings through critical discourse analytics may help us understand the ideologies underlying those shifts and the stances around which transnational imaginaries and globalized vernaculars of protest might have been—and might also be—discursively constructed (Appadurai, 1996; Meyerhoff & Niedzielski, 2003).

To explore these phenomena in this chapter, I first develop the overview of historical, political, and cultural contexts presented in the previous chapters by discussing what Poulson (2005) has identified as the cycle of protests in Iran which has marked its struggle for sovereignty and modernity during the 20th century and of which the 2009 protests arguably appears to be a continuation. Second, for the analyses in

this chapter I present a theoretical approach that links Poulson's theory of a master framework of Iranian social movements to theoretical discussions in chapter two on communication power and globalized social networks as well as those related to the sociocognitive discursive formation of ideologies discussed in chapter three. I extend those theoretical concepts to include the development of transnational imaginaries and *sociomental* bonds which can occur through shared activities of cognitive engagement, such as during social movements (Appadurai, 1996; Chayko, 2002, 2008), along with the protesters' use of English as a translocal language and symbolic resource (Lash, 2002; Pennycook, 2007). Finally, before analyzing a corpus of Twitter tweets and Flickr photos posted during the election protests by activists inside and outside Iran, I present a methodological approach built on the one I used in chapter three but which also considers the *heteroglossia* and *polyvocality* of activists' discursive constructions of stance and the ways those indexical constructions appear to cohere symbolically, intertextually, and interdiscursively.

A Quest for Sovereignty and Modernity: Sociocultural and Historical Contexts

In the way that the use of small media during both the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the 2009 presidential election protests suggests further parallels between these two social movements, it is also possible to see the 2009 demonstrations, along with the Green Movement which grew out of it, as a continuation of what Poulson (2005) has identified as an ongoing cycle of protests in Iran since the end of the Safavid Dynasty in 1736. As Poulson explains, much of the social protest of the post-Safavid era was focused toward state-making processes. This is particularly true of the twentieth-century Iranian social movements, which were largely marked by the push for

sovereignty at both the national and individual levels, with independence from Western influence being, as discussed in chapter two, a critical rallying cry of the 1979 revolution. As argued in chapter three, so too was Iran's struggle for a form of modernity that meshed with an Islamic religious framework in which reason is accepted "only if it is conditioned by revelation" (Rajee, 2007, p. 239). Such an approach, then, in which power adjudicates between politics and culture, can be seen as fundamentally clashing with Eurocentric expressions of modernity that emphasize critical reason and place the individual at the center of modernity's project (Rajee; Kamvara, 2008). The resulting tensions have generated in Iran, according to Poulson, a cultural narrative of national sovereignty and localized modernity which spans these cycles of protest, one which can also be taken up during new social movements as a means of legitimating collective action. For this reason, as well as those in the discussions of sociocultural and historical contexts presented above, it is plausible to consider the 2009 opposition movements as a continuation of that cycle. Moreover, understanding that cultural narrative as a master framework, that is, a sociocognitive construct, is important to establishing both a contextual link to the analyses presented in chapter three and the context for those in this chapter, particularly in regards to how protesters used symbols and language to discursively construct the stances of their social movement and their identities within it (Poulson).

The push for sovereignty which Poulson (2005) identifies as the master framework of twentieth century Iranian social movements first appears in the Tobacco Movement of 1890-92, during which regional protests against the British monopoly of tobacco in Persia coalesced into a national protest against Western imperialism that

ultimately pushed traditional leaders of government and social institutions to address their relationship with the West and the monarchy. Both of these relationships were further challenged during the Constitutional Revolution of 1906-09, with opposing sides divided according to their support for either a constitution or a traditional monarchical government. What both sides shared, however, was a common goal of gaining political and economic independence from Russian and British imperialism, a dialectic that drew the conflict to an end with the establishment of a constitutional monarchy and the creation of a national parliament (Keddie, 2003). Though these broad political changes, along with the accompanying social transformations, seemed to proclaim Iran's self-realized entry into the modern era, they nevertheless failed to end Western influence. Following World War II, during which Iran was invaded by Soviet and British forces, Cold War tensions were played out in the power struggle between the local communist Tudeh Party and the Iranian National Front, a loose coalition of nationalist groups led by then-Prime Minister Mosaddeq trying to reassert constitutional elements of governance (Poulson). This ended, however, with the overthrow of Mosaddeq in the CIA-led 1953 coup d'état and the establishment of the U.S.-backed Shah Mohammed Reza's military regime (Keddie). As a further instance of Western interference, the coup and the ensuing installment of the Shah created for many Iranians a fervent feeling of anti-imperialism that, coupled with religious beliefs, would vibrate through the 1963 Ayatollah Khomeini-led Qom protests against the Shah's social reforms and the increasing influence of the West— especially of the U.S.—in Iranian social, political, and economic affairs.

This cycle of struggle for sovereignty and a non-Westernized experience of modernity arguably reached its apotheosis in the anti-Shah demonstrations that ultimately grew into the tumultuous and shocking Islamic Revolution of 1978-79 (Kurzman, 2004; Poulson, 2005). According to Kamvara (2008), that revolution was fought over three main idealized identities: traditional concepts of Islam, Islamic reformism, and a secular-modernism that sought a neutral, or non-Western, interpretation of modernity, a desire perhaps best expressed by the term *gharbzadegi*, commonly translated into English as *westoxification*. Popularized in the 1960s by prominent Iranian writer Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *westoxification* refers to the idea that, as a result of continual and perfidious imperialist influence and intervention in Iranian political and economic affairs, along with the concomitant adoption of Western-style culture, Iran's cultural identity had been lost and its economy rendered a passive market for the consumption of Western goods (Kamvara, 2008). Because, Al-e Ahmad argued, the only field not corrupted by Western influence was religion, it is perhaps unsurprising that *westoxification* became a pillar of the Islamic Revolution.

The Islamic Revolution, however, did not settle Iran's ongoing internal struggle either to come terms with modernity or its complex relationships with the West. Even in the wake of the deep, widespread sociopolitical changes brought about by the revolution there existed a continued desire for an Iranian brand of secular-modernism (Kamvara, 2008). Chief among those calling for this vision of a modern Iran were the multitude of educated, urban Iranians who, in 1997, would help bring the reformist cleric Mohammad Khatami to power. The election of Khatami to the Iranian presidency initiated the reform movement that became known as the 2nd of Khorad Movement in

reference to the date of Khatami's election victory in the Iranian calendar (Poulson, 2005). As discussed in chapter two, this movement marked a shift toward establishing a more civil post-revolution society as well as more openness with the West, both politically, as marked by Khatami's proposed Dialogue of Civilizations, and culturally, as expressed in the desires of young, urban, educated, and wired Iranians to reestablish certain cosmopolitan aspects of past Iranian society (Varzi, 2006). Khatami's reforms, which included the rise of a critical press, allowed for new spaces of dissent that, together with the concurrent rise of the Iranian blogosphere, helped create the conditions for the transclass youth-led protests of 1999, during which students called for greater civil rights and individual freedoms as well as the end of the *velayat-e faghih*, or rule by supreme leader (Rahimi, 2008; Yaghmaian, 2002). However, much in the way that conservative forces within the Khatami government would repress these protests and shut down most of the critical free press, conservative views in large sectors of Iranian society, under the legacy of *westoxification*, would continue to see Western culture as a deleterious influence. In 2005, the reformist Khatami was replaced by the conservative Ahmadinejad, who, since taking power, has scaled back or undone much of the cultural and economic liberalization instituted during the Khatami presidency.

What has remained, then, is an ongoing antagonism between conservative religious attitudes toward cultural aspects of modernity and a strong, widespread desire for technology without its cultural accoutrements. Vahdat (2002) has called this a *positivist modernity*, in which Western technology is used according to the doctrines of Eastern morality, a desire that is ironically perhaps not unlike the instrumentality in views espoused by Western technocrats and would-be "Google Doctrine" adherents

(Morozov, 2011). Moreover, in the current standoff between Tehran and the West over its nuclear program, we can arguably see in that geopolitical power-struggle the continuation of the Iran's quest for sovereignty and freedom from Western interference. This is why I argue that extending Poulson's cycle of protests to include the 2009 presidential election demonstrations establishes a crucial macrolevel context for the critical discourse analyses that follow.

Perhaps ironically, however, this ongoing tension in Iranian culture might also underlie demonstrators' use, as a form of small media, of Western-originating technology to address a global audience in English, the current global *lingua franca*, during the 2009 protests. That is, we may also see, as I aim to show in this and the following chapter, how the master framework of Iranian protest identified by Poulson could be extended to accommodate the features, theories, and symptoms of a global network society so that protesters' discursive practices and identifications might be understood as further expressions of sovereignty and a localized understanding of modernity (Mirsepassi, 2000). But before exploring that consideration, it is important to understand how the protesters adapted these tools and forms of mediation as both a counterpower and counter-discourse to fit their communication aims, and how that use reflected an ongoing tension between the homogeneity of Eurocentric narratives of modernity and local experiences (Mirsepassi). To do this, I will first establish a theoretical framework that links social movement theory to those theories presented and operationalized in previous chapters, with the aim of limiting the so-called impressionism (Breeze, 2012) of how, through CDA, I interpret in my analyses the

protesters' discursive practices, counter-discourses, and the manipulation of symbols within them.

Reticulate Spaces and the Logics of Participation: Theory and Methods

While master frameworks, as both sociocultural narratives and sociocognitive discourse structures, can shape, inspire, and legitimize new social movements, the probability that a movement will occur typically depends first upon the existence of a political opportunity, some type of structural change or opening, such as an economic downturn or, in the case of Iran in 2009, an election crisis (Poulson, 2005). When such opportunities emerge, the state can be seen as vulnerable, temporarily creating for marginalized groups the potential for collective action and coalition formation, in particular for those groups already well-organized (Parsa, 2000). As such, these opportunities, together with framing processes, are understood to be, in social movement theory, the primary mobilizing structures of collective social action (Poulson).

But social movements are more than outgrowths of political crises. They also point toward "a deep transformation in the logic and the processes that guide complex societies" (Melucci, 1996, p. 1). Consequently, in the way that social movements should not be reduced solely to their political dimensions, the framing processes that help mobilize them must not only be considered culturally and historically, as discussed above, but also ideologically. That is, if ideology, as I have argued, is a network of beliefs and symbolic frameworks by which social relationships are rationalized and legitimated according to a 'commonsense' cultural logic, it is therefore important to consider the organizing logic of master frameworks within social movements from an ideological perspective (Melucci). This is not, however, to conflate ideologies with either

culture or frames. As Poulson has explained, if ideologies are the sets of beliefs used to justify or challenge a particular socio-political order, frames are the symbolic resources and cognitive cues by which collective action can be suggested or spurred in relation to those beliefs. This then means seeing social movement frames as strategically-constructed, shared understandings of the world through which the processes of both self-identification and collective action in social movements can occur (Gillan, Pickerill, & Webster, 2008). It also means that, much in the way that ideologies can be reproduced discursively by agents' social practices, social actors can also manipulate symbolic forms and referents so that social movement frames cohere with their own interpretations of a political opportunity or crisis (Melucci; Poulson). As a result, from this dialogic framing process not only can a context for social action be established and a movement's activities legitimized, but the interests of collective actors can also be coordinated according to ideological perspectives.

Social movements and communication power. Crucial to this coordination and the overall mobilization of a social movement's symbolic resources are information and communication technologies (ICTs). As discussed in chapter two, in a globalized network society, ICTs can both facilitate the hegemonic practices and communication power of dominant forces and help weave together decentralized networks of opposition through coordination and the spread of counter-discourses (Castells, 2009; Crack, 2008; Rahimi, 2008). As Gillian, Pickerill, and Webster (2008) have shown, the use of ICTs can also allow activists to exploit political opportunities by helping them reach a broader, even global audience and thereby extend the reach of a social movement's frame. When the media—legacy or new, big or small—functions as a platform for

enacting local concerns on a global scale, transnational ICTs can both increase the opportunities for dominant ideological voices to be heard, as argued in chapter three, and allow for the creative social and pragmatic language functions of marginalized or opposition groups, as I intend to show in the analyses below (Johnson & Ensslin, 2007).

During social protests, the amplification through ICTs of an opposition movement's symbolic resources, such as its slogans and images, across local and global networks can raise the effects of communication acts to political moments (Sreberny-Mohammedi & Mohammadi, 1994). Not unlike the Obama victory tweet of 2008, these discursive acts, whether of dominant or oppositional forces, can become ideological links between cognitive frameworks and social structures. Moreover, as 'small' media, social media forms utilize the infrastructural resources of institutional ICTs. But because their content is produced and distributed from multiple network nodes, social media can also function as tactical tools of popular mobilization for activists (Bohler, 2008). According to Sreberny-Mohammedi and Mohammadi, the potential counterpower of small media in Iran rests in their embeddedness within existing cultural frameworks. In 1979, the informal ties established through mosque networks facilitated the successful broadcast of Khomeini's cassette tapes across telephone lines. Extending this notion to 2009, it was arguably the existence of a youthful society readily disposed to using internet-based communications that suggested the tactical value of mobile social media forms such as microblogging and photo- and video-sharing.

Technologies, of course, do not themselves bring about political transformations. They can increase social actors' capacities to coordinate protests and disseminate

information, and, across global networks, cognitively extend political struggles beyond local contexts (Castells, 1997; Howard, 2010). But their effectiveness in social movements is dependent on numerous factors, including the strength of preexisting social networks and the specific ways in which activists use them to micro-coordinate collective action. Indeed, the effectiveness of Twitter and other social media during the protests, as discussed previously, has been debated. Fisher (2010) and Kamaliour (2010), for instance, have shown that Twitter facilitated both collective action in the streets of Tehran and, by sidestepping traditional gatekeepers and overcoming geographical limitations, the spread of information to a global audience that included Western news media unable to cover the protests themselves. Others, however, have claimed that Twitter's role was at best negligible and at worst an accelerator of chaotic online dissonance, a kind of 'cyberscreaming' that was of little reliable or verifiable signal intelligence (Acuff, 2010; Malek, 2010; Snow, 2010). In my view, the problem with both cyber-utopian and cyberskeptic interpretations of social media's impact on the 2009 protests is that both are premised on the cultural logic of competition and the accumulation of power and thus impose Western ideological interpretations onto protesters' discursive practices (Fuchs, 2008; Russell & Echichaibi, 2009). This is not to say that protesters did not want a successful outcome for their movement or did not believe mobile social media would aid their collective action. Rather, it is to contend that determining social media's impact on the protests solely according to the commonsense measure of a social movement's success—its impact on the state—discounts its potential mediating effects on discursive change and "the production of alternative values, discourses, and identities" during social movements (Juris, 2008, p.

291). For these reasons, I argue that both cyber-utopians and cyberskeptics miss the potential symbolism of these discursive practices within the master framework of protests discussed above, and that previous analyses of social media usage during the 2009 Iranian protests, which have tended to fall into either camp, have therefore been insufficient. If, as Sreberny-Mohammedi and Mohammadi have argued, the use of Khomeini cassette tape broadcasts during the Islamic Revolution marked an alternative 'Third World' model of revolutionary process in which populist, urban, small media functioned as tools of popular mobilization, the use of social media during the 2009 protests to address a global audience may have been a transnational process equally characterized by a local set of beliefs, and thus an instance of vernacularized globalized language practices worth examining for the reasons I presented in chapters one and two. Furthermore, it is also worth our attention to examine this discourse beyond ideologies and the symbolic realm given how the use of social media during the protests reshaped, if temporarily and at various fractal edges, the *twittersphere* into a transnational political public sphere within the internet's decentralized networked space of publics (Bohman, 2004; Russell & Echichaibi).

Forming transnational bonds. With both networks and social movements typically more rhizomatic rather than hierarchical (Juris, 2008), these reticulate public spheres tend to be heterogeneous, multiple, and—given access—inclusive (Fuchs, 2008).³⁴ As such, they can allow for the relatively fluid emergence of bottom-up organization and the temporary connecting of weak social ties that are hallmarks of social movements (Shirky, 2008). In the streets of Tehran, those ephemeral affiliations,

³⁴ See chapter two for discussions of access and digital divides.

galvanized by the symbols of a master framework of protest, would draw protesters together in what Durkheim called *effervescence*, or a shared spirit of energy and collective conscience (Brumberg, 2001). Online, with digital technologies extending temporary affiliations to a global scale (Juris), this collective energy could vibrate among the connections protesters made with the Iranian diaspora, global activists, and a global audience, producing what Howard (2010) has described as *network effervescence*. Admittedly, the energy in this rhizomatic organization may have produced, from a communication standpoint, a cacophony of simultaneous broadcast that might indeed have seemed more like cyberscreaming than either micro-coordination or public sphere debate (Malek, 2010; Shirky). But viewed at the collective level, the communication fueled by network effervescence could have helped form global *sociomental* bonds, or feelings of connectedness through shared cognitive engagements and social exchanges during activities like social movements (Chayko, 2002, 2008). That is, the multiplicity of interactions and relative ease of participation offered by online social networks could have facilitated the creation of a transnational collective conscience, albeit a situational, ephemeral, and fractal one (Fornäs et al., 2002). The cognitive destabilization such bonds would engender might, in turn, facilitate the possibilities of the multiple, imaginary worlds theorized by Appadurai (1996), in which the imagination as a social practice helps negotiate between local sites of agency, such as a social movement, and globally-defined fields of possibility (Anderson, 2006; Brumberg). With imagination, then, as central to agency, we can begin to better see the symbolic effect of the Iranian activists' cyberprotest and use of social media and how the logics inherent in this understanding might offer critical alternative perspectives to capitalist-oriented

measurements. That is, as a sustainable alternative to capitalist logics of competition and the accumulation of power, we might instead measure the success of the 2009 protests according to the logic of participation that is itself part of a multiplicity of logics and heterogenous worldviews in which transnational sociomental bonds are formed in the imagination and mediated across online social networks (Fuchs, 2008).

Global Englishes and social protest. A similar theoretical approach might also be useful in coming to terms with the Iranian activists' use of English during the protests. From an instrumental perspective, this phenomenon seems easy to understand: using English, a current global *lingua franca*, allowed Iranian activists to convey their messages across ICT-based social networks to an audience outside Iran and the Persian-speaking Iranian diaspora. But to limit our understanding of those practices at the level of utility is to deny both their potential symbolic resonance as well as the political implications of the use of English and the complex globalized networks in which that communication occurred. Before discussing those concerns, however, it is useful to briefly consider the history of English in Iran.

A significant linguistic presence in Iran for the last fifty years, English arrived in Iran primarily through British commerce and the close political relationship between the Shah Mohammed Reza and the United States (Sharifan, 2010). Through the strong U.S. military and economic presence in Iran during the Shah's reign, along with his push for a Western model of modernization, English replaced French as the prestige European foreign language in Iran. English language schools run by the British Council and the Iran-American Society offered—for those who could afford them—both local instruction and preparation for higher education abroad. But the 1979 Islamic

Revolution complicated Iran's relationship with English. At perhaps the most reactionary extremes were attempts to ban English or cleanse it of its cultural baggage by replacing British- and American-produced English-language textbooks with Iranian editions featuring local content. Those perhaps striving for a more positivist form of modernity tried to relegate English to the status of an international link language used to export the Islamic Revolution to a non-Muslim world. Despite these efforts, as Sharifan has explained, "many Iranians still associate English with social prestige, as a tool which can not only open educational, social and professional opportunities, but also help in the construction of an educated, elite social identity...a 'modern-citizen' identity that distances them from less cosmopolitan identities" (p. 140-1). For these reasons, English has managed to retain a vital presence in Iran, particularly among the social elite. Helping to maintain and expand this status has been the government's promotion of increased tourism and international trade to boost the economy after the Iran-Iraq war as well as the growth of the Iranian diaspora to English-speaking countries and the widespread use of the internet (Sharifan).

As the case of English in Iran shows, the complex histories and cultural politics bound up in the spread of English around the world mean no use of English in a global setting should be understood as either neutral or utilitarian, as has been widely argued elsewhere (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992). Language, instead, is a site of struggle, and when English is viewed through the critical lens of globalization theory, as I have argued in chapter two that it should be, it is possible to see how the global spread of English produces, in the form of *pluricentric* Englishes, both new forms of localization and, through *transcultural flows*, new forms of global

identification (Pennycook, 2007). As Pennycook has argued, the notion of transcultural flows entails not just cultural movement, but uptake, appropriation, and creative refashioning. For that reason, within the global Englishes paradigm that I have adopted, the Iranian protesters' uses of English should be understood as examples of a *translocal* language. By translocal I mean how language both crosses localities linked by ICTs and media (legacy and new) and contributes to the hybridizing of exogenous cultures (Leppänen, et al., 2009)—a language, as Pennycook has argued, “of fluidity and fixity, that moves across, while being embedded in, the materiality of locations and social relations” (p. 6). Furthermore, as the case of Iran also shows, English can function as not only a translocal vernacular, but also a prestige foreign language and international link language and therefore a source of symbolic capital and a gatekeeper to prestige positions in society (Canagarajah, 1999; Crystal, 2003). As a commodity, then, as well as a global *lingua franca* in a complex globalized market of linguistic and communicative resources, English possesses what Blommaert (2010) has described as a high value. This means that, in a globalized context of ‘winners and losers,’ the value of linguistic resources correlates with users’ *voice* and *mobility*:

people manage or fail to make sense across contexts; their linguistic and communicative resources are mobile or lack such semiotic mobility, and this problem is not just of difference, but of inequality. It is a problem exacerbated by the intensified processes of globalization. (Blommaert, p. 3-4)

If so, for protesters who possess the high value linguistic resources needed to tweet in English to an unknown global audience, their capital is both social and cultural: their ability to communicate in English, a network standard (Grewal, 2008), extended their

networks of potential support and influence while their knowledge of English, a language of global prestige, arguably increased their voice and mobility across those networks (Bourdieu, 1991).

While this translocal use of English in Iran must be understood within the context of globalization, we must not necessarily see English as globalized, but instead as vernacularized varieties and repertoires of English that exist and move across multiple scalar levels (Bhatt, 2008; Blommaert, 2003). This means, in my view, the protesters' use of English could also be understood as a form of borrowing from extant cultural resources not unlike the recontextualization of symbolic resources from the master social movement framework. This notion of borrowing reflects my orientation toward cooperative logics and the notion of a commons as the wealth of shared resources, both cultural and natural, rather than competitive ones of privatization and accumulation (Hardt & Negri, 2009; Kluitenberg, 2010; Lessig, 2001; Walljasper, 2010). In a globalized commons of networked spaces and modes of knowledge, English, then, might be seen as a translocal resource through which knowledge and shared meanings, together with other semiotic and symbolic cultural resources, might grant collective actors both further power, or counterpower, and influence with groups who share in that knowledge's epistemic ideology (Kogan, 2005). This is not to discount notions of access required to participate in either the commons or globalized transnational public spheres in which English is a network standard (Grewal, 2008). Rather, I argue, and as I believe the analyses that follow show, that by borrowing English from a translocal commons, the Iranian protesters not only extended their communication power to reach a global audience, but also tactically employed this symbol of banal globalism as kind of

terministic screen that, through the present symbolic role of English in the world, works to direct global attention to particular phenomena (Burke, 1989; Szerszynski & Urry, 2006). That is, because linguistic choices index our perceptions of context, the tactical use of English as a symbolic and psychosocial rallying-point (Edward, 2009) may have signaled, on the protesters' part, a particular stance toward how the local crisis born out of the election aftermath cohered with global frameworks of meaning. Therefore, it is possible that drawing attention to their movement through this symbolic action may have intensified their networked effervescence and the energized transnational imaginaries. However, that borrowing may also carry ideological implications that identify the protesters with globalized networks of power in ways that could be counter to their progressive objectives.

From a methodological standpoint, these considerations suggest employing, for descriptive purposes, the Bakhtinian concepts of *heteroglossia* and *polyvocality*. By heteroglossia, I mean the mixing, combining, and juxtaposing of communicative resources, such as style, genres, registers, and even languages, as reflections of the understanding of language as a site of struggle, or as Bakhtin (1986) claimed, "the coexistence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present" (p. 291). The polyvocality inherent in this struggle not only challenges notions of discourse's self-contained meaning, but also replaces the notion of a single, hegemonic public sphere with a plural, lattice of public spheres located at the interstices of different voices in society (Hauser, 1999). For interpretive purposes, I have built upon the sociocognitive approach to ideological analysis taken in chapter three and the

emphases on intertextual and interdiscursive relations to reflect both the local contexts and the materiality of that discourse, that is, the use of social media during a social movement. This includes considering the protesters' tactical use of social media during the opposition demonstrations both within the master framework of protests and the larger framework of globalized social movements (Boler, 2008). It also includes considering the indexicality of protesters' discursive practices through the analysis of stance. As Jaffe (2009) has argued, "the concept of stance is a uniquely productive way of conceptualizing the processes of indexicalization that are the links between individual performance and social meaning" (p. 4). I examine this process by using CDA to analyze both epistemic and affective stance with the goal of seeing how the Iranian protesters took up various positions in relation to particular subjectivities and social relationships, supported by the theory of *habitus* to consider how expressions of stance can convey one's position in a cultural field (Bourdieu, 1990; Jaffe). Also, as I argued in chapter three, the strong connection between style and metapragmatics to ideology (Silverstein, 2003; van Dijk, 1998) entails looking at both lexical and syntactical structures as well as the ways that protesters discursively signaled the events taking place, considerations which also allow me to expand the theoretical and methodological approaches to intertextuality and interdiscursivity taken up in the previous chapter.

Circulation Is the Content: Analysis

During the election crisis, two of the activists' discursive practices that appeared to strongly exhibit intertextuality and interdiscursivity were retweets (RTs) and the embedding of hyperlinks in posts. Similar to forwarding an email to a mailing list, *retweeting* another user's content to one's followers, together with hyperlinking, which I

discuss below, is one of the most common functionalities and communicative practices employed by Twitter users. In my dataset of tweets tagged #IranElection, written in English, and posted between June 1-30, 2009, there were retweets in 72 of 238 total posts.^{35,36} This rate of approximately one in three compares favorably with the results of the large-scale quantitative research conducted in 2009 by the Web Ecology Project. This study showed that during the first eighteen days of the Iranian election crisis one in four tweets about Iran were retweets of another user's content as were approximately 40% of the tweets in the 140kit Iran Election dataset.³⁷ That both these rates are somewhat higher than the approximately one in five rate for general Twitter use (Sysomos, 2010) points toward the importance of retweeting during the protests.

This increase might be explained by the ways retweeting can amplify circulations of information and discourse across new networks. Given the exigencies of the crisis as well as the goals of the social movement that grew out of it, this functionality would clearly be valuable to social movement participants trying to disperse their message to a wider audience. What is more, in a horizontal or rhizomatic organizational pattern typical of social movements, each retweet has the potential to connect more of the movement's loose network ties (Howard, 2010) while also contributing to the formation of the movement's counter-discourse (Castells, 2009). This sociability, in which decentralized discourses and communicative actions accumulate within the dynamics of network power (Grewal, 2008), could produce a form of counterpower employed by

³⁵ This publicly-available data was collected using the free social media search tool Topsy (<http://topsy.com>).

³⁶ The time frame for this dataset corresponds with those of the news data analyzed in chapter two and the other social media texts analyzed in this and subsequent chapters.

³⁷ Source: <http://140kit.com>. Retrieved on March 9, 2011.

activists to oppose the power of sovereignty, a process suggested by both the offline and online struggles between activists and Iranian authorities. For these reasons, the discursive practice of retweeting might also be understood as a social movement tactic by which circulation not only amplifies discourses across networks, but increases both their use and exchange values by strengthening their network presence (Boler, 2008; Dean, 2008; Entman, 2004).

Recalling Blommaert's (2010) claim that in a globalized market of linguistic resources the so-called market winners and losers are determined according to voice and mobility, retweeting clearly has the potential to increase the uptake of circulations across networks. That it was through social media such as Twitter that, in the early days of the election crisis, news of the protests first reached Western legacy media outlets as well as networks of global activists suggests at least some support for that assertion, as the following example of a retweet (RT) by an activist in Canada appears to demonstrate.³⁸

RT from Iran: <http://twitpic.com/7r4nw> - <http://twitpic.com/7r4pv> - Iran / Tehran / protesters / Topkhone Sq #iranelection Jun 18, 2009

As a circulation of information both within the social movement and across translocal social networks, this post about the location and occurrence of a protest in Tehran, accompanied by links to photographs documenting that event and categorized by its

³⁸ As discussed in chapters one, the locations of Twitter users became less clear as users in Iran tried to mask their IPs as a means of avoiding government surveillance. Meanwhile, many activists outside Iran temporarily changed their settings to show their location as Iran as both a sign of solidarity with the Iranian protesters and as a means of confounding Iranian surveillance attempts. I argue that for my analyses this lack of verifiable location is irrelevant since I am focusing on the bridging and extending of translocal networks, not specifically inside or outside Iran. That said, these facts do lend support for claims presented earlier in the chapter regarding the use value of protesters' tweets as signal intelligence.

hashtag, is amplified with each retweet across an extending lattice of public spheres (Hauser, 1999). The link between those spheres is suggested in the spatial deixis, which simultaneously indexes the situatedness of these utterances and the materiality of these practices (Leppänen et al., 2009). Indeed, the prefacing “from Iran” of the retweet situates the original utterance in a way that appears to validate the original circulation, an attribute that might afford it greater voice and mobility across networks. In that case, we might also see retweets like this as a form of peer evaluation in a social movement that also functions as an epistemic community in which a network of knowledgeable actors coordinate and articulate a movement’s aims (Dobusch & Quack, 2008; Kogan, 2005). In the following example, this notion of peer evaluation is intensified by the retweet count.

Iran / today / Krimkhan St / protest NOW #iranelection on Twitpic <http://ree.tw/bzk> (retweeted 131x <http://ree.tw/bzl>) Jun 17, 2009

Not only does the relatively high number of retweets seem to validate the original post’s recontextualization in a globalized context, it could also position the retweeter as both a participant in a translocal social movement and a knowledgeable member of the epistemic community. In addition, the polyvocality of retweeting could also suggest a braiding of voices through which collection action is performed, as seen in this example:

usernameB: RT @usernameA: "perhaps a million protesting" <http://bit.ly/QGk19>
pic: <http://twitpic.com/7gtbu> #iranelection #iran Jun 15, 2009

Here, by echoing user A's utterance as both a communicative act and a symbolic performance, user B becomes an imaginary co-participant in the street protest, and thereby empowered an activist.³⁹

That credibility, however, like the discursive relation grown out of the intertextual link, may be less social than informationalized (Lash, 2002). In terms of both use and exchange value, that these tweets were written in English likely strengthened their mobility potential by allowing them to move among transnational flows of information across global networks in which English-language repertoires function as common communicative links.⁴⁰ In the understanding that communication is typically centered on the acquisition of cultural capital and symbolic gain (Bourdieu, 1991), the use of English might also have increased the message's value given the cultural capital commonly associated in many contexts, including Iran's, with knowledge of a high-status language, a value that appears to be validated, if not reproduced, with each retweet. Moreover, in globalized contexts in which information and communication technologies facilitate translocal connections mediated by language, English can be viewed as a possible mediating standard through which actors gain access to more participants and new networks and thus increase their network power. From the same standpoint, retweets could then be understood as a form of positive feedback that drives the adopting of this

³⁹ I have anonymized usernames in my dataset to protect user's identities.

⁴⁰ At the time of the protests, Twitter was not available in right-to-left languages such as Farsi, which necessitated communication in a left-to-right language such as English. This fact strongly supports the views that Twitter was of negligible value as a coordination and communication tool among the protesters given the rate of English-language knowledge, along with the then-penetration level of Twitter in Iran. That said, it also complicates claims that the only reason activists tweeted in English was to address a global audience.

standard (Grewal, 2008). According to Grewal, in economies of scale, in which value is determined by demand and usage:

standards are more valuable when greater numbers of people use them because they offer a form of coordination that exhibits economies of scale; and second, that one effect of this coordination is, over time, to eliminate alternative standards that might have been freely chosen. (p. 26)

From a linguistic perspective, the notion of eliminating alternative standards might cohere with both the arguments of linguistic imperialism of the spread of languages such as English around the world and the notions of linguistic ecologies and the need for preserving linguistic rights (Phillipson, 1992; Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996). In that sense, the materiality of social media discourse and retweets as forms of positive feedback across global networks could be seen as reinforcing the adoption of both globalized social media and English as networks standards. But underlying those arguments are emphases on English as a structurally-determined, linguistically-defined object (Blommaert, 2010). Instead, numerous studies have demonstrated both the pluralities of English used around the world and the creative, performative ways users employ English as a set of communicative resources and repertoires in diverse, localized contexts (Pennycook, 2007). If we extend these arguments to Grewal's notions of standards and network power, we might see how the counterpower of sociability is a form of structuration by which standards can become both pluralized and flexible and thereby limit structural coercion. This is not to deny the network power granted to languages like English that dominate online discourse. Instead, it is to take up an alternative position that suggests how the tactical use of English during the

opposition movement was a form of borrowing, or recontextualization, of communicative resources in a globalized context and then deployed as a symbolic resource within the social movement frame. In the follow example, as in the first example above and in numerous tweets in my dataset, the variety of English employed here appears to be vernacularized toward network standards of compression and discontinuity (Lash, 2002).

RT @username: <http://twitpic.com/7j6ox> - Tehran / yesterday / crime
#iranelection Jun 16, 2009

Here, within Twitter's 140-character limit constraints, the emphasis is on nouns at the expense of verbs and functional lexis, with the syntactical use of forward slashes linking spatiotemporal deixis with the noun *crime* in a way that informationalizes the discourse (Lash). It also makes the utterance resemble the hyperlink that precedes it so that the original tweet appears to function as a coordinate of collective action within the social movement narrative. It also functions dialogically as a caption for the hyperlinked image which, as seen in Figure 4.1, appears to substantiate the claim of "crime," imbuing the utterance with evidentiality.



Figure 4.1. Photographic evidence hyperlinked from a tweet.

Arguably, this vernacularization of English in the original tweet suggests a localized meaning and therefore lowers its mobility potential across transnational networks. At the same time, with the discourse informationalized, it is plausibly more easily commodified and thus made available for uptake from micro- to macroscale levels (Blommaert). As the process of retweeting facilitated the movement of discourse from a local to a global level, the shift in spatiotemporal reference created the possibility for new signification: at a local scale-level, the utterance references a situated moment as a validation of its occurrence in real time; at a global scale-level, the retweet shifts the utterance into a translocal, timeless flow of space and time (Castells, 1996). In that flow, the utterance's validity is potentially transformed semiotically from a subjective into a more general statement of fact and normative validation of epistemic stance. That is, for a local audience, the original tweet could have been used to inform activists of events and the dangers of participation—or even just to inform a wider local audience of what was happening. For a global audience, however, when the tweet becomes,

through retweeting, rescaled as news, it arguably indexes an image of society, of mutual interest, if not dependency that, in turn, at a metapragmatic level evidences a particular epistemic stance or ideology (Blommaert; Jaffe, 2009; Silverstein, 2003).

At a global level, for an audience who can only bear witness to these events, the sense of normative validation entailed through the recontextualizing retweet comes from the promotion or ‘upscaling’ of the utterance to the discourse of news. In a statement of what is happening in the world, the retweet is employed like a journalist’s quote of an eyewitness or participant that the retweeting user selects, among the countless utterances flowing across time-space, as newsworthy (Silverstein, 2004). If so, it may be tempting to see the seeming lack of evidentiality in the quotative “RT” as a neutral form of attribution in direct reported speech and the amplification as similar to that of agents’ voices reported in legacy news media, magnified through publication and distribution, and then positioned within that discourse (Hall, 1977). Instead, the interpretative frame of validation, created through the intertextual link between retweet and tweet, could function dialogically, with the original tweeter ‘selecting’ users for retweeting his or her discourse. By constructing the tweet in the register of a journalist—the telegraphic text accompanying and captioning the documentary hyperlinked photograph—the user creates a recognizable voice that allows other users to judge it as valuable or authoritative and thereby more readily taken up in a wider network of discourse through the process of retweeting. That is, within the logics of participation and the social movement frame, the practice of discursively constructing the tweet as an instance of citizen journalism enables the practice of retweeting as a form of *participatory interpellation* through which the audience’s belief in the tweet’s validity and

reliability creates possibilities for both epistemic stance-taking and participation (Clift, 2006; Jaffe, 2009).

But doing so, I argue, also establishes an interdiscursive link through which the participatory epistemologies and ideologies of the social movement are brought into convergence, through the use of global networks, with those of communicative capitalism. According to Dean (2008), in the current contexts of communicative capitalism, the commodification of discourse has uncoupled communicative action from political principles such that:

the use value of a message [has become] less important than its exchange value, its contribution to a larger pool, flow, or circulation of content. A contribution need not be understood; it need only be repeated, reproduced, forwarded. Circulation is the content, the condition for acceptance or rejection for a contribution. (p. 108)

For agents, Dean has suggested, this detachment both fetishizes communication and shifts communication from message or content distribution to one of contribution. In the following examples, we can see similar features to those discussed above. But if viewed as informationalized commodities, the expressions of stance, as considered above, appear to be less epistemic than affective.

@username in Baharestan we saw militia with axe chopping ppl like meat - blood everywhere - like butcher - Allah Akbar - #Iранеlection RT RT RT 06/24/2009

Iran / today / hafttir Sq / protest NOW #iranelection on Twitpic <http://ree.tw/bzm> (retweeted 123x <http://ree.tw/bzn>) Jun 17, 2009

RT Iran: Very brutal death of a brave man <http://twitpic.com/7nv7z> - all I can do is to pray and CRY

For a local audience receiving these updates in real-time, the potential increase in use value of these tweets (then amplified as retweets) is fairly clear. But rescaled to a global level, their exchange value seems to come from their affective qualities. In the first example, the sense of urgency represented stylistically in the repeated retweet request, much like a repeated exclamation point, suggests the user's impassioned emotional state that is reflected in the visceral eyewitness description and religious invocation, all of which index an affective stance (Jaffe, 2009). As an intensifier, retweeting then might signify not only an amplification of discourses across wider social networks, but also an intensified emotional force. This interpretation might be supported by the retweet count in the second example as well as the style of the third, in which the intensifier *very* works to amplify the affect in the emotion-laden phrases *brutal death* and *brave men*. Arguably punctuating this expression of pathos is the invocation of faith and religion in "all I can do is pray," a somewhat fatalistic assertion that strongly indexes an epistemic stance, but which, when punctuated by the verb *cry* intensified with all caps, shifts the stance back to affect. As examples of the activists' Twitter-based discourse, these contributions might be seen, as discussed above, as means of engendering networked effervescence through which participants could become linked, if only ephemerally, in sociomental bonds across transnational imaginaries. However, it seems just as likely to be an example of what Žižek (2007) has called *interpassivity*, or a form of communication for reaction, not response, or a way of connecting without really connecting. As examples of networked interpassivity, each retweet might be read as a reaction, an evaluation that does not take up or extend the proposition put forth in the original utterance but merely amplifies its affect. If so, as this

data seems to suggest and as Dean has also argued, an internet-based transnational public sphere might not be a locus of imaginary belonging but “an empty signifier of global unity...[in which] our networked communities produce our specific worlds as the global or global capital” (p. 117). That those worlds would be constructed in the fluid discourse of emergent sociability that is both materially situated and deterritorialized, I argue, reflects the ideological stances of those social agents whose discursive practices and performances shape that interaction and the construction of fluid ideologies (Johnson & Ensslin, 2007; McNair, 2006).

The logic of the link. An additional means of circulating information and micro-coordinating social movement activities is the forwarding of hyperlinks. One of the most fundamental affordances of the web, hyperlinks are also common in Twitter, where users commonly circulate links as a means of filtering web content, as the examples above show. With Twitter usage in Iran at the time of the crisis highly concentrated in Tehran (Sysomos, 2009), the microblogging service could have readily offered young, urban protesters already disposed to using social media and ICTs an additional tactical resources as the exigencies of the election crisis, including the government-imposed communication blockades, intensified the need for information filtering. In my dataset, links appeared in approximately 95% of the tweets and targeted a range of site types as shown in Figure 4.2.

Hyperlink Target	n	Example
Legacy Media (e.g., BBC, the <i>Guardian</i> , CNN)	64	RT @username Iran Election Whistleblower Killed, From Guardian: http://bit.ly/3NC7x http://bit.ly/12kqL4 #iranelection
Uploaded videos (e.g. to YouTube, Qik)	54	@username Guy beaten to death video is up again http://bit.ly/12oZDT #iranelection Jun 14, 2009
Uploaded photos (e.g., to Twitpic, Flickr)	42	@username: Pictures from Tehran http://bit.ly/eTFuZ & http://bit.ly/132TNt #iranelection Jun 13, 2009
Social Movement Resources (e.g. proxy servers, first aid)	30	@username: List of fake & spam twitters: RT http://bit.ly/JcylU good site to block spam misinfo #IranElection Jun 18, 2009
Other new media (e.g. Facebook, blogs, aggregators)	27	@username: #iran9 #iranelection http://blip.fm/~3yt0y just some music from the big Z @username Jun 16, 2009
Other protests	7	@username RT @username can u help us get the word out? Boston Protest: 20 June 2009 15:00-17:00 Copley Sq http://bit.ly/xuklX #iranelection 06/19/2009

Figure 4.2. Taxonomy of hyperlinks embedded in tweets in the Twitter research corpus

As the table above suggests, activists tended to use hyperlinks conjunctively, connecting nodes of discourse and information as well as genres and modes of communication (Morgan, 2002). Furthermore, though the differences between hypertextuality and intertextuality have been debated (see, for instance, Riffaterre, 1994), it is easy to see how, like retweets, hyperlinks create manifest intertextual chains among texts given how links also suggest the presence of another text (Morgan). Accordingly, Meyer (2010) has claimed that links might be viewed as synecdoche, with the URL referring to the whole of the hyperlinked text. According to Grice's cooperative principle, Meyer goes on to say, this part-whole relationship suggests that further information being offered is relevant to the post, and through implicature readers are drawn to another nodal point in a network of discourse that is meant to comment on the

topic. In this sense, hyperlinks, like retweets, might function both as sources of support and credibility for a stance as well as a kind of metalanguage, or commentary on the text in which the link has been embedded (Johnson & Ensslin, 2007).

In that case, hyperlinks might be more than merely conjunctive. The resulting chain of polyvocal signification resulting from hyperlinking also suggests a constitutive intertextuality through which linked discourses might come to cohere. That is, the communicative practice of linking carries with it an associative 'logic' of the link that implies a coherence between the conjoined texts (Cali, 2000). If we accept this understanding of linking, then, as a rhetorical move, one that calls the reader into action, we might see how, as in example one in Figure 4.2, for instance, an opposition movement actor's linking to a Western legacy news media site could suggest to readers an assumed coherence between the ideologies encoded in those discourses (Fairclough, 2001). In that case, protesters' tweeted links should not only be seen as hybrid utterances or nodal points in a network of communication, or even coordinates in a real or imagined space. They could also be seen as extensions of power into cyberspace that can reflect a user's social and ideological associations (Crystal, 2001; Fornäs, 2002).

Clearly, those associations can range, even when, as in my dataset, the IranElection hashtag functions as a *metastance* that creates a framework for the interpreting the linked text (Jaffe, 2009). Looking again at the examples in Figure 4.2, the links, for instance, to proxy servers, lists of government sites of disinformation, or cellphone video captures of eyewitnesses/citizen journalists suggest an ideological stance somewhat apart from that suggested in links to legacy media or, as in example 5

from a member of the diaspora, to an internet-based music recommendation site set to an inspirational song. But in each instance, the hyperlink, as a rhetorical move, becomes a resource for individual action by which users shape and assign their own subjectivities while creating subject positions for their audience.

What might complicate this move, though, is the use of shortened URLs. A by-product of hyperlinking within the character-limit constraints of microblogs, shortened URLs, as in the example below, still point toward the presence of another text and create an intertextual chain or claim in which understanding of texts are conditioned by those that precede them.

RT proxy list for Iran: <http://bit.ly/KFBtQ> and in Farsi <http://is.gd/136wy> - #IranElection Jun 16, 2009

In this example, the implicature creates the expectation that this retweeted hyperlink provides readers with resources for finding proxy servers to help circumvent the government's communication blockades. But the URL's seeming 'illegibility,' that is, the lack of a readable domain name as a cue to the content being linked to, flouts the maxim of quantity and obfuscates the 'putting it that way' of what has been implied. In this sense, this practice of hyperlinking might be less conjunctive than additive while also informationalizing the hyperlinked texts into forms of symbolic exchange (Lash, 2002).

This might also mean that the practice of hyperlinking is not only intertextual, but interdiscursive, linking genres and modes of signification (Fairclough, 2003). As Kress (2003) has argued, genres, as forms of social action, are encoded with power and thus can be imbued ideologically. As frameworks of experience, they might therefore also

function as metastances that, as with hashtags, shape the interpretation of meaning in a way that implies ideology. For instance, in example 1 in the table above, the user has not only linked to the British legacy newspaper the *Guardian*, implying a sense of positional coherence between the texts, but has also borrowed the compressed style and initial capital letters of newspaper headlines in way that might also suggest, through recontextualization, a form of alignment (Jaffe, 2009). A different form of stance-taking might be seen in the use of variation or marked forms as style (Kiesling, 2009). In example 2, the use of the preposition *up* to denote *uploaded* or *functioning* (as in ‘the server is back up’) seems to index the positive symbolic value of technology jargon. In example 6, the shortening and lack of capital letters in “can u help us get the word out,” indexes, it would seem, the informality and spoken qualities of genres like text messaging and online chat (Crystal, 2001). That is to say, the use of links may be a form of political action that both bridges across network nodes and links genres of texts in ways that could also support the formation of counter-hegemonic discourse. But because the conjunctive functionality of hyperlinks points as much to the links between nodes as to the gaps between them (Morgan, 2002), the result of high-frequency hyperlinking, as in the activists’ microblogging discourse, might also produce a type of fragmentation that challenges the notions of connectivity and belonging rather than inspires the formation of sociomental bonds and networked effervescence.

Irony and iconicity: Recontextualized images. This paradox of networked connectivity and fragmentation might also be seen in the protesters’ discursive practice of carrying photographs taken by protesters and uploaded to and circulated through social media services such as Flickr, as shown in Figure 4.3. As discussed in chapters

one and two, these communicative actions became symbolic practices that represented both the government's violent repressions and the activists' agency despite state-imposed censorship and communication blockades.



Figure 4.3. Local recontextualization of activists' photographs.

In this image, the amplification of this discourse seems clear: the recontextualization of the documentary photographs, first, in the context of the protest in Iran and then at a secondary level of *mediality* (Johnson & Ensslin, 2007) on the Flickr social media platform, intensifies the circulation of the messages contained in them and therefore the possibility of their reaching a wider audience. But it also creates, within a multimodal text, complex levels of signification. In the image in Figure 4.3, the iconicity of the street sign appears to locate the spatial coordinates of the protest at that instant for both a local and global audience, even when, in the latter case, the Farsi script may be indecipherable. Meanwhile, the placard of black-and-white documentary images, presumably taken by activists and circulated through social media, appears to testify to the government forces' violent repression of the protests. This functions as a secondary form of signage, coincidentally held up by a Green Movement supporter, as symbolized

by the bandana knotted around the protester's wrist, in parallel with the street sign, whose red color echoes that of the Iranian conservative party. Whether or not those layers of potential signification are received in a globalized context, they nevertheless suggest a compressed micronarrative that, through this process of symbolically borrowing images, is arguably more likely to move among global information and media flows (Lash, 2002).

In fact, we can see how the practice of reentextualization as a discursive tactic within the social movement framework became, I argue, an *order of normativity* (Blommaert, 2005) within the global movement that grew up around and cohered with the election crisis protests in Iran. An instance of this can be seen in Figure 4.4 in the Flickr uploads of Iranian photographs reentextualized as evidence and symbolic resources during solidarity demonstrations held in Berlin and San Francisco.⁴¹



Figure 4.4. Reentextualization of documentary photographs in Berlin (l) and San Francisco (r).

⁴¹ In Flickr, users can label their uploaded photographs with titles, dates, and locations, as both these were. However, Flickr also can be set to show Exchangeable image file format (Exif) metadata that tags images taken with digital cameras to include such information as the date, time, camera settings, and geolocation. When collecting my Flickr data, I used Exif metadata to assure the date fell within my chosen collection parameters and, whenever possible, relied on geolocation tags rather than user captions for my analyses.

In the Berlin placard, the recontextualized photograph not only creates an intertextual affiliation between the Iran protests and those led in solidarity by global activists, but also an interdiscursive link between the visual image as documentation of the government forces' brutality and, as an instantiation of global new media flows, a slogan, the typical contents of demonstrator's placard, vernacularized through recontextualization and thus made comprehensible transnationally across media platforms and cultures. Further evidence of how this can be seen in Figure 4.5, in which the same documentary photography is recontextualized by a protester in Iran and an activist in San Francisco.



Figure 4.5. Police brutality photograph appearing in demonstrations in Tehran (l) and San Francisco (r).

As these images suggest, the circulation of photographs such as these through social media networks seems both to amplify its message across networks and, through intertextual and interdiscursive links, strengthening its symbolic power as both evidence of the events occurring in Iran and the protesters' agency if not also the networked effervescence these circulations appear to inspire.

That collective spirit of unity across social movement frames toward globally-defined fields of possibility can be facilitated by the affordances of social media like

Twitter and Flickr, perhaps especially the latter given the iconicity and crosscultural accessibility of visual images in postmodern societies. As the images in Figure 4.6 show, the symbolic—and ironic— borrowing by global activists of the iconic ‘Hope’ images from the 2008 Obama campaign as a form of metalinguistic commentary on the Iranian election crisis also shows how discourses can cross social movement frames.



Figure 4.6. Linking political discourses and movement frames and networks.

That these images were captured in Berlin and San Francisco also suggests how this process of reentextualization can, as discussed above, be a form of indexical rescaling from a local to a global social movement. The 2008 Obama campaign drew heavily for support on a demographic which had also largely supported the Iranian opposition candidate Mousavi and subsequently constituted the base of the anti-Ahmadinejad movement. Arguably, this means that the ironic “Nope” images also entailed the key slogans from Obama’s campaign, hope and change. The latter slogan can be seen in Figure 4.7 on a supporter at a rally in Shiraz for the reformist candidate Mehdi Karoubi, who ran under the slogan “Change for Iran.”



Iran's Election

تلاقی بعد از درگیری طرفداران مهرحسین موسوی و احمدی‌نژاد - ۲۰ خرداد ماه - خیابان خاگشلی شیراز

Figure 4.7. Iranian protester with political slogan in Farsi and English.

This use of English to express a slogan strongly echoing that used by the then-recently-victorious U.S. president in a historic election seems to be a clear deployment of global symbolic resources. This is not to say, however, that either the Iranian opposition movement actors or those global activists acting in solidarity with them were inherently Obama supporters. Instead, it is to suggest how the interdiscursive links created through this symbolic borrowing arguably increases the social movement discourse's voice and mobility across global networks. And as these discourse move across networks, it becomes more likely that borrowings and similarities can become nodes where discourses and frames can cohere. The use of English together with Farsi in Figure 4.7 suggests a further layer of symbolic borrowing given Iran's complex relation with English, the West, and in particular the United States, as discussed above.⁴² A placard written in English and held up for a global audience, as in Figure 4.8, seems to

⁴² The caption in Farsi below the image in Figure 4.7 can be roughly translated as "Minutes after fans clash Mousavi and Ahmadinejad - June 20 M Street - Soil Shiraz."

strongly suggest the use of a network standard to increase the message's mobility. At the same time, the cultural capital required to produce a sign like this appears to be redeployed as a tactic of counterpower used to circumvent the government's banning of foreign journalists during the election aftermath.



Figure 4.8. Iranian protester holding up a placard written in English.

In addition, the discursive practice of code-mixing can both index stance while further pointing toward the formation within the global social movement framework of orders of normativity, as the image in Figure 4.9 of an activist in Washington D.C. with signs in both Farsi and English strongly suggests. The activist not only appears to be borrowing the practices of the Iranian protesters, but also repurposing them to speak back to the Iranian authorities who, as discussed in chapter two, had taken to surveilling both local activists' use of social media and Western media coverage of the election crisis as a means of leveraging both internal and regional support against the protesters.



Figure 4.9. Activist in Washington D.C. with placards in both English and Farsi.

For the Iranian protesters, these discursive practices might also point toward a tactical use of English as a means of *nominating* the election crisis struggle as not merely a local concern, but a global human rights issue (Melucci, 1996). As Melucci has argued:

Contemporary movements strive to reappropriate the capacity to name through the elaboration of codes and languages designed to define reality, in the twofold sense of constituting it symbolically and of regaining it, thereby escaping from the predominant forms of representation. (p. 357)

At the same time, even if this form of intertextual linking across networks creates a participatory effect in which discourses and social actors' agency appears intensified, its symbolic value may be diluted in the current marketplace of networked communication capitalism due to weakened shared reference. It is this arena that communication, as Dean (2008) has argued, "has detached itself from political ideals of belonging and

connection to function today as a primarily economic form. Differently put, communicative exchanges, rather than fundamental to democratic politics, are the basic elements of capitalist production” (p. 105). Perhaps, then, what this means is that while activists may have increased the voice and mobility of their discourses by borrowing globalized forms of communication and symbolic purposes in the ways discussed in this chapter, those tactics may also have cost them much of the use value of those messages. That said, as the images above show, the symbolic exchange did appear to create further possibilities for the sociomental bonds that might work together toward as a form of sociocognitive counterpower against hegemonic forces and toward common goals, even if ephemeral and imaginary.

Borrowing as a Tactical Strategy: Conclusions

As I asserted at the start of this chapter, Iranian protesters’ use of social media during the 2009 election protests bears a significant resemblance to the use of small media during the 1978-79 Islamic Revolution. This similarity points toward an extension of modern Iran’s cycle of protests and the master social movement frame that has shaped it. Within that framework the use of social media, as part of the shift in social movements toward rhizomatic structures formed around communication, also suggests similarities in tactics. As Renzi (2008) has argued, tactical media are networked spaces in which counter-discourses can be symbolically fashioned and re-fashioned, a view that coheres with those of de Certeau (1984), who saw tactics as spaces of the other and the disempowered who borrow the symbolic resources of the powerful. But does the practice of borrowing those resources and deploying them within the social movement frame entail importing—if not completely, then partially—the ideologies and

stances imbued in those practices? That is, as de Certeau also claimed, if entailed in a strategy is the power to transform the uncertainties of history into readable spaces, the Iranian activists' practice of reentextualization, as I have tried to show above, appears to make their local struggle more readable to a global audience across transnational media and information flows. The discursive practices and orders of normativity evidenced in the data analyzed above seem to attest to the success, within the logics of participation, of those tactics.

At the same time, this process of borrowing as a means of extending their local struggle toward globally-defined fields of possibility also seems to mean that, in those discontinuous networked spaces flattened by the informationalizing processes of global flows, their resonance, as well as the logics of participation upon which they appear to be based, becomes diluted through diminished shared references and their stance-taking constrained at the level of affect. If so, this could be due to the convergence of strategies and tactics that has resulted from our contemporary environment of interactive, multimodal, cross-platform mediascapes and global flows (Manovich, 2009), in which dominant forces mimic the tactics of the marginalized, such as remixes and reentextualizations, as part of their powerful strategies. Why not, then, also the reverse? That is, Iranian protesters' use of social media through the cultural logics of the Iranian social movement frame might also exemplify the appropriation of strategies as tactics.

Operating within, I argue, competitive logics, commentators such as Frank Rich, who dismissed tweeting protesters as "wallflowers at a revolution," or Malcolm Gladwell, who claimed protesters' use of social media was the least important aspect of the 2009

demonstrations, may have missed the potentially powerful symbolism of these communicative and political acts. As Poulson (2005) has explained, during the Iranian cycle of protests, social movement actors have frequently drawn on local cultural and symbolic resources, such as *taquiya* and *bast*. *Taquiya* refers to the dissimulation of religious beliefs as a practical strategy for infiltrating an opposition organization or evading conflict. Perhaps, then, during the 2009 protests, Iranian activists' use of global social media might have been an instance of *taquiya*, in which reservations about adopting Western technological forms, especial those associated with the U.S., were temporarily set aside as a practical strategy for opposing government crackdowns. This alternative reading might further be likely given that addressing a global public sphere, which is a secular construction based on rational-critical debate, is, as discussed above, generally at odds with Islamic beliefs (Siapera, 2009). *Bast* can refer to both the seeking of sanctuary during conflict or the occupying of symbolic spaces, as exemplified by the taking of the American embassy during the Islamic Revolution. If occupying the embassy, a symbol of the U.S.-backed Shah's authoritarian regime, was an expression of counterpower, the use of social media originating from the U.S. might have been a symbolic act of resistance against the authoritarian, anti-West Ahmadinejad government. This is not to say that Iranian activists sought to 'occupy' U.S.-based social media. But their use of social media and vernacular linguistic repertoires could be seen as an example of a symbolic borrowing from existing cultural frameworks for creative acts of resistance and agency. If so, understanding these acts through the concepts of *taquiya* and *bast* would challenge not only cyber-utopian rhetoric about technology as fostering the spread of democracy, but also cyberskeptic rejoinders, such

as Morozov's (2011), which attack cyber-utopian ideologies without acknowledging their own. At the same time, it is hard to deny how, through the convergence of frameworks and cultural fields entailed in that practice of borrowing, the protesters' strategy may also mean that the logics of participation inherent in any social movement must merge with those of the forces they oppose.

What I intend to show by considering these possibilities is the importance of drawing on local cultural contexts in order to avoid reading the protests—from any ideological angle—through our own competitive logics, as appears to have been the case in the cyber-rhetoric debates that sprung up around the 2009 Iranian protests. Saying this does not deny either my rhetorical situation as a researcher nor the criticality of my approach. In fact, as my analyses reflect, because I see these virtual public spheres as reticulate discursive spaces in which sociocultural capital is required to participate, they must be understood through relations of social power (Bohman, 2004; Hauser, 1999; Siapera, 2009). Moreover, by considering above the use of highly mobile vernaculars of communication—in whatever mode—I do not make claims toward depoliticized notions of the utility of either English or internet-based social media (Ives, 2006). Instead, my aim is to question if we can also see that discursive formation as reflexive and participatory, rather than solely according to the logics of competition, and whether doing so sheds additional light on the complex ways social movement actors can manipulate symbols, borrowed from extant cultural resources, according to their desires while performing their identities individually and collectively within translocally-defined cultural fields, a concern I take up further in chapter five.

Chapter Five

Networked Identifications: Effervescence or Resonance?

In chapter four I argued that the field of reference from which protesters tactically borrowed symbolic and linguistic resources to deploy within both local and global cultural frameworks functioned as a strategy of counter-discourse formation and a means of strengthening their counterpower in a lopsided struggle against government forces. After years of the discourse of *westoxification*, that dialogic process seems to point toward a shift in the logic underlying Iranian society in which locally-defined understandings of modernity might also resonate with the kinds of outwardly-looking cultural reforms that marked the start of the Khatami era (Melucci, 1996). But if any ‘dialogue of civilizations’ emerged from the 2009 presidential election crisis, it was not one that transpired among international political and religious leaders or even through legacy media. Instead, it occurred among global activists communicating through ‘small’ social media across networked transnational public spheres. As the evidence in chapter four suggests, this online engagement helped spark the networked effervescence that also inspired offline collective action, both globally in solidarity with Iranian activists and locally. As Afsaneh Moqadam (2010) has noted in his account of participating in the 2009 Iranian election protests:

How many times, during the Khatami presidency, did the people indicate their willingness to follow their leaders into the streets? How many times were the people disappointed by their leaders’ reluctance to risk their or anyone else’s skin? The use of mass action is no longer a monopoly in the hands of the hard-liners. (p. 49)

Even without large-scale structural resources and hierarchical organization, protesters succeeded, as tactical forms of collective action, in communicating across weak network ties and organizing the largest demonstrations Iran had experienced since the Islamic Revolution. Though these actions may not have inspired another revolution or even forced a new election, their symbolic and sociocognitive effects, as I argued above, seemed to resonate across social movement frames and translocal networks.

But the practice of microcoordinating collective action and the circulation of discourse across scale levels might point toward more than new possibilities for collective agency, both in the streets of Tehran and transnational imaginaries. These practices might also signal shifts in the protesters' identities. As has been widely argued, the symptoms and syndromes of intensifying global connections that mark contemporary experience have significantly contributed to the forming of new, individualized subjectivities at the expense of old collective identities such as community and class (Giddens, 1991; Rustin, 2008). When mobilized within social movements and intensified by the exigencies of conflict, it is through this process, as Poulson (2005) has argued, that "actors manipulate symbols and language in order to create new ideas and new social identities" (p. 1). In recent social movements, the formation of new identities has typically been marked by a shift from individual to new collective identifications that should be understood not as essentialized or reified objects, but as the outcomes of interaction and collective action (Melucci, 1996). For that reason, examining this process, as well as the ways in which collective actors take up subject positions within the social movement frame, is essential to trying to understand how social movements can point toward deep shifts in a society's cultural logics. It is also important, I argue, to

tracing the discursive changes that tend to emerge from social movements, as I have intended to do in this research.

For these reasons, I extend in this final chapter the analyses and discussions offered in the previous one by looking at the various discursive strategies employed by activists, acting both locally in Iran and around the globe, to construct and perform their identities within the social movement frame. To do so, I first present a theoretical framework in which I accommodate established understandings of the social construction of identity with both the protests' historical contexts and the master social movement frame of modern Iran as well as with the considerations of globalization and communication power presented in earlier chapters. Then, I examine activists' discursive strategies for constructing and performing their collective identities in ways that strengthened collective agency and extended the social movement frame. I also consider how those identifications are made within and complicated by the *place-identity nexus* (Dixon & Dunheim, 2000), which, as the data suggests, also significantly informed the election crisis struggle. Finally, I offer a set of conclusions for both the chapter and the research project as a whole in which I try to address concerns raised in chapters one and two regarding how the protesters' actions, together with Western understandings of them, index a complex range of stances and overlapping ideologies. This discussion will include how working to understand, from multiple perspectives, this process of discursively constituting fluid ideologies might also suggest future research on the social construction of ideologies and identifications as well as the flows of vernacular symbolic resources across transnational networks as resources for collective action and agency.

Mobilities, Co-Presence, and Delocalization: Theoretical Considerations of Identity.

In social research it is generally accepted that in globalized contexts dialectically shaped by internal and external forces, identity has become a primary source of meaning and experience (Castells, 1996). With global flows *decentering* culture from the traditional determinisms of experience, identity has become a reflexive project in which we engage in the construction of self and realignment of habitus within localized global cultural fields (Appadurai, 1996; Featherstone, 1990; Giddens, 1991). Yet, this process, despite the intense pressures of commodified global values and lifestyles, is not exclusively homogenizing (Fine, 2007). Instead, we retain the agency to see ourselves as connected to global concerns while situated in our local histories. And within the tensions of translocal cultural influences, our interpretations of these experiences can be divergent and multiple. As a result, identity is also now commonly considered to be neither stable nor singular, but multiple and hybrid—a process in the collective establishment of symbolic relationships of similarities and differences (Hopper, 2007; Jenkins, 2008). Within the processes of identifications, Castells (1997) has identified three general forms of identity construction that are important for my analyses: one, the *legitimizing identities* built by dominant social forces as a means of maintaining and rationalizing their power; two, the *resistance identities* constructed by social actors in opposition to dominant social structures; and three, *project identities*, or the new identity constructions through which social actors redefine their social positions as part of a larger effort to transform society, as during social movements.

Underlying these theories are assumptions regarding the social construction of identity. With language at the core of our experience, our identities are understood to be formed in discourse, namely the dominant discourses of social structures and practices, a process by which agency can be controlled if not erased (Foucault, 1972, 1978). Yet, within these constraints, identity can be itself a discursive practice, one that we inhabit but also perform through the ways we repeat verbal and non-verbal signs or acts as means of self-fashioning (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Butler, 1990). Capable, therefore, of both reproducing and destabilizing established discourses, we discursively construct our identities through a dynamic process of interaction and performance in which fluid, fragmented, or hybrid identifications are made at the interstices of culture and communication (Bhabha, 2004; Featherstone, Lash & Robertson, 1995). As argued in chapter two, these interstices typically bear the local-global tensions of a transnational network society (Castells, 1997; Goffman, 1974), with language fundamental to that dialectical, translocal process. But when language is viewed not as an object but a set of linguistic resources, these tensions come to produce the *translocal vernaculars* that, in turn, constitute *translocal identifications*, or subjectivities that can both cross localities and be pulled in various directions (Brumberg, 2001; Ong, 1999).

Inherent in the discursive construction of translocal identifications is the belief that place is bound up with language in the constitution of identities. 'Where we are' has long been understood as strongly connected to 'who we are.' Place, though, is more than just a container for identities. Rather, like identity, it is something produced through interaction and collective co-construction. How we talk about 'where we are' comes to

constitute our understandings of places and the various ways we occupy them. But in translocal contexts, the dynamic links in this *place-identity nexus* have become increasingly complex, and how this nexus is deployed in discourse is critical to the ways in which we accomplish social action (Dixon and Dunheim, 2000). In addition, the ways we understand, experience, and construct ourselves and the places we inhabit have been strongly influenced by the mobilities now afforded us by wireless technologies. That is, within the *space of flows* in networked societies, the increasing mobilization of social life has helped produce fluid, *delocalized* identities and experiences (Castells, 2009; Urry, 2007). With the old immobility of place delocalized, the boundaries between presence and absence have been blurred. For social actors, this means their agency can be extended through, on the one hand, the *co-presence* created by mobilized communication and, on the other, a *polychronicity* of experience (Caron & Caronia, 2007). A protester in Iran, for instance, could be participating in a street demonstration while tweeting or uploading cellphone video captures to circulate to both other local activists in Tehran or Shiraz and, simultaneously, to an unknown audience reading them in real-time or recontextualized later in other activists' discourses. In social movements, therefore, the emphasis has shifted from individual to collective identifications as both a network of active relations and the cognitive process of jointly constructing a system for legitimating collective action (Melucci, 1996). And with cultural identity and the collective action underlying the processes of collective identification at the core of new social movements (Parsa, 2000; Poulson, 2005), analyzing the discursive construction of place and identifications in social movements is essential to trying to determine the impact of social movements on discursive change (Juris, 2008).

Collective Identifications and Deictic Shifts: Analysis

Given the context, the social movement goals, and the various deployments of symbolic resources within the social movement frame as discussed in the previous chapter, it is perhaps unsurprising that one of the most common forms of identification present in all three of my datasets are linguistic and visual representations of collective identity. As Melucci (1996) has argued, collective identity, as a cognitive process, refers to a network of active relationships between actors who interact, communicate, influence each other, and make decisions. This network of relationships becomes active in the transnational imaginary when, as in the following tweet from outside Iran, a user appears to perform his or her identity as a member—real or imagined—of the Iranian diaspora.

@username For all my brothers and sisters in #Iran9 <http://blip.fm/~3ua5k>
#Iraelection please please retweet this...please Jun 16, 2009

Here, the use of familial forms could cue not only cognitive associations of the diaspora, but also a symbolic extension of the social movement frame toward the cosmopolitan ethics of transnational logics (Ong, 1999). The amplifying *all*, entreating *please*, and dramatic use of ellipsis also produce a strong affective stance that works to create, through empathy, a collaborative or consensual subject-position for the audience (Jaffe, 2009). A similar process can be seen in the use of collective pronouns in the social movement discourse. Compared with the first-person pronouns, plural personal pronouns tend to emphasize interaction with others and have been shown to signal more positive outlooks than first-person singular pronouns (Elson, Yeung, Roshan, Bohandy & Nader, 2012). In addition, as has been widely argued (see Fairclough,

2001; Hall, 1996), the use of collective pronouns such as *we*, in dominant discourses, can be a means of clustering or eliding heterogeneous identities in ways that could support hegemonic encodings of cultural meanings or forms of structural domination. But in tactical counter-discourses like that of the Iranian protesters, the use of collective lexical forms may function as an assertion of agency against control within the social movement frame. According to the large-scale quantitative content analysis by Elson et al. of Twitter tweets about the Iranian election during and after the 2009 protests, there was an elevated use of second- and third-person pronouns in the month that followed the election. This trend compared favorably to that of my Twitter dataset, in which there are 27 instances of *we* and 24 of the collective noun *people*, an example of the latter appearing in this tweet from inside Iran:

@username People of Iran - THIS IS THE DAWN - This is the new beginning - have hope and prepare - #Iraelection RT RT RT 06/21/2009

Like the use of familial forms above, this use of collective lexis arguably creates a cognitive sense of unified stance according to which particular actions might be legitimated. For the protesters, this may have included demanding a recount, even a new election, or the various forms of passive and active resistance that occurred during the movement. Yet, as in dominant discourses, collective forms in counter-discourses can also elide differences within groups and thus complicate notions of individual agency and intentionality as well as the performance of collective identities in transnational public spheres. In the following tweet from an activist supposedly tweeting outside Iran, the collective forms *we* and *people* (abbreviated) suggest, on the user's behalf, a complex instance of co-presence:

@username We WANT A RE-VOTE NOT A RE-COUNT!! This will not stand.
#Iralection REMEMBER DO NOT TWEET NAMES FROM PPL IN Iran! <http://blip.fm/~5ervw> Jun 17, 2009

In the first part of the tweet, the inclusive *we* gathers the user into the demonstrating crowds in Iran speaking back to local forms of power, a clear instance of stance-taking supported by the emotive use of all caps and repeated exclamation points (Jaffe, 2009). In one sense, this action might simply be another example of how global activists echoed Iranian protesters' chants and slogans as a means of circulating their discourse and extending their movement's frame, with the tweet functioning as kind of electronic bumper sticker in the transnational traffic of information and media flows. Seen this way, this type of discursive practice might support interpretations of Twitter's function during the 2009 protests as limited to temporary expressions or venting of emotions and therefore of little value as signal intelligence or movement coordination (Hashem & Najjar, 2010; Malek, 2010). But in the second part of the tweet, the use of "in Iran" adds a proximal-distant tension typical of globalized relations (Hopper, 2007) that also evidences, on the user's part, a reflexive awareness of an imagined audience as part of the dialectic interplay of internal and external forces in the identification process (Jenkins, 2008). This shift in the place-identity nexus might also be an example of what Goffman (1974) called *keying*, or the action of shifting of frames as a means of redefining a situation. As Jaffe has argued, redefining experience through keying can allow for the layering or overlapping of frames through which a multiplicity of stances and identities can then be signaled. Here, the keying of a global frame overlays the discourse with the dialectic of local-global participation and co-presence through which the possibilities for agency can multiply. On the user's part, an imagined co-presence

facilitated by the use of networked communication technologies might also add valence to the sociomental bonds the user appears to have formed with multiple audiences. In this overlap of frames, social movement actors can become powerful nodes between networks.

This evidence suggests, then, that tactics such as these appear to extend collective action or agency, even when individual identities are suppressed, as might understandably be the case within the social movement frame and the need to mobilize loosely-affiliated actors around the election crisis. However, within overlapping frames and the dialogic experience of co-presence, such moves may also reflect a fragmentation of identity and heteroglossic struggle for meaning that complicates, if not dilutes, the resonance of these symbolic expressions. In the Flickr dataset, for instance, there are numerous images of global activists borrowing the symbolic resources of the Iranian protests, such as the Iranian flag, as a means of showing solidarity with the activists in Iran, as seen in Figure 5.1.



Figure 5.1. Activists in Berlin (l) and Paris (r) demonstrating in solidarity with Iranian protesters.

On the Berlin placard, the recontextualized Iranian flag, a symbol of Iranian nationalism, is laminated with use of German “Zusammen für Iran,” (“Together for Iran”). Similarly,

on the Paris placard, the colors of the Iranian flag have been used to expressively amplify the slogan “Nous exigeons une election libre” (“We demand a free election). In both these examples, the appropriation of symbolic resources across contexts appears to create opportunities for wider discursive diffusion. As I argued in the previous chapter, the borrowing of the symbolic resources visible in Figure 5.1 works to amplify the Iranian protesters’ discourse across new networks while also creating a sense of collective spirit, or networked effervescence, between Iranian and global activists. In the process, it may also work to legitimize the Iranian protesters’ struggle according to globally-defined values. That is, by concomitantly strengthening transnational sociomental bonds and reframing the election crisis as a human rights issue, agents may feel further empowered locally to continue to struggle—or, for still-passive observers, to join in—against the government forces. If so, this possibility would need to be accounted for in measuring the impact of social media during the protests.

Networked fields of reference. It is possible, however, this process of layering may also dilute the resonance of these symbolic resources across networks. In the Paris photograph, the collective *we* (*nous*, in French) functions as a node between proximal and distant networks. In one sense, this would seem to simply expand the collective identifications further across translocal networks. But redefining the antecedence in this way potentially strains the semantic binding between pronoun and referent and therefore complicates the identifications being made by these activists across networks. In other words, who does *we* specifically refer to in these examples, and which *we* is empowered to legitimately make such demands of a sovereign country? And as these symbolic resources, in this case of banal nationalism (Billig,

1995), are recontextualized into globalized contexts, it appears that their shared references can become weakened and thus constrained—if not further, than differently—in their effect. Further evidence of this complexity can be seen in the image in Figure 5.2, in which members of the Iranian diaspora in Bern, Switzerland, are shown demonstrating in solidarity with the protesters in Iran.⁴³



Figure 5.2. Collective pronouns in activists' placards.

Here, the collective reflexive pronoun *our* in “Where are our friends?” on two signs appears to complicate, if not contradict, in one sense, the reflexive *their* of “Where is their vote?” and, in a slightly different sense, the use of the collective pronouns *we*, *you* (plural) and *our* in the slogan “To the people of Iran, We send you our prayers and support.” In this network of deictic references, the use of *we/our* and *you/their* sets up what seems to be a relatively straightforward proximal-distant axis of relations with the activists in Switzerland at the *deictic center*, that is, the reference point according to

⁴³ This location is based on the Flickr geo-tagging metadata for this upload.

which a deictic expression—in this case, a spatial one—should be understood, as represented in Figure 5.3.

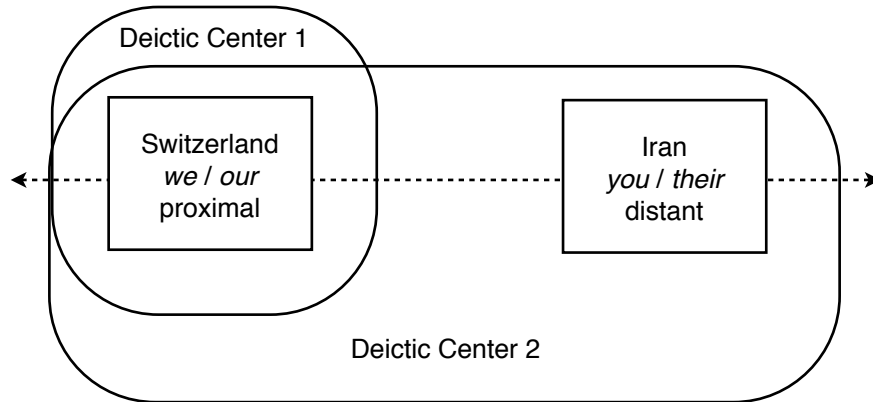


Figure 5.3. Shifting deictic centers in networked fields of reference.

But the recontextualization of the slogan “Where are our friends?” doubles the deictic reference for *our* and creates multiple, overlapping deictic centers. As a remix of the widely-used slogan *Where is our vote?*, this use of *our* could reference the vote of hundreds of thousands of Iranian expatriates who voted outside Iran, including in Bern.⁴⁴ Yet, the phrase *people of Iran* suggests a cultural or ethnic identification as a member of the diaspora rather than a political one. Either way, this fluid field of reference reflects how deixis can crucially be reshaped as discourses and images move across networks and scale levels with the *space of flows* (Castells, 1996). It may also signal the complex ways deterritorialization can transform collective actors’ loyalties, or at least how they are represented (Appadurai, 1996).

Identifications in the place-identity nexus can also transform networks of reference bound up in symbols of *banal nationalism* (Billig, 1995). In Figures 5.1 and

⁴⁴ Source: <http://www.irantracker.org/analysis/2009-iranian-presidential-election-expatriate-and-foreign-voting-results>. Retrieved on April 28, 2013.

5.4, the images of the Eiffel Tower and Washington Monument, respectively, strongly locate activists both geographically and in the global imagination. But when moving across transnational networks, these *mediatized* symbols of nationalism can come to index global power through the cognitive associations bound up in commonplace understandings of the West's role in globalization. What is more, like the layered image of the Iranian flag above, the Farsi-English bilingual slogan “We Will Not Be Silent” on the activist's t-shirt, with the monument in the background, creates a co-presence that positions social actors in a multiplicity of roles (Caron & Caronia, 2007).



Figure 5.4. Flickr uploads of activists demonstrating in Moscow (l) and Washington, D.C. (r).

Further instances of this process of multi-localization through layers of signification can be seen in the presence of Farsi (both in script and transliterated) together with English in the Moscow photograph in Figure 5.4. The similarities in the discursive constructions of identity appear to support the claims by Melucci (1996) and others that rather than structural determinants of identity, a shared deployment of symbolic resources appears to suggest a congruence in stance across local movements. Through amplification and uptake across global social media networks, this tactical employment of translocal symbolic resources might also point toward a discursive strategy among activists to

bridge the local social movement frame with a globally aligned one. If so, these resources, taken together as part of a flow of images collected under the IranElection tag, evoke both further instances of networked effervescence as well as a shared horizon of concern, a global or cosmopolitan ethics that would transcend past constructions of identity (Chouliaraki, 2006). At the same time, as an intertextual chain of reciprocal references, they also delocalize activists so that they appear to float among contexts and potential fields of action in a way that, rather than redefining possibilities for agency and belonging (Caron & Caronia), might flatten or dilute the value of those expressions among global flows or constrain their meaning at the level of affect (Dean, 2012; Lash, 2002).

This *interobjectivity*, as Caron and Caronia (2007) have termed it, can also arguably be seen in the image in Figure 5.5 of activists demonstrating *en masse* in Tehran's Azadi Square. This scene, common in the Flickr dataset, clearly invokes iconic images of collective action and the populism of social movements.



Figure 5.5. Mass demonstration in Azadi Square, June 15, 2009.

Yet, within historical contexts and across global flows, the *semiotics of the crowd* can also cue mental models of both democracy and the mass participation of the Islamic Revolution that produced the conservative elite against whom these protesters are demonstrating (Tambar, 2009). As a trope, then, within the social movement frame, this use of iconic crowd images could reflect some of the struggle for identity that has marked much of modern Iran's cycle of protests. This network of possible meanings is further complicated by the images of protesters photographing the crowd in a way that suggests a reflexive awareness of the material and political conditions of the protest and their individual participation within it (Mittelman, 2004). What results is a co-presence in which technical immediacy, through the use of the cellphone cameras, is put in the service of sociocultural immediacy to produce a multiplicity of identifications (Caron & Caronia, 2007). That is, by mediatizing the protests, agents' experiences become doubled in a way that could grant individuals the agency to reconfigure experience as documentary evidence, perhaps later for another audience (Chouliaraki, 2006; Talbot, 2007). In the photograph in Figure 5.6, an image documenting evidence of the government's violent repression of the protests becomes, once circulated across networks, recontextualized as a symbolic resource when employed, in this instance, as a placard in a San Francisco march in solidarity with the Iranian protesters. But the image is further reconfigured when subsequently remediated through the Flickr upload of the placard in an image that, through framing, substitutes the activist's face with that of the injured Iranian protester.



Figure 5.6. Placard in San Francisco solidarity march

If, as Jenkins (2008) has argued, the process of identification is based on the systematic construction and signification of similarity and difference, this instance of remediation points toward a collapsed identification, or a collective co-presence at the node formed by the converging discourses and contexts across time-space. And that these contexts are linked is implied in both the uptake visible here and the mobility it entails (Chouliaraki). What this appears to suggest, then, is the effectiveness of deploying communicative resources as forms of symbolic and social capital to bridge social movement frames across global networks (Castells, 2009; Gumperz, 1982). Yet, according to Gumperz, it is when “communicative conventions and symbols of social identity differ, [that] the social reality itself becomes subject to question” (p. 3). If so, should we also see as entailed in these attempts to bridge or even transform frame alignments a belief that those social realities— a bloodied protester in Tehran and an activist in San Francisco—could or should be similar? This is not to suggest that any act or process of symbolically identifying or empathizing with suffering or injustice is inherently an essentializing one; rather, that the discursive construction of similarities in

these collective identifications, I argue, reflects an ideology oriented more toward the logics of collectivities and participation than that of individuals and competition, and our attempts to understand them through analysis should take that into account (Gumperz; Jenkins).

At the same time, we must accept that the logics of networks, and thus of informational capitalism, are integral to these processes of remediation, and in doing so, it is hard not to wonder whether the same economic and information systems that have weakened offline social solidarity also inherently undermine all genuine attempts at online solidarity predicated on those logics (Rustin, 2008). In this sense, within the social movement frame, the process of identification can itself become a potentially powerful form of stance-taking and counter-discourse. In the following tweet, in which a user deploys both English and social media—both in the form of Twitter and, through the hyperlink to an uploaded cellphone video clip, YouTube—to legitimate a particular identity for Iranians.

This is what real Iranians are: <http://bit.ly/VhocZ> #Iranelection

Substantiating that claim is a hyperlinked video clip of a street protest in Tehran that includes images of a large crowd marching peacefully, a police motorcycle burning in the street, and various protesters attending to an injured police officer, as seen in the excerpted frames in Figure 5.7.



Figure 5.7. Frames from June 2009 protest video uploaded to YouTube

In addition to offering validity and indexical meaning to the knowledge claim offered in the tweet, this hyperlinking between modalities and social media services gives activists a further means of creatively constructing their identities in discourse. In doing so through the tactical symbolic resources of a globalized vernacular and networked social media, they are empowered through both cultural and social capital to position their collective subjectivities at multiple scale-levels: in the local context of the protests, the images of activists marching peacefully and altruistically aiding an injured police officer—particularly when defined as characteristic of “real Iranians”—also function as a powerful form of stance-taking on a global level. Yet, the process of remediation bound up in these identifications (and the counter-discourse they help to construct) also suggests social actors’ need for multiple forms of evidence to validate experience and/or knowledge. Such practices of rendering collective action as *techno-factual* suggests not only a reconfiguration of experience, but perhaps also an inversion of intimacy in a dialogic lifeworld (Chouliarki, 2006). Put another way, these practices, I argue, point toward a need to ascribe value to experience according to contradictory logics or principles. As individuals reshape for local and global audiences their identifications as both participants and witnesses, activists and citizen journalists, they risk diluting the

value of their symbolic and social capital and fragmenting their identities in the merging of the private and public spheres to which these actions seem to attest. As strategies for the formation of counter-discourses and resistance identifications, these actions also suggest a dialectic of contradictory principles in which social movement actors' resources, like the constructions of ideologies in legacy media discourse presented in chapter three, are situated in a fluid discursive construction of potentially powerful forms of stance-taking and identification (Boehmer, 2006; Fornäs, 2002).

Where is this place?: Discursive reterritorialization. For collective identifications and collective actions to multiply and extend in scope within a social movement, there must be a social space free from repression or domination (Melucci, 1996). The process of multi-localization described above appears to be a viable way for activists to tactically deploy social media and global vernaculars in a strategy of reconfiguring boundaries and extending the social movement frame across global networks. Yet, those collective actions, themselves a form of stance-taking and counter-discourse within Iran's master social movement frame, do not necessarily signal a lack of local struggle with the processes of deterritorialization inherent in globalized relations. Instead, the evidence I have collected suggests that tactical discursive constructions of place are highly valuable in the social movement discourse, and the creative process of reterritorializing place in discourse is an important act of symbolic resistance within the social movement frame.

One of the highest frequency keywords in the Twitter dataset, *Iran* appears 325 times in 238 total tweets at a rate of approximately 1.4, a frequency that compares relatively favorably with the rate of 1.8 in the 140kit dataset. This high frequency is

understandable given not only the use of the IranElection hashtag, but also how, especially within the constraints of the microblogging genre, the word *Iran* could function effectively as a *topos* in the developing election crisis discourse. Yet, because it appears so much more frequently than, for instance, the collective pronoun *we*, it is hard to dismiss its potential significance in the discursive process of collective identification. In the following tweet, *Iran* appears as part of a set of coordinates in the developing post-election crisis.

Iran / today / hafttir Sq / protest NOW #Iranelection on Twitpic <http://ree.tw/bzm>
(retweeted 123x <http://ree.tw/bzn>) Jun 17, 2009

For a local audience, this circulation of nodal coordinates in the ongoing demonstrations could have functioned as an act of microcoordination to enlist participant support. It may also have been a warning to those seeking to avoid confrontations with government forces. For the user circulating this tweet, the specificity of the information and the supporting hyperlinked photograph create the role of engaged participant while the emotive style of the all-capped deictic reference *now* suggests an affective stance that might, through its implied urgency, also function as a call to collective action that the retweets, as forms of peer evaluation, appear to support.

At a macrolevel, however, the rescaling process creates a shift in the field of reference so that what is being reported for an unknown global audience is not the specific event but the knowledge of the event that is then symbolically ratified by the retweets. The specificity, therefore, of this location, together with the supporting hyperlinked image, works to create a sense of authenticity—a credible voice—and, as argued above, the telegraphic style functions as a mobile global vernacular readily

amplified across networks. In this process of presenting experience as signal intelligence, the subjectivity constituted in this discourse shifts from witness and (perhaps) participant to citizen journalist, and the notion of place projected here operates less as a set of coordinates referring to a specific geographic location and more as a notion of place itself or a set of beliefs about it. Additionally, with the URL-like forward slashes functioning syntactically in the text, the deictic expression *now*, in the absence of a tensed verb, arguably shifts from an affective to epistemic stance-marker. That is, as the notion of place seems to supplant, through discursive rescaling, reference to a place itself, temporal deixis comes to reference *timeless time*, or what Castells (1996) has called the ‘eternal/ephemeral’ of network flows. As the space of flows dissolves time by disordering the sequence of events and making them simultaneous, society comes to occupy an eternal ephemerality in which *now* is always *now*, and place is time-bound.

Within the social movement frame, this reorganization of experience may invite further participation—real or imagined—across networks and thus extend collective agency. Liberated from the frictions of distance (Harvey, 1989), activists around the globe are free to participate or lend support, to protest in solidarity, share information about proxy servers, or link network nodes of signal intelligence, as the data in chapters four and five have shown. In this sense, by using social media and ICTs, social movements can work to occupy these spaces as acts of resistance and symbolic expression, that is, as forms of counterpower (Castells, 2009). But if, as Manovich (2001) has argued, in the flow of transnational communication what matters is not the content but the sociability of communicative actions, is this participation, and the

process of collective identifications it entails, only symbolic, no more than further instances of global interpassivity? If so, as a tactic of further engendering networked effervescence, the informationalizing of experience might mean that what matters is not where in Iran the protest is occurring but simply the fact that it is (Lash, 2006). In other words, the content that might be most mobile across scale-levels for a global audience is the construction of Iran as a place where protests can and do occur, where resistance and change are possible, regardless of whether this is actually the case. If so, the more this ‘knowledge’ is known and validated, the greater its circulation and amplification and the larger that space becomes within the transnational imaginary that audiences around the world are free to co-inhabit. Yet, the data presented in this chapter, as well as in the previous one, suggest that this kind of ‘knowledge’ is merely a public attestation of sociability that can only be, within a ‘placeless’ frame of collective action, ratified through quantification and commodification— by, for instance, 123 retweets from anonymous users or the techno-factual experience of mediatized co-presence, as seen in the evidence above. If so, the informationalization of discourse in the social movement frame and the logics of participation appear similar to that of the logics of flexible capitalism.

Nevertheless, as a tactical tool of resistance, this process seems to allow social movement actors—at least within the space of transnational imaginaries—the creative agency to reconfigure, or reterritorialize place and thereby transform experience and the resistance identities located within it. The metaphoric comparison in the following tweet, substantiated by the hyperlinked image shown in Figure 5.8, discursively reconfigures

Iran as a space of resistance by creating a metaphorical equivalency between it and Palestine.

@username: <http://twitpic.com/7fmo8> - Iran is the same as Palestine
#Iranelection Jun 15, 2009



Iran is the same as Palestine
#iranelection

Figure 5.8. Photograph of rioting activists linked from Twitter.

This cognitive bridging could also align the Iranian protests with the interests of a wide range of global progressives for whom critical issues in Israel and Palestine are commonplaces in their social justice and activism discourses. It also works to discursively reconfigure Iran within global frameworks of reference networked to complex ideological stances on such issues as human rights and political sovereignty (Hopper, 2007; Mittelman, 2004). Projecting Iran symbolically, then, into transnational public spheres becomes more than a matter of expressing of attachment or taking a stance; it also creates what Dixon and Durheim (2000) have called a *grounds of identity*, which is both a sense of belonging to place and a rhetorical warrant through which

social practices and relations can be legitimated. In this discursive construction of space, deployed as a symbolic resource, social actors can perform a variety of actions, from legitimating and justifying to excluding and blaming. As such, establishing a grounds of identity to legitimate claims of moral equivalency between Palestine and Iran would seem to signal a discursive strategy to reframe the election crisis as a human rights issue and thus a global concern. If so, this would be significant within Iran's master framework in that it links collective action to the secular ideals of social justice and human rights while also challenging isolationist policies and cultural attitudes of the Iranian conservative elite. In this sense, these types of discursive constructions of the place-identity nexus can function ideologically. As Dixon and Durheim have claimed, "it is through language that places themselves are imaginatively constituted in ways that carry implications for 'who we are' or 'who we claim to be'" (p. 32). Yet, as the micronarratives of place and resistance come to circulate among the proliferation of global symbols, it is also possible that the resulting informationalizing of experience renders these narratives and the identifications within them as merely further instances of *banal globalism*, the unnoticed backdrop and symbols of the dense globalized, network society (Szerszynski & Urry, 2006). I argue, then, that if in global public sphere discourse Palestine has come, in various ways for diverse groups, to function as a cue for legitimating a range of political stances and actions, suggesting Iran is its metaphorical (and perhaps moral) equivalent would align the protesters' social movement frame with an incongruous array of political frames in a way that could denature the supposed emotive force of the intended comparison suggested by the attached photograph. If this is the case, it may simply mean that context actually

matters. Or does it point toward a critical weakness of this type of identification—especially when rescaled across frames of reference—as a social movement tactic?

This place is Iran. Within the place-identity nexus, then, the discursive construction of place is both central to the production of self and, when reconfigured in the space of flows, the processes by which identities can be dissolved (Dixon & Durheim, 2000). But new identifications are central to transforming society (Castells, 1997). If so, the breakdown of old identities would seem to offer, at least within the social movement frame, opportunities for reconstructing resistance identities around shared principles into the project identities by which agents can redefine their positions in society and thereby work to transform it (Castells). The collective spirit of effervescence across global networks might seem to energize the possibilities for real change, but is that spirit resonant enough to endure its actual processes in local contexts? To that question, history suggests but one response. Those engaged in the struggle offer at least another. How some have approached their answer might be reflected in a final piece of evidence, the IranElection YouTube upload “Where is this place?”. In the video, an unseen narrator recites a poem written in Farsi as protesters shout from their rooftops into the Tehranian night “Allah-o Akbar!” (“God Is Great!”). In a culture where poetry and symbolic language are critical elements of millennia-old traditions, the use of poetry here as a symbolic resource is congruent with Iran’s historical tradition of strategically deploying of symbols, signs, and slogans during mass protests (Gheytnchi, 2010). As Gheytnchi has shown, protesters in 2009 frequently borrowed slogans from the 1979 Islamic Revolution, replacing the Shah with the Basij as their targets, and later used social media such as YouTube to spread slogans that

had been chanted in the streets to a wider audience, including the Iranian diaspora, for whom cyberspace serves as a meeting point.

But more than just the tactical deployment of symbolic cultural resources recontextualized within the social movement frame as symbols of resistance, this use of emotive expression appears to function as counter-discourse to the supposed dislocated, 'universal' perspective of 'objective' news (Chouliaraki, 2006). As the dark grainy images and muffled sound of the amateur video document the nighttime protests (see Figure 5.9 below), the poem, performed like a voice-over, locates Iran not at nodal coordinates, but in a cultural field of values, ethics, and human concerns.⁴⁵ To define what appears to be the boundaries of this field, the speaker in the poem engages in a series of questions-and-answers that at once evokes the logic and systematicity of Socratic questioning and the emotive call-and-response of prayer:

Where is this place?

Where is this place where every door is closed?

Where is this place where people are simply calling God?

...

Where is this place where

so many innocent people are trapped?

Where is this place where no one comes to our aid?

Where is this place where only with our silence

we are sending our voices to the world

...

⁴⁵ See Appendix D for the full transcript of the poem translated into English.

Where is this place where citizens
are called vagrants?

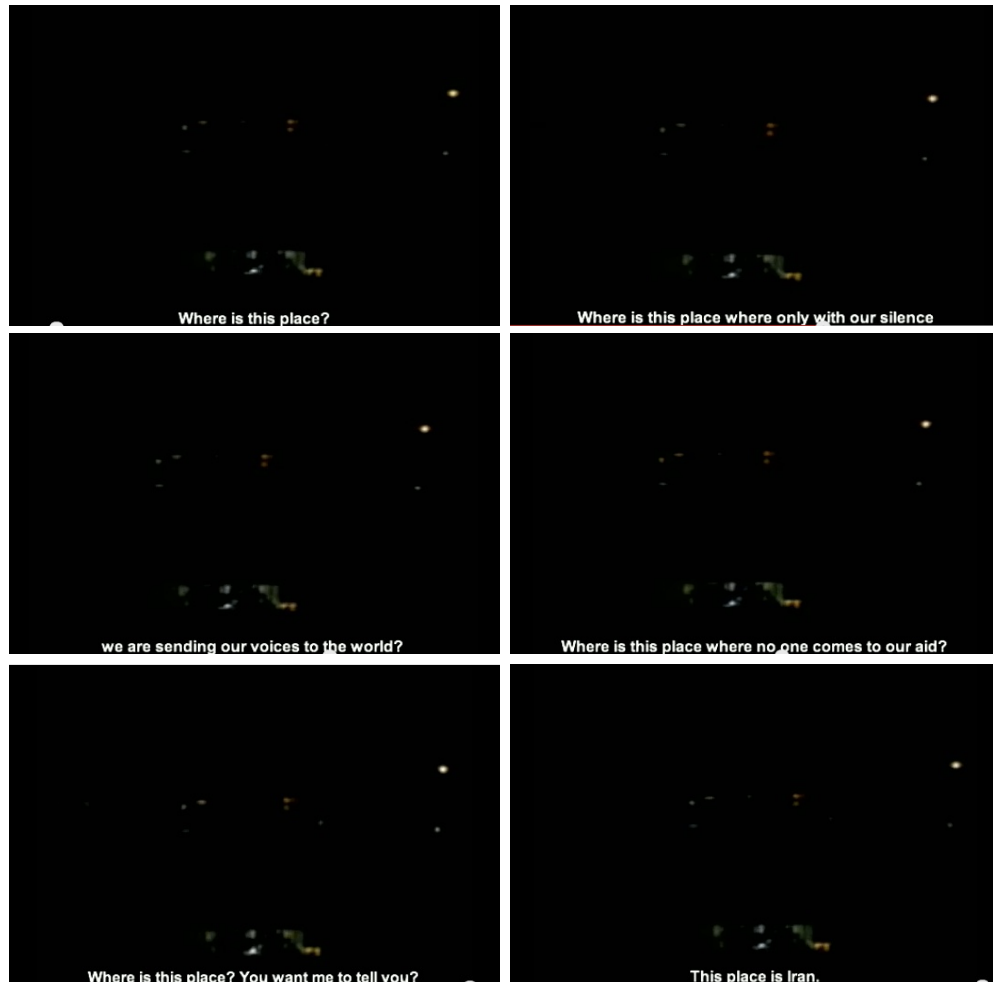


Figure 5.9. IranElection YouTube video upload “Where is this place?”

The poet's questions map a complex terrain defined by the tension between local and global networks of power and meaning. Protesters call out both to God and a global audience while statist notions of citizenship contend with the transnational, cosmopolitan ethics of human rights. Yet, for all the dialectical complexity of the questions, the response is simple and unequivocal: “This place is Iran. / The homeland of you and me.” As Melucci (1996) has argued, “contemporary movements strive to

reappropriate the capacity to name through the elaboration of codes and languages designed to define reality, in the twofold sense of constituting it symbolically and of regaining it, thereby escaping from the predominant forms of representation” (p. 357). Though this is but one example of the various videos uploaded to YouTube under the IranElection hashtag, the suggestion here is that the process of recontextualizing symbolic resources within the tactical space opened up by new media presents the opportunity for agents to redefine reality. But does this practice presuppose or ignore the suspicion that technology can produce authenticity (Chouliaraki, 2006)? Where is Iran, this place, *real* as (re)defined here through layers of mediation? The use of poetry may evoke Iran’s deep cultural traditions, but the voice-over reading might also reflect the discursive practices of legacy media, where inauthentic flows of images are crafted into a reality we have come to trust as authentic (Di Piero, 2009). If people are driven to seek out and create places compatible with who they are (Dixon & Dunheim, 2008), how authentic are the identifications—individual and collective, dialogical and multiple—made among these overlapping layers of signification? Is this the place where, within the competing logics of the commons and the market, the collective *we* breaks down, as in this rooftop poem recited to multiple unseen worlds, into *you* and *me*?

Effervescence or Resonance?: Closings

In the networked identifications of globalized social movements, it appears that entailed in the question *Where is this place?*, as the Iranian poet asks in the video clip above, might also be the question *Where is where?*. By this I mean, in one sense, to reiterate longstanding questions within theories of globalization on how, through the syndromes and symptoms of our intensifying connections, our understandings of place

have been transformed. Transformationalist theorizers of globalization have posited the obsolescence of nation-state boundaries and the deterritorialization of places and cultures. In the triumphant spread of globalization's universalizing logic, places are disembedded from their local contexts, causing meanings—including those of who we are and what we believe—to become hollowed out and homogenized (Featherstone, 1990). Subsequent and arguably more nuanced understandings tried to account for a range of experiences of global interconnectivity, including the power and counterpower potentials of all involved in globalization's processes and struggles, not just the global elite. In a dialectic interpenetration of the distant and near, of global and local, locales are reterritorialized (Robertson, 1995), and our places within the mutually constitutive intricacies of the place-identity nexus become decentered and hybridized (Bhabha, 2004). But if the multiplicities of these later theorizations and their emphasis on difference critically subvert the homogenizing essentialism of earlier ones, do they do so at the expense of crucially ignoring our similarities (Featherstone & Lash, 1995)? Could a cultural logics of transnationalism, in which the tensions between local and deterritorialized experiences, enhanced through our real and imagined mobilities, point toward a *flexible* sense of belonging that allows for a creative negotiation of our distinctions and similitudes (Appadurai, 1996; Ong, 1999)?

As implied by our contemporary experiences of globalization, ripe with banality and devastation, repression and revolution, ephemeral sociomental bonds and seemingly insuperable divisions, we do not know. And it remains likely that our newest theorizations will continue to fail to answer those questions. Yet, as I intend that the analyses and discussions in this chapter and the preceding ones have shown, in the

space of flows and timeless time, asking *Where is where?* is still vitally important. In the video poem “Where Is This Place?,” the poet’s susurrations, modulated perhaps as much to the protesters’ rooftop chants of rebellion and prayer as, we should suspect, the possible threat of Basij surveillance, insist that we do, and that this question continues to entail considerations of *who*, *how*, and *why*.

As suggested by the experiences of both Iranian protesters and global activists acting in solidarity with them, the polychronicity and multi-localization of experience bound up in our mobile co-presences and networked identifications have further destabilized the socially constitutive process of locating ourselves—geographically, politically, and culturally—in discourse (Caron & Caronia, 2007; Melucci, 1996). As discourses move across scales and networks, the deictic centers of our cultural fields of reference shift. In the environment of a fluid ideological conjecture that define our contemporary chaotic news paradigm, this shift works to network the discursive construction of identities and stances according to seemingly contradictory meanings (McNair, 2006). In the flows of borrowed symbolic resources between local and global social movement frameworks, the rescaling of discourse across transnational networks collapses the use and exchange values of activists’ discourses into informationalized affect (Dean, 2012; Lash, 2002). Though these discursive shifts appear to offer new possibilities for discursively constructing identifications, ideologies and, therefore, new legitimizations for action and understanding, they are also subject to perhaps novel forms of manipulation as part of the ongoing battle in a network society for communication power, or the struggle to control the way we think (Castells, 2009; Juris, 2008; Kluitenberg, 2010). The instability of that shifting deictic center appears to allow

old, polarizing ideologies to retain a certain ‘ideological magnetism’ in shaping our meanings. The resulting search for coherence in chaos can cause our mental models of novel events, such as the Iranian election crisis or perhaps even the ongoing Iranian nuclear threat, to be linked with semantic, social memories according to established and extant political valences (van Dijk, 1998). These links may, in turn, work to reshape ideologies, or the networks of shared beliefs according to which we organize our knowledge and legitimize our actions. A new social movement, for instance, borrows the symbolic resources of previous ones, linking its frame to a master framework that enacts collective actions—and collective identifications—with meaning. But when those resources are recontextualized through social media and globalized vernaculars across transnational networks, it appears the textures of a local frame alignment become flattened when bridged with global frameworks of meaning. Informationalized experience gains voice and mobility, and thus value in multi-scalar flows, but one that, like the compressed narratives of a retweet, is syntactic only of affect, invoking only reaction, not response. Transnational identifications multiplied by co-presence help spark networked effervescence, but also appear to complicate the deeper resonance of lasting sociomental bonds. In Tehran, the barbed irony of the anti-Ahmadinejad slogan “Down with Potatoes!” becomes, at a global level, a legacy media joke.

Yet, even in the chaos of meaning in this seeming dilution of spatiotemporal, if not cultural and ideological deixis, there remains another important question, one perhaps also entailed in that poet’s incantatory verse: how, within the contradictory logics of globalization, can the ways we enact our identities and ideologies in discourse continue to tell us where *where* is? As Blommaert (2010) has argued, globalization “is

like every development of the system in which we live, something that produces opportunities as well as constraints, new possibilities as well as new problems, progress as well as regression” (p. 4). The commingling of these issues, I argue, can be seen in the translocal and deterritorialized sociolinguistic effects in the protester’s poem, if not all the discursive practices I have examined, from its borrowed symbolic resources to its global vernaculars informationalized through network rescaling. Read against the changing backdrop of a globalized place-identity nexus within transnational network societies, I argue that the poet’s questions of *where*, together with how and why we consider where *where* is, point reflexively back at us, an *us* that, if we are to see these protesters’ micronarratives as mattering, as I believe they do, appear to include both a resonant *we* and the effervescent, ephemeral sociomental bonds between *you* and *me*.

To try to understand how and why these micronarratives might matter, I have examined both legacy and new media discourses of a variety of stakeholders in the 2009 Iranian presidential election crisis. Based on those analyses, I have argued that activists’ discursive practices do add to the micronarratives of vernacular globalization while also calling into question the dominant narratives about Iran that appear to be encoded in U.S. legacy media discourse (Semati, 2008). As the master framework of social movements in modern Iran seems to show, Iran’s struggle to embrace a form of modernity compatible with its local cultural beliefs and understandings suggests an experience somewhat apart from that of others. As a result, I argue that trying to understand Iranian protesters’ discursive practices—both inside and outside of social movement frameworks—contribute significantly to our understandings of the complex and often contradictory forces of globalization discussed above.

These understandings, I have also claimed, are premised on the argument that both legacy and new media, as part of the *ideoscape* in Appadurai's (1996) five dimensions of cultural flows, allow for possible scripts of social practice and thereby a plurality of social worlds (Brumberg, 2001). With the imagination viewed as collective, protesters' discursive practices, though ultimately reflexive, nevertheless work to constitute the formation of transnational imaginaries and imagined communities (Appadurai; Anderson, 2006). But by examining these discursive practices through theories of global networks, I have tried to problematize Appadurai's failure to see, in the transnational imaginary, the same forms of unevenness and barriers to access that mark our everyday experiences of globalization (Ong, 1999). In this sense, if we are to view, in any way, a measure of success in the activists' tactical uses of social media and strategies of discourse formation, those uses can only be considered successful within an understanding of social power that recognizes who possessed the social and cultural capital needed to participate in their struggle. Put differently, I argue that activists' transnational discursive practices show how social movement discourses can become amplified when they appropriate the standards of global networks, but those standards, for better or worse, become inscribed as traces in those discourses. The rhetorical exigencies, for instance, of an activist's "NOW" in a tweet containing the coordinates of a protest in Tehran can become, when retweeted, the diluted 'ephemeral/eternal' *now* in the timeless time of networking logics (Castells, 1996). This, as Dean (2012) has argued and I would agree, collapses crucial distinctions in these discourses between use and exchange value. They risk becoming techno-factual, validating, at different scale levels, for a variety of participants, the seemingly contradictory experiences of

transnational engagement and marking their identifications within the logics of the network. And so, by extension I would also argue the logics of participation and competition can become conflated in ways that may not always be compatible with a social movement's aims, even when they help inspire networked effervescence.

Though this sense of transnational collective spirit has been shown, here and elsewhere, to extend social actors' sense of solidarity and thereby encourage further participation (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012), these possibilities do not directly rebut the claim by Morozov (2011) and others that Twitter and other social media played no significant role in the 2009 protests. And neither should they challenge the critical ways Morozov has cautioned us against understanding the spread of technology as congruous with that of democracy, and vice versa. As I intended the analyses of U.S. legacy media in chapter three to show, the 'Google Doctrine' discourses that Morozov has warned us against may in fact be little more than discursive ideological cover for an extant desire to frame events such as those in Iran in 2009 through the polarized ideological vision of the world as defined by the collision between reactionary traditionalism and integrative modernism (Barber, 1995). If so, this strategy may work to legitimize a particular set of political actions in response to the ongoing Iranian nuclear threat and, in arguably a contradictory way, may also help relegitimize (at least, from U.S. perspectives) the protesters' identities according to those ideological beliefs. Yet, I maintain that Morozov's arguably teleological focus on end conditions points toward larger failures within cyberskeptical discourses to consider the effect of participation on the discursive construction of resistance identities or the enabling of political agency at a sociocognitive level (Castells, 1997). As Juris (2008) has suggested, what may really

matter in social movements are the ways they create opportunities at microlevels for the constitution of new discourses and identities that could eventually contribute to macrolevel discursive change, if not social transformation.

I have also argued that as a form of symbolic exchange (Lash, 2002), protesters' micronarratives and mobile discursive practices challenge the insufficient treatment of English as a mediating standard by Grewal (2008) and others in analyses of global networks. In my view, activists' translocal discursive practices suggested, at least within social movement frameworks, that symbolic resources, globalized vernaculars, and networked genres functioned more readily as network standards than either English as a linguistically defined object or any particular variety of English. That is, as Blommaert (2010) and others have argued, in considering the role of English in a globalized world, both as a commodified resource and a focus of instruction and study, we might be better off emphasizing vernacularized mobile resources and repertoires and the ways they move transnationally across scale-levels in sociocultural, political, and historical contexts.

From a methodological standpoint, this might yield at least two potential benefits. First, in addressing the problem of doing qualitative research with online discourse, the implementation of network theories carries with it—or should—an understanding of the fractal nature of cyberspace (Brooke, 2009). That is, the internet, and by extension the discursive practices that constitute its social dimensions, is composed of the same kinds of self-similar patterns, or fractals, that make up numerous natural and cultural phenomena. Because these patterns occur at different scale levels, we might say that the microlevel focus of qualitative, CDA-based research such as this, though still subject

to the critical questionings of methodology discussed in chapters two and three, can in fact point to macrolevel processes and phenomenon in online discourse. If so, this would mean that the examination of online discourse could retain the importance of context inherent in qualitative approaches while pointing perhaps with more confidence toward larger scale trends in the ways that quantitative studies aim to do, a need which, in the current era of 'big data,' seems all the more pressing for researchers taking qualitative approaches. Second, as I have argued above, rescaling appears to distend and distort contexts in ways that complicate their roles in approaches to understanding discourse through CDA, for which considerations of context, as I have argued above, are crucial. By including network theory together with understandings of globalization in my overall theoretical approach, I believe it has allowed me to consider the 'Englishness' of protesters' discursive practices in ways that both describes language as intrinsically linked to globalization, but which also offers an alternative way of discussing language other than according to difference.

In this sense, it might also be useful to import these considerations into college composition and English-language learning classroom settings. For instance, as Jarrat, Losh, and Puente (2006) have contended, working within the logics of a transnational framework might help students see that the flexibility of mobile sociolinguistic resources can offer them a crucially diversified range of repertoires needed to meet the complex communicative demands inside and outside of globalized classrooms. This flexibility might also help them recognize, as I have argued activists did through their tactical use of recontextualizations, how they can access a range of possible stances and subjectivities (Canagarajah, 1999) through their strategic use, tactical deployment, and

symbolic borrowing of these communicative resources, and how that access might extend their potential for agency at multiple scale levels. It may also encourage the development of translocal multiliteracies. These would be based not only on the kinds of multimodalities exhibited by activists, but also on the understanding of how those texts move within and across local and global contexts. This means emphasizing vernaculars and varieties over standards and the critical thinking and language awareness needed to negotiate diverse discursive environments (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Doing so might also crucially challenge the notion that, in the fractured cultural fields of globalized societies, a language like English can only function as a 'network standard' in standard varieties.

As a final consideration, I also suggest that beyond social movements we could learn from and apply in a variety of cultural fields and political arenas the creative ways that, as I have tried to show, Iranian activists negotiated the crucial tensions between not only 1979 and 2009, but also the logics of competition and participation that seem to presently mark our contemporary experiences of globalization. By analyzing discourses within that dynamic tension, I believe we can continue to see and understand the meaningful and novel ways language comes to constitute who and where we are, as well as what we believe. And perhaps by doing so we might find new ways of working collectively to alleviate and transform our shared predicaments through the effervescence sparked by the contentions of those logics as well as the ongoing resonance of our common experiences.

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Appendix A

Selected Articles from U.S. Legacy Media Research Corpus⁴⁶

June 13, 2009 Saturday Late Edition - Final

Both Sides Claim Victory in Presidential Election in Iran By ROBERT F. WORTH and NAZILA FATHI Pg. 1

Iran's state-run news agency said Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had won Iran's presidential election in a landslide just two hours after the polls closed Friday night. But his main rival, Mir Hussein Moussavi, announced defiantly that he had won and charged that there had been voting "irregularities."

"I am the absolute winner of the election by a very large margin," Mr. Moussavi said during a news conference with reporters just after 11 p.m. Friday, adding: "It is our duty to defend people's votes. There is no turning back."

The conflicting claims, coming after an extraordinary campaign that saw vast street demonstrations and vitriolic televised debates, seemed to undermine the public legitimacy of the vote and to threaten unrest.

In recent days, Mr. Moussavi's supporters were predicting a wide victory, citing voter surveys. And Mr. Ahmadinejad, the hard-line incumbent, had appeared on the defensive, hurling extraordinary accusations at some of the Islamic republic's founding figures.

An hour after Mr. Moussavi declared victory, the state news agency reported that Mr. Ahmadinejad had won the election with 69 percent and that Mr. Moussavi had 28 percent. As the election commission announced new totals early Saturday morning, the numbers changed slightly, but the wide lead by Mr. Ahmadinejad did not.

The election commission said early Saturday morning that, with 77 percent of the votes counted, Mr. Ahmadinejad had won 65 percent and Mr. Moussavi had 32 percent, Reuters reported. Then at 8 a.m. Saturday, Iranian state media reported that Mr. Ahmadinejad had about 18 million votes and that Mr. Moussavi had 9 million. The other two candidates, Mehdi Karroubi and Mohsen Rezai, each won about 250,000 votes, the state media reported.

The election commission is part of the Interior Ministry, which Mr. Ahmadinejad controls. Some lawmakers were already congratulating Mr. Ahmadinejad, and some of his supporters were celebrating in the streets, the news agency said.

Some analysts warned that Mr. Moussavi's supporters might take to the streets to protest on Saturday, despite a firm warning against any demonstrations by the deputy commander of the Iranian national police, Ahmadreza Radan. Early on Saturday morning the Tehran police began a "maneuver" to maintain security, the news agency said.

⁴⁶ The articles are sequenced according to their first reference in the analyses.

The emotional campaign was widely seen as a referendum on Mr. Ahmadinejad's divisive policies. It pitted Mr. Moussavi, a former prime minister who has pledged to move Iran away from confrontation with the West, combat economic stagnation and expand women's rights, against Mr. Ahmadinejad's economic populism, social conservatism, and hard-line foreign policy.

Many women, young people, intellectuals and members of the moderate clerical establishment backed Mr. Moussavi. Mr. Ahmadinejad drew passionate support from poor rural Iranians as well as conservatives.

At his news conference, Mr. Moussavi cited irregularities that included a shortage of ballots. He accused the government of shutting down Web sites, newspapers and text messaging services throughout the country, crippling the opposition's ability to communicate during the voting.

Fraud has been a prominent concern for Mr. Moussavi's campaign, with many of his allies warning that Mr. Ahmadinejad could use the levers of state -- the military, the Revolutionary Guard, and the Basij militia -- to cajole or intimidate voters, or even engage in outright fraud. In 2005, Mr. Karroubi, who is also a candidate in this election, accused the Basij of rigging the vote in Mr. Ahmadinejad's favor.

At his news conference, Mr. Moussavi called on the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, to help the country reach a "favorable conclusion."

Ayatollah Khamenei, who has final authority over affairs of state, appears to be the only figure who could mediate between the two camps in the event of an open confrontation over the legitimacy of the vote. But it is not clear how much he knows about the crisis, or what role he might play.

Mr. Khamenei met on Friday with Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a cleric, former president and backer of Mr. Moussavi's who had warned the supreme leader in an unusual open letter on Tuesday about the possibility of election fraud, according to a political analyst who spoke on condition of anonymity, citing the gravity of the situation.

While casting his ballot earlier in the day Friday, Ayatollah Khamenei had said that people were using texting to spread rumors, but it is unclear if that is why the services were shut down.

Amid the confusion overnight, a reformist Web site called Fararu said Mr. Moussavi was talking with the two other candidates, Mr. Karroubi and Mr. Rezai, to discuss the situation. Mr. Karroubi is a reformist cleric and Mr. Rezai is a conservative and the former commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

Tens of millions of Iranians crowded voting stations throughout the day, with long lines forming outside some polling stations well before they opened at 8 a.m.

Polls were originally due to close at 6 p.m., but voting was extended by four hours.

The strong showing appeared to be driven in part by a broad movement against Mr. Ahmadinejad that has spurred vast opposition rallies in Iran's major cities over the past few weeks. Many reform-oriented voters stayed away from the polls in 2005, and now say they are determined not to repeat the mistake.

According to Iran's election rules, if none of the candidates wins more than 50 percent of the vote, the top two finishers will compete in a runoff in a week. Most analysts had assumed that the election would go to a second round, but in recent days, the extraordinary public support for Mr. Moussavi had led to predictions that he could win the presidency in the first round on Friday.

Iran's president is less powerful than Ayatollah Khamenei, who has final authority over affairs of state. But the president wields great power over domestic affairs, and Mr. Ahmadinejad has skillfully used the office as a bully pulpit both at home and abroad.

As voting began on Friday morning, journalists gathered to watch Ayatollah Khamenei cast his vote in a mosque near his home in southern Tehran. Just after 8 a.m., a set of brown curtains opened and the leader emerged, a gaunt 69-year-old with glasses and a long white beard, with a black turban on his head and a black clerical gown draped around him. The journalists, mostly Iranians, gasped and then chanted a religious blessing.

The supreme leader presented his identity papers to an official standing nearby, cast his ballots and then gave a brief speech in which he praised the vigor of the election campaign.

"I am hearing about a vast participation of people, and I hear there are even gatherings at night," the ayatollah said. "This shows the people's awareness."

Ayatollah Khamenei's position on the presidential elections has been a matter of intense speculation. He has not endorsed anyone, but offered a description of the ideal candidate that sounded very much like Mr. Ahmadinejad.

A number of voters seemed anxious about the possibility of vote-tampering.

"I put one name in, but maybe it will change when it comes out of the box," said Adel Shoghi, 29, who works as a clerk at a car manufacturing company and voted at a mosque in southern Tehran.

Like some other supporters of Mr. Moussavi, Mr. Shoghi seemed uneasy about making his position too explicit in public. But he said he favored Mr. Moussavi because Iran needed more civic freedoms and because Mr. Ahmadinejad worsened Iran's pariah status internationally, making life hard for Iranians who travel.

His brother Mansoor, 27, said he had just voted for Mr. Ahmadinejad.

"He is more with the people, and he has a plain way of living," he said, echoing comments made by many of his supporters.

Half an hour later, Mr. Moussavi arrived at the mosque to cast his vote, surrounded by a thick, shouting crowd of aides and photographers.

"This is a golden opportunity for us," he said, as photographers jostled for position and voters struggled to hear. "All this unity and solidarity is the achievement of the revolution and the Islamic republic," he said.

He left soon after, with his admirers in the courtyard still chanting, "Hail to Muhammad, the perfume of honesty and sincerity is coming."

Mr. Ahmadinejad voted at another mosque, in southeast Tehran.

June 14, 2009

Iran Opposition Protests Hard-Liner's Re-election BYLINE: By ROBERT F. WORTH and NAZILA FATHI Pg. 1

The streets of Iran's capital erupted in the most intense protests in a decade on Saturday, with riot police officers using batons and tear gas against opposition demonstrators who claimed that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had stolen the presidential election.

Witnesses reported that at least one person had been shot dead in clashes with the police in Vanak Square in Tehran. Smoke from burning vehicles and tires hung over the city late Saturday.

The Interior Ministry said Saturday afternoon that Mr. Ahmadinejad had won 62.6 percent of the vote, with Mir Hussein Moussavi, the top challenger, taking just under 34 percent. Turnout was a record 85 percent.

Mr. Moussavi, a former prime minister who had promised to reverse Mr. Ahmadinejad's hard-line policies, declared himself the winner by a wide margin Friday night, charged widespread election irregularities and called on Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, to intervene.

The landslide victory for Mr. Ahmadinejad, an intensely divisive figure here and abroad, came as a powerful shock to opposition supporters, who had cited polls showing that Mr. Moussavi had a strong lead in the final days of the campaign.

Interior Minister Sadegh Mahsouli said Saturday that such a lead was a misimpression based on Mr. Moussavi's higher levels of support in the capital, and that he had less backing elsewhere.

Mr. Moussavi made clear in statements on Saturday that he rejected the results and called on supporters and fellow clerics to fight them. But there were no reports of any public appearances by him through the day, leading to rumors that he might have been arrested.

In a statement posted on his campaign Web site, Mr. Moussavi said: "Today the people's will has been faced with an amazing incident of lies, hypocrisy and fraud. I call on my Iranian compatriots to remain calm and patient."

But Ayatollah Khamenei closed the door to any appeals for intervention in a statement issued on state television on Saturday afternoon, congratulating Mr. Ahmadinejad on his victory and pointedly urging the other candidates to support him.

In a televised address to the nation Saturday night, Mr. Ahmadinejad called on the public to respect the results, and he denounced foreign diplomatic and journalistic criticism.

"All political and propaganda machines abroad and sections inside the country have been mobilized against the nation," he said.

Mr. Moussavi's defiance seemed to fuel street resistance by his supporters -- a coalition including women, young people, intellectuals and members of the moderate clerical establishment -- who had united in opposition to Mr. Ahmadinejad's erratic economic stewardship, confrontational foreign policy and crackdown on social freedoms.

"Death to the coup d'etat!" chanted a surging crowd of several thousand protesters, many of whom wore Mr. Moussavi's signature bright green campaign colors, as they marched in central Tehran on Saturday afternoon. "Death to the dictator!"

Farther down the street, clusters of young men hurled rocks at a phalanx of riot police officers, and the police used their batons to beat back protesters. There were reports of demonstrations in other major Iranian cities as well.

The authorities closed universities in Tehran, blocked cellphone transmissions and access to Facebook and some other Web sites, and for a second day shut down text-messaging services.

As night settled in, the streets in northern Tehran that recently had been the scene of pre-election euphoria were lit by the flames of trash fires and blocked by tipped trash bins and at least one charred bus. Young men ran through the streets throwing paving stones at shop windows, and the police pursued them.

Earlier in the day, hurried meetings were reported among Iran's leading political figures and clerics; some were said to be trying to influence Ayatollah Khamenei to intervene in a situation that could stain public confidence in the integrity of Iran's elections.

But Saeed Leylaz, an economist and political analyst, said he believed that Ayatollah Khamenei's statement would bring a resolution, even if demonstrations persisted for a few days. "This has put an end to political negotiations from above," Mr. Leylaz said.

For the moment, Ayatollah Khamenei's admonition did nothing to calm the opposition's rage.

"The results of the 10th presidential election are so ridiculous and so unbelievable that one cannot write or talk about it in a statement," said Mehdi Karroubi, a reformist cleric and candidate.

Mr. Karroubi came in last with 300,000 votes -- far fewer than analysts had predicted. "It is amazing that the people's vote has turned into an instrument for the government to stabilize itself," he said.

The other candidate, Mohsen Rezai, got 680,000 votes, Interior Ministry officials said.

In 2005, when Mr. Karroubi was also a candidate for president, he accused the government of rigging the vote in Mr. Ahmadinejad's favor. In that election, the government announced when polls closed that there would probably be a runoff between two of three candidates, a reform candidate and a former police chief.

But by 7 a.m. the next day, a spokesman for the Guardian Council, a clerical oversight panel that is not supposed to be involved in vote counting, announced that Mr. Ahmadinejad was in first place. Mr. Karroubi's charges were never investigated.

The turmoil on Saturday followed an extraordinary night in which the Iranian state news agency announced that Mr. Ahmadinejad had won by a vast margin just two hours after the polls closed. The timing alone provoked deep suspicion here, because the authorities have never before announced election results until the following morning. Mr. Moussavi also announced Friday night that he believed he had won by a wide margin.

Mr. Moussavi also complained about irregularities and unfairness in the election, saying there had been a lack of ballots in many areas and that some of his campaign offices had been attacked and his Web sites shut down.

The official results prompted further skepticism, in part because Mr. Ahmadinejad was said to have won by large margins even in his opponents' hometowns. Mr. Rezai's hometown, for example, gave him less than a tenth of Mr. Ahmadinejad's total there, the Interior Ministry said.

The issue of vote-rigging has often been raised in Iranian elections, but analysts have generally said the authorities can manipulate the results by only a few percentage points, leaving room for genuine democratic movements.

Iran's clerical leaders often point to past reformist victories as proof of the Islamic Republic's democratic legitimacy. Many reformists have boycotted votes in the past to avoid giving the clerics that satisfaction. Those reformists voted in large numbers this time, inspired by a vast popular movement that rose up to support Mr. Moussavi.

Their bitterness on Saturday at the unexpected results was correspondingly severe.

"We are not disposable things to be thrown away," said Mahshid, 20, a student who declined to give her last name because she feared repercussions from the authorities. "From now on, we won't vote. They have insulted our feelings of patriotism."

Meanwhile, the working-class areas of southern Tehran where Mr. Ahmadinejad is popular were largely quiet, despite rumors of wild victory celebrations.

"There might be some manipulation in what the government has done," said Maliheh Afrouz, 55, a supporter of Mr. Ahmadinejad clad in a black chador. "But the other side is exaggerating, making it seem worse than it really is."

June 15, 2009

Real-Time Criticism of CNN's Iran Coverage BYLINE: By BRIAN STELTER Pg. 5

Cable news normally serves as the front line for breaking news, but the channels largely took the weekend off as Tehran exploded in protests after Iran's presidential election.

The performance of the American cable news, especially CNN, spawned an online protest by thousands on Saturday and Sunday, showing that viewers can try to pressure news organizations about their coverage in real time via the internet. Fox News Channel and MSNBC also were said to have covered the protests in limited ways.

Protesters' comments on Twitter were quickly noticed by CNN, which defended its coverage. The social networking blog Mashable said Twitter was acting as a "media watchdog."

CNN had reports from Tehran throughout Saturday, including some from Christiane Amanpour, its chief international correspondent. But it did not provide the kind of wall-to-wall coverage that some had expected.

It was a departure for CNN, known for its breaking news coverage, including its celebrated reporting during the Tiananmen Square crackdown 20 years ago. But the Tehran protests were not covered with rolling live coverage for hours at a time.

Untold thousands used the label "CNNfail" on Twitter to vent their frustrations. Steve LaBate, an Atlanta resident, said on Twitter, "Why aren't you covering this with everything you've got?" About the same time, CNN was showing a repeat of Larry King's interview of the stars of the "American Chopper" show. For a time, new criticisms were being added on Twitter at least once a second.

Andrew Sullivan, a blogger for The Atlantic, wrote, "There's a reason the MSM is in trouble," using the blogosphere abbreviation for mainstream media.

CNN said, "We share people's expectations of CNN and have delivered far more coverage of the Iranian election and aftermath than any other network."

Journalists in Tehran were working in difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions. The BBC said its correspondent John Simpson and a camera operator had been briefly arrested after filming in the streets. Jim Sciutto, an ABC News correspondent in Tehran, said that the police had confiscated a camera and footage. "We are shooting protests and police violence on our cellphones," he wrote on Twitter.

Some Americans relied on British networks. A report from Channel 4 was spread widely on the internet. In the video, the correspondent Lindsey Hilsum said of Iran, "I feel like I went to sleep in one country and woke up in another."

June 12, 2009

In Iran, a Real Race, and Talk of a Sea Change BYLINE: By ROBERT F. WORTH; Nazila Fathi contributed reporting. Pg. 1

Less than two months ago, it was widely assumed here and in the West that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran's hard-line president, would coast to another victory in the elections on Friday. Many of the reformists who sat out the vote in 2005 seemed dejected and unlikely to raise a strong challenge.

As voters went to the polls Friday, that picture has been transformed. A vast opposition movement has arisen, flooding the streets of Iran's major cities with cheering, green-clad supporters of Mir Hussein Moussavi, the leading challenger. Mr. Ahmadinejad, seemingly on the defensive, has hurled extraordinary accusations at some of the Islamic republic's founding figures, but the tactic has served to unify a diverse and passionate body of opponents of his populist economic policies and confrontational approach to the West.

Some Iranians believe that the unruly democratic energies unleashed over the past few weeks could affect this country's politics no matter who wins. Mr. Ahmadinejad's radical policies and personal attacks, they say, have galvanized powerful adversaries who will use his own accusations of corruption and mismanagement against him. Ayatollah Ali

Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, who has the final say in affairs of state and prefers to avoid open conflict, may force Mr. Ahmadinejad to steer a more moderate course if he is re-elected.

"The elite will not let go of Ahmadinejad's neck" if he wins, said Muhammad Atrianfar, a journalist and former government official who supports Mr. Moussavi. "The official institutions will be in conflict with him, including the Parliament."

But hope has often outpaced reality in Iran, and similar democratic movements have been stifled in the past by the country's clerical leadership. In 1997, a burst of student demonstrations was followed by mass arrests, and a broader crackdown has taken place since Mr. Ahmadinejad succeeded his reformist predecessor, President Mohammad Khatami, in 2005.

And for all the hopes placed in him, Mr. Moussavi is no liberal. Another candidate, Mehdi Karroubi, is more closely associated with the core causes of the Iranian reformist movement, including the freeing of political prisoners and women's rights.

Moreover, there are limits to what any Iranian president can do. Although Mr. Ahmadinejad has tried to augment the powers of the presidency, it is Ayatollah Khamenei, as supreme leader, who controls the direction of foreign policy.

Still, Mr. Moussavi would clearly push for a less confrontational stance toward the West. He implicitly criticized Iran's support for militant groups like Hezbollah and Hamas, saying the government should focus on domestic problems instead.

Perhaps more important to Iranians, Mr. Moussavi would change economic policy; Mr. Ahmadinejad has been criticized for economic stagnation, including rising inflation and unemployment. A former prime minister in the 1980s, Mr. Moussavi is given great credit for managing Iran's economy effectively during the war with Iraq.

Much of Mr. Moussavi's popularity derives from support by Mr. Khatami, the charismatic reformist cleric who was president from 1997 to 2005. But in some ways he could be more effective as president, analysts say. He is more pragmatic than Mr. Khatami, and because he is less distasteful to the hard-line clerical elite, he could have more success than Mr. Khatami did in promoting his agenda.

Moreover, opposition leaders say Mr. Moussavi, if elected, would have the advantage of a powerful popular movement behind him, and not just because the street demonstrations of the past weeks have been bigger than those of earlier elections. Women have become a potent force in this campaign for the first time in the Islamic republic's 30-year history, with all three opposition candidates making major efforts to win their votes.

Mr. Moussavi broke with precedent by campaigning alongside his wife, Zahra Rahnavard, a prominent professor and artist who was famous before he was. Other candidates have promised to extend women's rights as well. Campaign rallies for Mr. Moussavi often seem to include more women -- who make up half the voters in Iran -- than men.

Some say this is another aspect of the campaign that could remain important regardless of who wins. In April, a number of secular and conservative women's groups joined forces and submitted a list of demands for greater rights from Iran's next president.

Political and economic factors could also play a role. Iran's oil revenue has dropped precipitously over the past year. The country is facing political challenges in Iraq and Afghanistan, and its allies in Lebanon lost an important election there on Sunday. All these things could moderate Mr. Ahmadinejad's aggressive, free-spending style if he is re-elected, analysts say.

Mr. Moussavi's supporters say they are confident that change is coming. Mr. Ahmadinejad sounded defensive during his last allotted television spot on Wednesday night, repeating again and again that he was not a liar, as his opponents have claimed. One of his final campaign rallies was canceled Wednesday afternoon after the university where it was to be held unexpectedly refused to delay exams to accommodate the president. A large crowd of students chanting anti-Ahmadinejad slogans forced him to change his plans again, and he ended up speaking to a much smaller group of supporters.

Opposition leaders say they expect a huge turnout on Friday, with many of the reformists who sat out the vote in 2005 saying they will take part this time, to help unseat Mr. Ahmadinejad.

Mr. Moussavi's supporters say they remain concerned about the possibility of fraud, but a determined campaign -- led in part by Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, an influential former president -- has kept that issue in the public eye. Mr. Rafsanjani urged Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, to prevent any fraud in an extraordinary public letter on Tuesday, and on Thursday he met with the ayatollah for three hours.

For all the confidence of the opposition, it would be wrong to count Mr. Ahmadinejad out. He has the strong support of most of Iran's rural voters, and his populist economic policies have won the loyalty of many pensioners and state employees, as well as the pious poor.

If he wins a second term, many here are now asking what will become of the "green wave" -- the name given to the vast crowds of people who have filled the streets in recent weeks dressed in the signature color of the Moussavi campaign, demanding change.

"It depends on us," said Mr. Karroubi, the reformist cleric who is running against Mr. Ahmadinejad, in an interview at his campaign offices. "What sort of action shall we take? Shall we continue on our way, or shall we go into a coma?"

June 4, 2009

Iranian Leader, Rival Express Sharply Divergent Views in Debate BYLINE: Thomas Erdbrink; Washington Post Foreign Service Pg. A08

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his main rival in the June 12 election, former prime minister Mir Hossein Mousavi, held a remarkably frank debate Wednesday night that exposed deep differences among Iran's leaders and presented voters with two completely opposing views.

During the 90-minute debate, which was televised live, the candidates openly delved into topics in a way never seen in the Islamic republic, touching on foreign policy and corruption. In addition, Ahmadinejad raised questions about the academic credentials of Mousavi's wife, a former professor.

The candidates represent two factions in Iran's system of Shiite clerical government. In the debate, Ahmadinejad, in a beige suit and surrounded by stacks of papers, portrayed his opponent as a pawn of Iran's political elite, which he said was corrupt and weak in the face of Western pressure.

Mousavi, a painter and architect, said Ahmadinejad's controversial international and domestic policies were a danger to Iran's future. He accused the president of driving the country toward a "dictatorship" and acting as if he owned the truth. "You think you are higher than all," he told Ahmadinejad.

A large part of the debate centered on foreign policy. Mousavi said Ahmadinejad's denial of the Holocaust had cost Iran much international standing. "Tell me, who are our friends in the region?" he asked the president. Mousavi said the country had become internationally isolated.

Ahmadinejad pointed out that the previous government, which temporarily suspended uranium enrichment from 2003 to 2005, received nothing in return for the gesture to the West.

"There was so much begging for having three centrifuges. Today more than 7,000 centrifuges are turning,"

Ahmadinejad said of Iran's nuclear program. "Which foreign policy was successful? Which one created degradation? Which one kept our independence more, which one gave away more concessions but got no results?" he asked.

Ahmadinejad repeatedly blamed Mousavi for the earlier failures of politicians who now support Mousavi's campaign.

The president broke a taboo in Iranian politics by openly labeling as corrupt former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and his family. Many in Iran say Rafsanjani's family has acquired enormous wealth since the 1979 Islamic revolution, but the accusation -- which Rafsanjani denies -- has not been mentioned on state television or publicly by Iranian politicians.

"Where did the sons of Mr. Hashemi get their money from?" Ahmadinejad asked. "How did the son of Mr. Nateq Nouri become a billionaire?" he said of an influential former parliament speaker who once supported him. "I have lists of former high managers who were given lands, hectares of land."

In the 2005 presidential race, Ahmadinejad, then the mayor of Tehran, surprisingly made it into a second round, facing Rafsanjani, a former two-term president.

During the campaign, Ahmadinejad has promised to bring the "economically corrupt" to justice but has never named those he accused. After the televised debate, some Iranian news agencies refrained from printing the parts in which Ahmadinejad directly accused Rafsanjani and a string of other influential politicians.

Ahmadinejad also accused Rafsanjani and his family of trying to become a ruling dynasty.

"Mr. Hashemi is the puppet master behind all of this," Ahmadinejad said of criticism of his government. "He wants you to prolong his aristocracy," he told Mousavi.

Ahmadinejad held up a paper showing text and a portrait of Mousavi's wife, Zahra Rahnavard, a prominent academic. "I have a file here of a woman, you know her as she sits beside you in your election meetings. She became a dean without the correct credentials," Ahmadinejad said.

Rahnavard has quickly shot to fame in Iran, holding hands with her husband during campaign rallies, events where the wives of candidates did not appear in the past.

Mousavi, who remained reserved during the debate, said Ahmadinejad's methods of governance would result in dictatorship. Responding to the attacks on his campaign supporters, he said, pointing a finger: "You can't just accuse people and name them. What does this have to do with me?"

He added, "You couldn't find anything against me -- that's why you try to connect me with the two previous governments."

Ahmadinejad tried to interrupt -- a move not allowed in the debate -- but Mousavi said that it was his time to speak.

"For four years we are always hearing you predicting that the United States and Israel will dissolve. We based our foreign policies on these thoughts, so it's obvious that we went in the wrong direction," he said. "Your management is taking us toward a dead end. Our country is hurting badly."

June 12, 2009

**A Polarized Iran Prepares to Go to Polls;
Presidential Race Turns Into a Battle of Haves and Have-Nots, Old and New Guard
BYLINE: Thomas Erdbrink; Washington Post; Pg. A08**

A long column of provincial, working-class Iranians, clad in black and walking in flip-flops, streamed into a highway underpass, heading for a reelection rally for President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Standing on a high ledge safely out of the way, a group of cosmopolitan youths looked down at the crowd of mostly out-of-towners. "Go back to the zoo!" shouted a teenager with gelled-up hair and a green T-shirt, a sign of support for Ahmadinejad's main challenger, Mir Hossein Mousavi.

"Sissies!" the marchers yelled back.

As Iranians go to the polls Friday to choose a president, the country is more deeply polarized than at any time since the Islamic revolution that overthrew the shah 30 years ago. After a bitter campaign that included personal attacks on some of Iran's leading families, both sides are preparing to contest the results, and many Iranians wonder whether the social and economic rifts exposed by the election will deepen.

"Some people think that only they are Iran," said Saeed Majidi, who had driven for hours on his 125cc motorcycle to hear Ahmadinejad speak at Tehran's Grand Mosque. "But those with jobs and money only represent 30 percent of the population."

"We are Iran," Majidi concluded, pointing at the crowd pouring into the tunnel, a sea of women with sunburned faces and bearded men with black horn-rimmed glasses.

"Other presidents never cared for us. Ahmadinejad does."

Though he holds many of the levers of power, Ahmadinejad is proud of his status as an outsider. He says the country's political class has drifted away from its religious and revolutionary roots. Since his surprise election in 2005, he has constantly attacked Iran's post-revolutionary elites, contending that they long ago gave up fighting for the "barefooted" masses and began doing business deals from their villas on the slopes of affluent North Tehran.

Ahmadinejad has turned the Iranian economy upside down, making sure that advantages flow to the lower class. His government has increased state wages and pensions and has made health insurance free for 22 million people. He derides economists who blame him for high inflation and unemployment, saying that they are tied to the higher classes and that his goal is to "spread justice."

But his support does not come solely from the downtrodden. He is also backed by a small group of hard-line Islamic clerics and leaders of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps who share his resentment toward the West, his calls for Iran to occupy its rightful place as a world power and his championing of Iran's nuclear program.

His leading challenger is Mousavi, an urbane, soft-spoken architect who was prime minister from 1981 to 1989. Though out of power for two decades, Mousavi is in many ways the Iranian establishment's candidate. He represents an older generation of Islamic clergy and politicians who fought side by side with the leader of the 1979 revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, but whose power and positions have gradually been stripped away by Ahmadinejad and his associates.

Mousavi's political foot soldiers, in turn, are disgruntled middle-class youths, intellectuals, artists and academics who have been alienated by the current government's radical rhetoric and pervasive restrictions on personal freedom, such as police controls on the way people dress, the banning of books and the disciplining of dissident students.

Yet Ahmadinejad's main foil in the campaign has not been Mousavi. Rather, he has tried to turn the election into a referendum on the man whom he defeated in 2005 and who is not, formally, in the race this time: Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a former Iranian president and head of one of the country's most prominent families. In an apparently calculated move during a June 3 nationally televised debate with Mousavi, Ahmadinejad attacked Rafsanjani and his wealthy children, calling them "corrupt" and alleging that Mousavi was their puppet.

Rafsanjani responded with an open letter asking Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, to intervene against Ahmadinejad's personal attacks. But Rafsanjani's son, Mehdi, seemed to confirm at least part of Ahmadinejad's claim, telling foreign reporters

that the family had helped organize Mousavi's campaign and was planning to bring down Ahmadinejad.

The result is a confrontation not just between Iran's haves and have-nots, but between the old revolutionaries who seized power from the shah and a new cadre of radicals seeking to dislodge them.

"Our mistake has been that we have not dealt with the power seekers," said Mehdi Kalhor, Ahmadinejad's media adviser, using a label that Ahmadinejad's supporters often attach to those around Rafsanjani.

"They are like a bacteria in every empire. The Islamic revolution was a fight against these 1,000 ruling families," Kalhor added. "We now need to carry out the objectives of the revolution."

Each camp has warned that the other may be planning to seize power by nondemocratic means. Mousavi and another presidential challenger, Mehdi Karroubi, have jointly created a committee against vote-rigging and announced plans to post observers at all of Iran's approximately 45,000 polling places.

"We will have our results before the Ministry of Interior does," predicted Morteza Alviri, Karroubi's representative on the committee.

Aides to Ahmadinejad, meanwhile, say Mousavi's backers plan to claim victory before the votes are fully counted and to mount a "color revolution" like the Rose Revolution that swept away the post-Soviet government of Georgia and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine.

"According to their plan, these people will make a heavy media atmosphere, claiming premature victory with rallies to mobilize their supporters," Gen. Yadollah Javani, head of the political office of the Revolutionary Guard Corps, predicted in an interview with the guards' magazine, Sobh-e Sadeqh.

June 12, 2009, Friday Election: Iran's decision to oust Ahmadinejad - or not

BYLINE: Scott Peterson Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor SECTION: WORLD; Pg. 6

Iranians poured into polling stations in a key presidential election on Friday, transforming the electricity of a tumultuous campaign and street demonstrations into a near-record turnout.

This election, in which President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's main opponent surged in the final days, is being seen as a referendum on how the government is handling its faltering economy and aggressive foreign policy. Iran's decision to oust Mr. Ahmadinejad - or not - will shape the Islamic Republic's response to US President Obama's recent overtures and key issues such as Iran's nuclear program.

"This is very important for us, because we want to choose our own candidate - so we can choose our own destiny," said Babak, an electrician in south Tehran, as he made his way to his local mosque to vote. "This is the first time that the campaign was marvelous. It was infinity!"

Top challenger Mir Hossein Mousavi, he said, "will win 100 percent."

But just to be sure, many Mousavi supporters carried their own pens to the polls, after rumors circulated by text message that operatives of hard-line Ahmadinejad had imported 2 million pens with disappearing ink - so that votes for his opponents would be invalid.

A flicker of a counterrumor held that it was in fact the opposition camp - whose champion, Mr. Mousavi, has drawn the most support on the streets, and whose green-clad supporters predict victory over the incumbent - that had sneaked in such pens.

But those and many other rumors of vote-rigging did not deter the majority of Iran's 46.2 million eligible voters from lining up from early morning at some 45,000 polling stations, causing the polls' closing times to be extended twice. Officials said they expected "unprecedented" turnout could top 70 percent, close to the 80 percent achieved by reformist Mohamad Khatami in his landslide 1997 victory.

Opponents of Ahmadinejad have long argued that high turnout would put the embattled president at a disadvantage. But the regime has also sought since the 1979 Islamic revolution to demonstrate its legitimacy with high turnout.

Washington was keeping a close eye on the result.

"We think there's the possibility of change," Mr. Obama told reporters at the White House on Friday, acknowledging that it was up to Iranians to choose a leader.

"Whoever ends up winning the election in Iran, the fact that there's been a robust debate hopefully will help advance our ability to engage them in new ways."

Pro-Ahmadinejad basiji militants attack Mousavi headquarters

Excitement was palpable, in one polling booth after another. State television showed couples dressed in marriage finest, voting on their way to their wedding. "This election is as important as our wedlock; that's why we are doing both on the same day," said one bride.

Voting alongside his wife in an Ahmadinejad stronghold of south Tehran, Mousavi stained his finger purple, then used it to make his point by noting that some of his camp's election monitors had not been given access to all the polling stations. He complained that Iran's text-messaging service - by one count carrying 90 million messages a day, many of them pro-Mousavi notes to mobilize people - had been cut off early Friday morning.

"I thank all the people for their green presence which created a miracle," Mousavi said after voting. Iran's unity was an "achievement" of the Islamic revolution, he said, calling on officials to allow his representatives access "as soon as possible."

"We should not be fearful about the free flow of information, and I urge officials to observe the law," said Mousavi.

When polls were meant to close at 9 p.m., already there were reports - confirmed by eyewitnesses and a video uploaded to the internet - that about a dozen pro-Ahmadinejad basiji militants with pistols and pepper spray moved to shut down the

Mousavi headquarters in the religious north Tehran district of Qeytariyeh. One witness described a fire at another Mousavi location.

Defiant voters: 'We each are a nuclear bomb'

Mr. Khatami, who remains one of the most popular politicians in Iran despite the collapse of the reform movement from the late 1990s, said after voting on Friday: "All indications suggest that Mousavi has won."

But the trend was hardly all pro-Mousavi. In Shahr-e Rey, a suburb of south Tehran where Mousavi voted, most of the graffiti and posters on walls hailed Ahmadinejad.

The combative television debates and street demonstrations "showed democracy in our country, the honor of our country, because of the enthusiasm and because of the freedom of speech," said a banker called Nafiseh.

She accused the US and the West of meddling in Iranian affairs and said Ahmadinejad's aggressive and principled stands were correct: "We consider elections to be a war," said Nafiseh. "They say we have nuclear weapons, but the fact is we each are a nuclear bomb. The more they say against us, the stronger we become."

But even as she spoke, another woman dressed all in black stepped up and retorted in English: "Ahmadinejad is a big liar, 100 percent!" said Fatemeh. "In four years [he] has lied to Iran, all our foreign policy is so bad. The oil of Iran goes to [Lebanese militant group] Hezbollah, and not to us."

'Mousavi is a correct thinker'

Iran's supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei, voted the moment polls opened, and called upon all Iranians to vote and "have their share in governing the country and to choose who is best fit to govern the country for the next four years."

Ayatollah Khamenei thanked Iranians for their "enthusiastic presence in the past few days in the elections [campaigning]," adding that "with their improved maturity, morality, and thought, did not allow any sad scenes to be created amidst the enthusiasm."

Khamenei warned against believing rumors about him and the elections, which he said were passed along by people with "unsound minds."

Those rumors did not affect the debate inside one family. Housewife Zahra Khalili held her 7-month-old baby outside a polling station, and is a strong supporter of Ahmadinejad, who she said "God willing" would be reelected.

But her brother-in-law, a teacher standing beside her, was not convinced. "Mousavi is a correct thinker," said Asghar Davoudi. "We don't want a liar. Living simply [like Ahmadinejad] is not important. Doing good work, being active, is much better."

Perhaps Ahmadinejad summed it up best after he voted. The location where the archconservative would vote was a closely held secret until the last moment - apparently out of safety concerns, sources close to his campaign said - so only a handful of photographers were on hand.

After voting, the president said: "People's strong, revolutionary, and clear decision will bring about a bright future for the nation."

June 8, 2009

**In Iran, Harsh Talk As Election Approaches BYLINE: By ROBERT F. WORTH;
Nazila Fathi contributed reporting.**

SECTION: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4

The leading candidates are accusing each other of corruption, bribery and torture. The wife of the strongest challenger to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has threatened to sue him for defaming her. And every night, parts of the capital become a screaming, honking bacchanal, with thousands of young men dancing and brawling in the streets until dawn.

The presidential campaign, now in its final week, has reached a level of passion and acrimony almost unheard-of in Iran.

In part, that appears to be because of a surge of energy in the campaign of Mir Hussein Moussavi, a reformist who is the leading contender to defeat Mr. Ahmadinejad in the election, set for Friday. Rallies for Mr. Moussavi have drawn tens of thousands of people in recent days, and a new unofficial poll suggests his support has markedly increased, with 54 percent of respondents saying they would vote for him compared with 39 percent for Mr. Ahmadinejad.

But many Iranians say the campaign's raucous tone is due largely to Mr. Ahmadinejad's unexpectedly fierce rhetorical attacks, which have infuriated his rivals and their supporters, and drawn some blistering ripostes.

"This campaign is a watershed in the history of Iran," Sadegh Zibakalam, a political analyst at Tehran University, said. "We've had debates before, but nothing like this. Ahmadinejad is accusing everybody of corruption -- he is basically saying the same thing the counterrevolutionaries have been saying all along."

Many people say a critical moment was last Wednesday's nationally televised debate, in which the president opened with a furious attack on Mr. Moussavi. Mr. Ahmadinejad seemed to spare no one, accusing his conservative and liberal opponents of being corrupt.

But the most shocking thrust, to some viewers, was when he held up a document with a small picture of Mr. Moussavi's wife, Zahra Rahnavaard, and asked him in a derisive tone, "Do you know this woman?" Mr. Ahmadinejad then accused Ms. Rahnavaard -- a respected professor of political science -- of entering a graduate program without taking the entrance exam and other, lesser violations of university policy.

There were other personal and political broadsides in the debate, including Mr. Moussavi's claim that Mr. Ahmadinejad's foreign policy was based on "adventurism, illusionism, exhibitionism, extremism and superficiality."

But the attack on Ms. Rahnavaard struck a nerve. She has taken an unusually public role in her husband's campaign, and many liberal Iranians feared that Mr. Ahmadinejad's attack was code for a broader effort to deny women a public role.

On Sunday, a visibly angry Ms. Rahnavaard held a news conference in which she threatened to sue if Mr. Ahmadinejad did not apologize within 24 hours.

"The way the president insulted me was an insult to everyone," Ms. Rahnavard said, repeatedly emphasizing her own Islamic credentials as she addressed a room full of reporters. "Those who made up this case against me wanted to say it is a crime for women to study, to get two graduate degrees, to become an intellectual or an artist."

She also thanked Mehdi Karroubi, another presidential candidate, for defending her during his own vituperative debate with Mr. Ahmadinejad on Saturday night.

The insurgent energy seems to have spilled over into everyday life, where many people feel emboldened to make criticisms they would not ordinarily dare to make out loud. On Saturday evening, a gathering of Moussavi supporters confronted a group of former politicians and journalists who agreed to give a joint talk.

"Five thousand innocent people were executed when you were in the government in the 1980s," one woman told Muhammad Atrianfar a journalist who worked for Mr. Moussavi when he was prime minister in that period. "Why?"

Mr. Atrianfar seemed surprised by the question.

"My friends, at the beginning of the Islamic revolution we were all like Ahmadinejad, but we changed our path and our way," he said, earning a round of applause from the audience.

Another woman, who gave her name as Parvaneh, said: "Look at me -- I am shaking. I am speaking on behalf of my friends who lost their rights. We love our religion, but they have used it as a tool to take people's rights."

On Saturday, at a stadium rally for Mr. Moussavi just outside Tehran, thousands of young women screamed angry slogans in unison, in a deafening roar that often drowned out the rowdy young men on the playing field below.

"Ahmadinejad is crazy, he's an idiot," Maryam Massoumi, a 27-year-old consultant, shouted above the din. "He's making this country into a place everyone wants to leave."

Nearby, the crowds chanted: "Ahmadi, shame on you, leave Mir Hussein alone!" and "We don't want a police state!"

Mr. Ahmadinejad's supporters, who carry the Iranian flag as their banner, have held their own rallies, and some can be seen riding through Tehran and Isfahan at night, as well.

To some extent, the invective and the carnival atmosphere reflect a ritual loosening of the rules every four years during campaign season. If the pent-up energies seem a little wilder this time, that may be a reflection of the crackdown on social freedoms that has taken place under Mr. Ahmadinejad, a hard-liner who says he wants to return Iran to the zealous piety of the 1979 revolution.

Still, many Iranians say the loosening of tongues may signal a broader shift.

"This will become a wave that cannot be stopped," said Saeed Leylaz, an economist who was briefly a minister in the previous reform-oriented government. "If the president

can say these things about corruption and not be punished, others will say them, too. This is unprecedented and will have consequences."

Even conservatives acknowledge that this campaign is different.

"The atmosphere is hotter this time; that is basically true," said Hossein Shariatmadari, the general director of Kayhan, a hard-line government newspaper and representative of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. But Mr. Shariatmadari offered a different reason.

"The principalists have shown to the people what serving the people really means," he said, using a word he prefers to "fundamentalists." "And on the competing side, they have seen that they are up against a serious competitor."

Reading tea leaves in Tehran BYLINE: the Monitor's Editorial Board

SECTION: EDITORIAL; Pg. 8 Christian Science Monitor

June 18, 2009, Thursday

Mass anger in Iran about the official results of a June 12 presidential election appears to be without end.

So, too, is the speculation among Iran-watchers over what the results of the protests might ultimately mean for the country's Islamic leadership, its nuclear ambitions, and Iran's ties to the rest of the world.

A peaceful rally Thursday in Tehran that drew nearly 100,000 people saw further demands for either a new vote or a total recount of the flawed election in which President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was declared the winner - under highly suspect circumstances.

Foreign leaders such as President Obama can only wait patiently to see if this tense drama is merely a power struggle over a stolen election or whether Iran's awkward experiment in Islamic governance is due for a major overhaul.

The Muslim theocrats who now barely tolerate the will of the people in a constrained democracy appear caught off-guard by the protests in many major cities. Their use of violence against peaceful dissent and their attempts to cut internet connections only confirm a disdain for democratic values.

Such actions also reveal an adherence by President Ahmadinejad and others to a messianic version of Islam that seeks to impose ultraconservative Muslim values on the faithful - but with little trust in the faithful's choice of their secular leaders.

This basic tension between an Islamic dictatorship and the popular principles of democracy has kept Iran in political turmoil and economic backwardness ever since the 1979 revolution. Yet even if the candidate backed by the protesters, Mir Hossein Mousavi, should somehow take power, it is likely the country would shift only slightly toward more tolerance of popular will and openness while the top clergy would retain ultimate powers.

Iran's experiment to discover Islam's role in a world largely driven by Western values such as civil liberty may only continue in a softer form.

Mr. Mousavi, after all, was a major player in the 1979 revolution and ruled as prime minister during the 1980s when the regime crushed its opponents. Only during his recent campaign did he appear to reflect the masses' wish for open elections, a free press, fair trials, and other essentials of modern society.

In a telling gesture, he held Monday's protests in Tehran's Azadi (freedom) Square instead of Enghelab (revolution) Square. Meanwhile, in his speeches, the president speaks of the "Islamic Government of Iran" and not its formal name, the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Even before the 1989 death of the revolution's founder, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a battle over the meaning of the revolution was waged between his underlings. His successor, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei, does not hold nearly the same religious authority or credentials. He has stumbled in his attempts to manipulate the different factions trying to interpret competing visions of Shiite Islam for Iran - and for the rest of the Middle East.

The apparent manipulation of the 2009 election in Ahmadinejad's favor only reveals more of this contest among the ruling elite and former elite. The protests of the past week and the iron-fisted response are Iran's way of trying to reconcile the inherent contradictions between democracy and a radical version of Islam that sees the sovereignty of the nation residing in God and a leader who rules in his name.

In the West, that sort of clash was resolved long ago, definitively in the American and then the French revolutions. Now the West can only stand by as Iran works out this competition of ideas.

A victory by Mousavi may only partially resolve that battle. But, to most Iranians, it may be a political battle worth fighting for.

Daily News

June 13, 2009 I WIN! SEZ EVIL IRAN PREZ, DESPITE FLAP. Foe also declares victory in election

BYLINE: BY CORKY SIEMASZKO DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 12

IRAN'S LOONY leader and the supposed reformer trying to unseat him both declared victory yesterday after a sea of voters swamped polling stations across the country.

Holocaust-denying incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was declared the winner by the state-controlled news agency - raising fears the election was rigged.

The announcement came after Mir-Hossein Mousavi called a press conference to declare, "I am the definite winner of this presidential election."

Last night, there were reports of scuffles breaking out in the streets between Mousavi supporters and the police in Tehran and other Iranian cities.

Mousavi poll workers claimed it was no accident that Iran's cell-phone texting system, which they had been using to stay in touch, went down on Election Day.

The conflicting claims of victory came as election officials began counting votes - a process that dragged into today - following an apparent record turnout in this conservative Islamic country.

With about 78% of the ballots counted, Ahmadinejad had won 65% of the vote and opened a commanding lead on Mousavi, with 33%, said elections chairman Kamran Daneshjoo.

While the official did not say where those votes had come from, the incumbent was believed to be running strong in rural areas while Mousavi was getting the big-city vote.

"I can say that based on our surveys . . . Mousavi is getting 58% to 60% of the vote, and we are the winner," Sadegh Kharazi, an ally of the former prime minister, told Reuters earlier.

Iranian election officials said the turnout could top the record 80% recorded when Mohammad Khatami swept the 1997 presidential election. Long lines and two-hour waits to vote were reported across the country.

Experts said a Mousavi victory might ease tensions with the West and especially with Israel, which has been warning

the world about Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

Before the dueling victory claims, President Obama said he was "excited to see what appears to be a robust debate taking place in Iran. . . . We think there's the possibility of change."

Secretary of State Clinton also voiced optimism.

"It's a very positive sign that the people of Iran want their voices and their votes to be heard and counted," she said.

Expatriate Iranians in the U.S. and elsewhere also voted by the tens of thousands - and many of those votes appeared to be going to Mousavi.

"He is our Obama," Maliki Zadehamid, a 39-year-old exporter voting in Dubai, told The Associated Press.

The real power in Iran does not lie with Ahmadinejad, who has called for Israel's destruction and described the murders of 6 million Jews by the Nazis as a hoax. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei calls most of the shots in Iran. To the U.S., Mousavi is viewed as the lesser of two evils.

He, too, has rejected demands that Iran halt its uranium enrichment programs, which Israel and other countries have called a cover for building nukes. But analysts say Mousavi is more likely to seek more compromise with the West and liberalize life in Iran.

The three-week presidential election has been a mudfest, with Ahmadinejad accusing Mousavi of being a U.S. lackey and Mousavi calling his rival a liar.

June 8, 2009 Monday Suburban Edition

**A Relative Unknown Leads Challenge in Iran;
President's Key Opponent, a Revolution-Era Prime Minister, Wins Support by
Taking on Ahmadinejad**

BYLINE: Thomas Erdbrink; Washington Post Foreign Service SECTION: A-SECTION; Pg. A06

The main challenger to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Friday's presidential election is a relatively unknown candidate who says he joined the race to save Iran from his opponent's "destructive" policies.

Mir Hossein Mousavi, 67, who served as prime minister in the early years of the Islamic revolution, had stayed away from politics for the past 20 years. But he entered the race on a main promise to stand up to Ahmadinejad, which has earned him the support of influential clerics, politicians and young people alike.

Each night, tens of thousands of youths gather in Tehran's main squares to cheer their support for a man who just a month ago they barely knew by name. Mousavi has emerged as the only serious alternative for those who oppose the policies of Ahmadinejad, who has the support a small group of hard-line clerics and some influential members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps.

"Mousavi will make us free," a girl shouted from a car Saturday night, waving at the masses of young supporters. "I don't really know who he is. But he is the only one that can beat Ahmadinejad."

Those close to Mousavi, who is also an architect, describe a worldly intellectual who is not hungry for power but who thinks that Iran's bad economy and international isolation require him to try to effect change. Others, however, accuse Mousavi of having played a pivotal role in the purging of pro-Western professors and students in the first years of the Islamic revolution.

But most Iranians say that Mousavi, like many of the founders of the Islamic republic, has changed. They say the dogmatic hothead who wanted to spread the Islamic revolution around the world has become a pragmatic politician who firmly believes in Islamic governance but also has called for greater freedoms and civil rights protections.

"One of my slogans is 'freedom from fear,' " Mousavi said recently on state television. " 'Fear' does not have only a physical meaning, rather, peace of mind should be created in the society."

Yet it is not his plans for Iran's future that draw people into the streets to campaign for him.

"Mousavi is so popular because many people dislike Ahmadinejad's policies," said Majid Hoseini, a political analyst in

Tehran. "He doesn't have any charisma. It's the worries in the society that will get him votes."

Years as a Hard-Liner

On a recent day, Mousavi's son-in-law Mahdi Makinejad strolled through the new Iranian Academy of the Arts building, which Mousavi designed. He stopped by a traditional closed courtyard, purposely made accessible to the public from the busy street it faces, and pointed at marble columns decorated with calligraphy, writings from Iran's pre-Islamic and Islamic years.

"He feels that all should be represented in Iran and all should have a place," said Makinejad, an artist who specializes in ceramics and glass.

More than 15 years ago, Makinejad walked into Mousavi's office, trying to explain that he was in love with Mousavi's daughter. "I was so nervous. But he asked me which books I read. That was very surprising," he said. "Mousavi is always respectful and calm. He makes people feel at ease."

But many remember a different Mousavi, a hard-line revolutionary who they say played an important role in closing Iranian universities for two years, forcing female students to wear head scarves and purging professors deemed Western.

Mousavi has publicly denied being part of what is called the cultural revolution here. But Abdolkarim Soroush, a former member of a council that organized the purge, has accused him of not being honest about his past.

"Tell us about your important role in these events. Tell us the truth," Soroush, one of Iran's main contemporary political thinkers, recently wrote in an open letter.

Back then, Mousavi, who briefly served as foreign minister, said Iran's revolution must be spread around the "entire world."

Freedom of speech was not on his agenda in those days. "Anyone can think in their hearts, but whoever speaks out or acts against the revolution would see the system fighting him with all its strength," he said in 1983 after becoming prime minister.

But reality sank in as he tried to manage the country through its eight-year trench war with neighboring Iraq.

During the war, Mousavi played a key role in logistical planning and created a coupon system to ensure that Iranians' basic needs were met despite sanctions imposed by many Western countries, who largely supported Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

Mousavi "created a war economy that helped us fight Saddam Hussein," said Hussein Alaei, an influential retired admiral in the Revolutionary Guard Corps who had extensive contact with Mousavi in those years. "The country was stable, inflation was low . . . there was war, but nobody was hungry. We all respect him for his management."

In 1984, Mousavi said on state radio that exporting the revolution was no longer a realistic goal.

"It seems that we were wrong in our initial assessments with regard to the fast spread of the revolution," state newspaper Kayhan quoted him saying a year later.

Over the years, "Mousavi evolved from a revolutionary to a pragmatic manager," said Masoud Soltanifar, a former deputy governor of one of Iran's Persian Gulf provinces.

Premier in Wartime

In 1988, the last year of the war, Soltanifar was one of the first Iranian officials to learn that the USS Vincennes had shot down an Iranian civilian airliner en route to Dubai, killing all 290 passengers and crew members on board.

"I called Mousavi. He didn't believe it. 'The Americans wouldn't do such a thing,' he said," Soltanifar recalled.

Mousavi ordered him to sail out to debris floating in the Persian Gulf. It soon became clear there were no survivors. "Only when I told him what I saw with my own eyes he realized the Americans had really shot down a civilian aircraft," he said.

The U.S. Navy said the downing was an accident. Iranian officials are convinced the plane was shot down to pressure Iran into signing a cease-fire agreement with Iraq.

The eight-year war ended a month later.

After Mousavi's two-term tenure ended in 1989, Iran's constitution was changed and the post of prime minister was abolished for administrative reasons.

During a debate televised live on Wednesday, Ahmadinejad accused Mousavi of being a pawn of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, one of the most influential politicians in Iran. Ahmadinejad accused Rafsanjani of leading an elite of power-hungry politicians who think of themselves first and the people later. Mousavi denies that, saying that the president makes public allegations to cover up his own failures.

During a debate Sunday with cleric Mehdi Karroubi, the other significant challenger to Ahmadinejad, Mousavi strongly attacked the president.

"We are facing a phenomenon: a person who can stare at the camera and say outright lies to people," he said of Ahmadinejad, who during the debate showed numerous statistics indicating that inflation and unemployment were both down.

"When the president sits here and lies, nobody confronts him. I'm a revolutionary and speaking out against the situation he has created," Mousavi said in closing. "He has made the country full of lies and hypocrisy. I'm not frightened to speak out. Remember that."

June 14, 2009 Sunday Met 2 Edition

Ahmadinejad Vows New Start As Clashes Flare; U.S. Waits for 'What the . . . People Decide'

BYLINE: Thomas Erdbrink; Washington Post Foreign Service SECTION: A-SECTION; Pg. A01 LENGTH: 1205 words DATELINE: TEHRAN, June 13

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declared a "new beginning" for Iran late Saturday after he was declared victor in the presidential election, but as he spoke on national television violent demonstrations rolled through several areas of Tehran. Supporters of defeated candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi burned dumpsters, threw stones and clashed with police in the worst rioting in Tehran in many years.

The Interior Ministry, controlled by Ahmadinejad, announced that he had been elected in the first round with 62.6 percent of the vote, compared with less than 34 percent for Mousavi, who was the leading challenger. Turnout was a record 86 percent of the 46.2 million eligible voters.

Announcement of the results triggered protests throughout the day. Families lined the streets in the middle-class neighborhood of Saadat Abad, cheering on the demonstration and shouting, "Death to the dictator!"

Ahmadinejad's reelection will pose fresh challenges to the United States. It has pressed Iran to halt a nuclear program that critics say could be used for weapons, but Iran says it is for civilian purposes. Ahmadinejad has also taken a sharply confrontational approach in foreign affairs.

Talks between Iran and the United States are still a possibility with Ahmadinejad at the helm. On several occasions, he has said he wants such talks. His oft-repeated verbal attacks on Israel are not expected to change.

After the results were announced, the Obama administration said it was examining the charges of election fraud. "We are monitoring the situation as it unfolds in Iran, but we, like the rest of the world, are waiting and watching to see what the Iranian people decide," Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said.

The White House released a two-sentence statement praising "the vigorous debate and enthusiasm that this election generated, particularly among young Iranians," but it expressed concern about "reports of irregularities," the Associated Press reported.

In Tehran, Mousavi's whereabouts were unknown. Reporters on their way to a news conference by the former candidate were stopped by security personnel, who said the meeting had been canceled. Several journalists were beaten.

In his speech from the garden of the presidential palace, Ahmadinejad, who campaigned as a champion of the working class, lauded the high turnout in the voting, which he described as free and fair.

"There were two options," he said. "Either to return to the old days or continue our leap forward towards high peaks . . . and progress. Fortunately, the people voted for that last option." He said the Iranian people had chosen a program over a personality, and he promised to continue his policies "only with more energy." He also attacked foreign media coverage of the campaign, saying "they have launched the heaviest propaganda and psychological war against the Iranian nation."

Mousavi, who had said on Friday that he won, posted a statement on his Web site rejecting the vote tally as rigged.

"I'm warning that I won't surrender to this manipulation," he said. "The outcome of what we've seen from the performance of officials . . . is nothing but shaking the pillars of the Islamic Republic of Iran's sacred system and governance of lies and dictatorship."

He warned that "people won't respect those who take power through fraud." The headline on the Web site declared, "I won't give in to this dangerous manipulation," the AP reported.

Mousavi appealed to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, to intervene. But Khamenei had already issued a televised statement that declared Ahmadinejad the victor, and he appealed to Iranians and the defeated candidates to support the president. Khamenei's statement made it unlikely the election results will be overturned.

In his address, Ahmadinejad criticized his opponents, particularly the influential clerics and former officials behind Mousavi who have ties to the 1979 Islamic revolution. He said it did not matter what they had done at the time of the revolution. "It matters what they do now," he insisted, suggesting that his opponents were not working for the people.

Tensions enveloped Tehran early Saturday after Ahmadinejad had been declared the victor. Youths, families and young women in traditional black chadors gathered around the heavily fortified Interior Ministry, where the votes had been counted.

Fights erupted in several locations across Tehran soon after Khamenei's televised statement.

On Mottahari Street, protesters set three buses on fire. Riot police appeared in full protective clothing and helmets, wielding batons as they raced through the streets in two-man teams on red motorcycles. Others stood in lines between three burned city buses.

Hundreds of protesters rained stones at the police. Thick black smoke filled the air. Loud thuds could be heard in the distance.

"We want freedom!" protesters shouted. Many covered their faces with green cloth, the color of their candidate, Mousavi. About a dozen ran after someone they thought was an undercover policeman. Dressed in a checkered shirt, wearing a backpack, he had stood between the mostly younger protesters, trying to film them.

"You are without honor!" two girls covered in traditional chadors shouted at police.

Traffic sign poles that had been ripped from the ground lined the streets. "Fight them!" one man shouted. "Death to the dictatorship!" others yelled as they ran toward the riot police.

In other locations, demonstrators threw policemen to the ground, who were then beaten and kicked by bystanders. "They have insulted us with this result," said Mehrdad, a student who refused to give his family name. "We want Mousavi," the men around him said.

"Commando troops are beating the people. I even saw they beat an old lady," said Morteza Alviri, a former major from Tehran, now a campaign official for Mehdi Karroubi, a former candidate. He was trapped in his car by the protests and spoke by phone. "They were beating her to a pulp," he shouted.

The demonstrations continued into Saturday night, with riot police receiving support from Iran's voluntary paramilitary force, the baseej.

Ahmad Zeidabadi, a political dissident, was arrested Saturday evening, his wife, Mandieh Mohammadi, confirmed. There were reports that 11 other prominent opponents were also arrested. Mobile telephones services were cut and social network sites Facebook and Twitter were filtered. Internet connections as a whole were down part of Saturday. Iranian media remained silent on the riots. State television showed voters saying it was time to move forward and accept the result.

Mousavi was not seen Saturday. In the afternoon, Ali Reza Adeli, a senior official in Mousavi's campaign, denied reports that his candidate was under house arrest. Zahra Rahnavard, Mousavi's wife, told the BBC by phone that she and her husband will continue to fight to achieve the "rights of Iranian voters."

Ahmadinejad announced a "victory party" on Sunday at a central square that Mousavi supporters used in recent weeks to stage their election rallies.

"We are hopeful," the president said during his speech. "Now it's time to move on and continue to build our great Iran."

June 16, 2009, Tuesday

Was Iran's election rigged? Here's what is known so far.

BYLINE: Scott Peterson Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor SECTION: WORLD; Pg. 6

In the biggest presidential election turnout in the history of the Islamic Republic, some 85 percent of Iran's electorate went to the polls last Friday and gave incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad a landslide victory.

Or did they?

Defeated challenger Mir Hossein Mousavi claims that the official result of 62.6 percent for Mr. Ahmadinejad and just 33.7 percent for him was a "dangerous charade," and has called for a new election. His newspaper, Kalameh Sabz, reported that more than 10 million votes were missing personal identification numbers that made the votes untraceable. He also says some polling stations closed prematurely, preventing some voters from casting ballots.

Many others also suspect the legitimacy of the vote, for a number of reasons: Results from 39.2 million handwritten ballots came much more swiftly than in previous votes, emerging within hours.

Detailed election data typically released has not been made public. Iran's Supreme Leader sanctioned Ahmadinejad's victory after a day, instead of the customary three.

Ahmadinejad made a surprisingly strong showing in wealthier cities, where he is known to have less support, and in the ethnic strongholds of his rivals. Results from cities and rural areas normally vary, but this time were remarkably consistent.

Farideh Farhi of the University of Hawaii, whose decades of studying Iran has included poring over data from Iranian elections, says the result was "pulled out of a hat." Here's why.

Monitor: How does this election compare to past votes in Iran?

Ms. Farhi: My personal feeling is that Ahmadinejad could not have gotten anything more than 10 million. And I really do have the data from previous elections, each district, how they voted, each province, to make comparisons with these numbers that the Ministry of Interior have come out.

I am convinced that they just pulled it out of their hats. They certainly didn't pull it out of ballot [boxes] or even stuffed ballots, they just made up numbers and are putting it out. It just doesn't make sense.

I do take the numbers of the Interior Ministry very seriously. I pore over them every election. I did it last time in the parliamentary election, to determine the orientations and what they mean. I always do that.

In this election, I am not even going to spend time on this, because of all the [problems].
Monitor: Weren't there party monitors at the polling stations, to watch the count?

Farhi: There were party monitors, and the boxes were all counted, and there were records made, and the information was relayed to the Interior Ministry on a piecemeal basis.

But at one point, immediately after the polls were closed, a very few people, without the presence of any monitoring mechanism, started giving out these numbers. And that's why I think this was brazen manipulation.

It wasn't that they only wanted Ahmadinejad to win. They also wanted to make a case that we can do anything we want to do. And they were, I argue, very much interested in demoralizing this 20 to 30 percent extra voters that are coming in.

They simply are not interested in these people continuing to be interested in politics in Iran. They want them to become demoralized and cynical, because their participation in the Iranian electoral process is extremely destructive for the [Islamic] system ...

What they have not counted on, of course, is a group of people that they essentially think of, for lack of a better word, Westernized wishy-washy liberals, who never stand for anything, would actually be upset that this election was stolen in such a brazen way.

They assumed: 'Ah, you know, we go into the streets, we yell at them, and a couple of shots and they go home and close their doors.'

They knew that they were a minority, and that's why they tried to pull this off. They thought they could bully people, through violence. And they may ultimately be correct. But it seems they have underestimated, not only the crowds, but Mr. Mousavi.

Other red flags

Analysts expected a closer race, if not a reverse of that result, after a final surge in cities across Iran galvanized a large anti-Ahmadinejad vote.

Secret Iranian government polls reported by Newsweek earlier this month estimated that Mousavi would win 16 to 18 million votes, and Ahmadinejad just 6 to 8 million. Those polls found that even the Revolutionary Guard and Iran's "vast intelligence apparatus seem to have come around to this position: a large majority of them also plan to vote for Mousavi," Newsweek reported.

Earlier polls appeared to indicate a stronger showing for Ahmadinejad, who - though under fire for poor economic performance, a surge of inflation, and unemployment - had made 60 visits to Iran's provinces handing out cash and development projects.

The final "official" figures, however, gave Ahmadinejad 24.5 million votes, and Mousavi 13.2 million. That result was a shock for many Iranians and analysts.

The powerful Guardian Council will now be investigating irregularities. Daily protests, riots, and violence have marred the aftermath, and Iran's supreme religious leader Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei - who had very quickly pronounced Ahmadinejad's victory "divine" - on Tuesday called for national unity.

Was Iran's election rigged? Here's what is known so far.

But could there have been the widespread fraud? And what does the perception of a stolen vote mean for the hundreds of thousands of Mousavi supporters - and tens of thousands of Ahmadinejad loyalists - who have taken to the streets?

Farhi says of the 11 million new Iranian voters, she "simply, simply cannot believe" that Ahmadinejad could have won 8 million of them.

"The history of the Islamic Republic is that they never vote for status quo, they always vote for change," says Farhi. "I know people who entered this electoral process, who never voted in the Islamic Republic, and they came in and voted simply against Ahmadinejad."*

June 18, 2009 Thursday Late Edition - Final

Stark Images of the Turmoil in Iran, Uploaded to the World on the internet

BYLINE: By BRIAN STELTER and BRAD STONE

SECTION: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 14

A man bled to death on a street in Tehran on Monday. As one bystander tenderly held the man's head, five others held out their cameras.

They captured photos and videos of the man, and of the blood that stained his white shirt. On Wednesday afternoon, an anonymous individual uploaded the disturbing video to YouTube, where it was viewed by thousands and shared by bloggers.

"This is absolutely despicable," wrote one of those commenting on the YouTube video, urging the protesters to stay active. "The rest of the world is watching and cheering you on."

Via the internet, the world has received unprecedented looks at the continuing unrest in Iran. As foreign journalists are forced to leave Tehran and others are essentially confined to their hotel rooms, news organizations are looking more and more to the Iranians themselves to provide the news, or at least the pictures.

Dozens of videos of the sometimes violent protests by opponents of the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, have appeared on YouTube and other sites in the days following last Friday's presidential election, provided by Iranians eager to circumvent the shroud of censorship their government was trying to place over the unfolding events. On Wednesday, amateur videos of an opposition rally were one of the primary sources of television pictures from Tehran. Another video showed a protest inside a Tehran train station.

YouTube said it had relaxed its usual restrictions on violent videos to allow the images from Iran to reach the rest of the world.

"In general, we do not allow graphic or gratuitous violence on YouTube," the company said in a statement. "However, we make exceptions for videos that have educational, documentary, or scientific value. The limitations being placed on mainstream media reporting from within Iran make it even more important that citizens in Iran be able to use YouTube to capture their experiences for the world to see." But the Iranian government continued to try to restrict Web communications. On Wednesday, Iran's Revolutionary Guard warned that protesters trying to stoke tensions using internet sites like Twitter would be subject to retribution.

"We warn those who propagate riots and spread rumors that our legal action against them will cost them dearly," a statement from the military force said.

At the same time, the opposition candidate Mir Hussein Moussavi was using his public profile page on Facebook to organize protests scheduled for Thursday.

Meanwhile, the Iranian visas of many visiting journalists have expired, meaning that the corps of international reporters in the country is shrinking. Newspapers and television news networks are increasingly supplementing their on-the-ground reporting with video images, with frequent caveats that their authenticity cannot be verified.

On Wednesday, CNN frequently showed amateur videos, with a graphic that labeled them "unverified material." It showed a YouTube video of the aftermath of an apparent raid at Tehran University. The video showed rooms that appeared to have been burned extensively.

It is unclear how the gripping videos are being uploaded, given the restrictions on internet access within Iran. Behind the scenes, a sophisticated cat and mouse game is playing out, with the Iranian government trying to thwart free internet communications, and an informal coalition of Iranian protesters and their sympathizers trying to keep the floodgates open to data.

Throughout the week, supporters of the protesters around the world had been making their own computers available to Iranians who wanted to evade government censors.

These people have been publishing the IP addresses of their computers to public forums like Twitter -- offering them as so-called proxy servers.

Greg Walton, founder of Psiphon, a provider of Web proxy services, said the continued internet activity from Iran was a testament to the durability of the internet and the commitment of Iranians to get their story out despite the government crackdown.

"Information is still coming out of Iran," he said. "Twitter is still buzzing from people giving live updates from the street, and YouTube is full of live videos testifying to the brutality of the regime's crackdown. The internet is fragile but still operational."

Christiane Amanpour, CNN's chief international correspondent and a native of Iran, arrived back in London on Tuesday after her one-week Iranian visa expired. While CNN still has personnel in Tehran, Ms. Amanpour expects a heavier emphasis on amateur video.

"You can't keep any of this news down anymore, and that's a huge change from the past," she said in an interview. "The process of getting the word out is totally democratized."

June 18, 2009 Thursday Late Edition - Final

Rallying Iran: Time Tempers a Challenger Forged in Revolution BYLINE: By ROBERT F. WORTH; Nazila Fathi contributed reporting.

SECTION: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

His followers have begun calling him "the Gandhi of Iran." His image is carried aloft in the vast opposition demonstrations that have shaken Iran in recent days, his name chanted in rhyming verses that invoke Islam's most sacred martyrs.

Mir Hussein Moussavi has become the public face of the movement, the man the protesters consider the true winner of the disputed presidential election.

But he is in some ways an accidental leader, a moderate figure anointed at the last minute to represent a popular upwelling against the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. He is far from being a liberal in the Western sense, and it is not yet clear how far he will be willing to go in defending the broad democratic hopes he has come to embody.

Mr. Moussavi, 67, is an insider who has moved toward opposition, and his motives for doing so remain murky. He was close to the founder of Iran's Islamic Revolution but is at odds with the current supreme leader. Some prominent figures have rallied to his cause, including a former president, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. So it is not clear how much this battle reflects a popular resistance to Mr. Ahmadinejad's hard-line policies, and how much is about a struggle for power.

Mr. Moussavi and his wife, who played a prominent role in his campaign, have been under enormous pressure to accept the election results, said a close relative who spoke on the condition of anonymity. The relative did not specify what kind of pressure.

"They are both being very courageous and are expecting the pressure to increase," said the relative. "Mr. Moussavi says he has taken a path that has no return and he is ready to make sacrifices."

Mr. Moussavi began his political career as a hard-liner and a favorite of the revolution's architect, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Although he has long had an adversarial relationship with Iran's current supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, his insider status makes him loath to mount a real challenge to the core institutions of the Islamic republic. He was an early supporter of Iran's nuclear program, and as prime minister in the 1980s he approved Iran's purchase of centrifuges on the nuclear black market, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Yet like many founding figures of the revolution, he has come to believe that the incendiary radicalism of the revolution's early days must be tempered in an era of peace and state-building, those who know him say. Some have seen a symbolic meaning in his decision to make Monday's vast demonstration in Tehran a march from Enghelab (revolution) Square to Azadi (freedom) Square.

"He is a hybrid child of the revolution," said Shahram Kholdi, a lecturer at the University of Manchester who has written about Mr. Moussavi's political evolution. "He is committed to Islamic principles but has liberal aspirations."

In recent days, Mr. Moussavi has been pushed inexorably toward a confrontation that carries terrible risks for both sides. If the authorities use force on a major scale to quell the protests, it could crush the movement. It could also generate martyrs and deeper public anger, swelling the demonstrations into a broader threat to the system Mr. Moussavi hopes to preserve.

The steadiness he has shown since the election results were announced Saturday has helped solidify his role as a leader and has heartened his followers.

"The demands of the people are the most important goal of the Islamic republic," Mr. Moussavi said as the polls closed on Friday night, in what was widely seen as a shot across the bow of Iran's clerical leadership, and a warning that he would take his case public in the event of voter fraud.

Mr. Moussavi is in some ways an unlikely figurehead. Calm and deliberate, he has a soporific speaking manner, and even his most ardent defenders grant that he has little charisma. He was out of public life for two decades, a soft-spoken architect who loves to watch movies at home and was overshadowed for years by his distinguished wife, Zahra Rahnavard, a professor and artist.

Yet many also describe him as a resolute figure whose hard experience as Iran's prime minister during the 1980s taught him not to fear risky decisions.

"He was an artist, a university professor with no experience, but he managed under harsh conditions to run a country of 35 million people through trial and error," said Muhammad Atrianfar, who served as deputy interior minister under Mr. Moussavi, and later became a journalist. "The biggest result for him was the self-confidence he gained from that."

As prime minister, he often clashed with Ayatollah Khamenei, who was president at the time. The fights were mostly over economic issues; Mr. Moussavi favored greater state control over the wartime economy, and Ayatollah Khamenei argued for less regulation. The president was more moderate on some issues, and unlike Mr. Moussavi, sometimes drew rebukes from Ayatollah Khomeini, then the supreme leader. In that sense they have switched positions, but the animus between them remains.

After stepping down in 1989, Mr. Moussavi kept a hand in politics, serving on Iran's Expediency Council. But most of his time was devoted to architecture and painting. His chief influences include the Italian architect Renzo Piano, said a close relative.

"He takes some elements of modern Japanese architecture, and American postmodern, and then puts them in the context of Iranian architecture," the relative said.

Although he is deeply religious, Mr. Moussavi (the name is also often rendered in English as Mir Hossein Mousavi) appears to hold relatively liberal social views. His wife is a well-known professor of political science who has campaigned alongside him, often giving speeches and news conferences independently. When they were younger, he was sometimes introduced as "the husband of Zahra Rahnavard." His wife promised

that if he was elected, he would advance women's rights and appoint "at least two or three women" to the cabinet.

His oldest daughter is a nuclear physicist. The youngest prefers not to wear the Islamic chador, and her parents do not mind, the relative said. "There has never been any compulsion in the family," the relative added.

In recent years, Mr. Moussavi was deeply dismayed by the excesses of the morality police and by the government's decisions to shut down newspapers, his relative said.

He decided to run for president earlier this year to save Iran from what he said were Mr. Ahmadinejad's "destructive" policies. But it was not until a few weeks ago that a popular movement began to build behind him. As the campaign drew to a close, Mr. Moussavi began answering the president's rhetorical broadsides with some strong language of his own.

"When the president lies, nobody confronts him," Mr. Moussavi said during his final debate appearance. "I'm a revolutionary and I'm speaking out against the situation he has created. He has filled the country with lies and hypocrisy. I'm not frightened to speak out. Remember that."

For a long time, he was compared unfavorably to Mohammad Khatami, the charismatic reformist cleric who was president from 1997 to 2005. But many now say that during the recent protests, Mr. Moussavi held firm against the government in ways Mr. Khatami never would have.

"He's not as open-minded as Khatami," said Nasser Hadian, a political analyst. "But he's more of a man of action."

June 17, 2009 Wednesday Regional Edition

Tehran Drama;

The U.S. stake in Iran's political crisis. Pg. A20

FOR THE UNITED States, popular revolt in hostile, authoritarian states poses a special dilemma. Americans instinctively sympathize with those struggling for freedom; their triumph promises a new regime both more democratic and friendlier to us. Yet, unless the United States is prepared to risk direct intervention, it has no ready means to ensure their victory. If Washington denounces a tyrant's repression too loudly, it risks charges of imperialist meddling; a tepid response undercuts this country's moral standing. There may be a need to do business with whatever government emerges. From the crushing of Hungary's revolt in 1956 to the Prague Spring of 1968 to Tiananmen Square in 1989 to Burma in 2007, U.S. policymakers have found it difficult if not impossible to strike a satisfactory balance.

Now comes Tehran 2009. In the greatest display of popular protest in Iran since that country's 1979 revolution, hundreds of thousands of people have poured into the streets to protest the allegedly fraudulent reelection of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. They have been met with gunfire and beatings; seven people have been confirmed dead so far. The Obama administration has tried to register revulsion without upsetting hoped-for talks about Iran's nuclear weapons program and its support for terrorism. Instead of a full-throated denunciation of fraud and repression, Mr. Obama waited a couple of

days before making calibrated remarks in which he offered respect for Iranian sovereignty but added that the regime's violent response "is a concern to me and . . . to the American people."

We can understand the reluctance to sound a tougher note. The United States has few ways to help the opposition -- and it may have to deal with whoever wins the current struggle. But, however the crisis ends, it may require rethinking of the administration's Iran strategy. There is a connection between the regime's internal character and its external conduct. To be sure, the Iranian opposition seems to be trying to change the course of the Islamic Republic rather than overthrow it; Mr. Ahmadinejad's opponent, Mir Hossein Mousavi, is a veteran of the 1979 revolution who promised a restoration to its true principles. Neither man is a purely independent actor. Mr. Ahmadinejad fronts for the country's true powers, supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the Revolutionary Guards; Mr. Mousavi represents a rival faction centered on former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Still, many Iranians saw Mr. Mousavi, who has denounced Mr. Ahmadinejad's rhetoric, as an alternative to the economic decay and international isolation wrought by the current regime. Mr. Mousavi is, potentially at least, a more reasonable negotiating partner for the United States. If Mr. Mousavi succeeds in getting a new election and ultimately wins the presidency, Mr. Khamenei's power would be shaken and new opportunities for engagement with the West might open up. But if Mr. Khamenei imposes Mr. Ahmadinejad for another four years, it could portend an even more belligerent Iranian foreign policy. By crushing Mr. Mousavi and the movement he has inspired, the supreme leader would show that he is determined to hold on to power -- and, probably, to terrorism and nuclear ambitions -- no matter what anyone thinks, even his own people.

Daily News (New York)

June 16, 2009 Tuesday SPORTS FINAL EDITION

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IRE IN IRAN SECTION: EDITORIAL; Pg. 24

Showing inspiring courage, hundreds of thousands flowed onto Tehran streets yesterday in a rage over the preposterous result of Friday's election.

The world must stand with these brave souls, who prove that not even a repressive and wrathful regime can silence the will of the people.

With each and every protest, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's claim to legitimacy becomes increasingly tenuous. Not since the uprisings that toppled the shah has there been a show of such discontent in Tehran.

And it is astonishing both that the Iranian militia opened fire, killing one demonstrator, and that Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei called for probing the election results.

Not that anyone would vest a shred of credibility in such a probe, but here at least was a sign that even the ironfisted clerics go shaky in the face of hundreds of thousands of massed and furious citizens.

Stalwart, too, was former Prime Minister Mir Hossein Mousavi, from whom the election appears to have been stolen. Standing before the crowds, Mousavi declared:

"I am ready to pay any price to carry the ideals of you, dear people. We must regain our trampled rights and stop this lie and stand up to fraud."

This watershed in Iranian history signals a dramatic split between the people and the clerical rulers who determine policy and who screen presidential candidates for orthodoxy.

By the looks of it, huge numbers of Iranians have had their fill of the morality police and of a stagnant economy. Which is not to say Mousavi would be more open to abandoning the pursuit of nuclear weaponry, the export of terror or the destruction of Israel.

But they're demanding a semblance of democracy - a good thing.

Iran's fishy election results SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 10A LENGTH: 425 words

21 of 25 DOCUMENTS USA TODAY

June 15, 2009 Monday FINAL EDITION

Even dictatorships like to hold elections, especially ones where they control the outcome, to give themselves veneers of legitimacy and popular support. The problem occurs when the voters don't realize they are supposed to be actors in a charade. Such appears to be the case in Iran, where the official presidential election results show a landslide victory for incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad over chief rival Mir Hossein Mousavi.

The result is highly suspicious. Is it really possible that in a record voter turnout of 85%, many of them infuriated with Ahmadinejad, that he won 63%-34%? How can it be that major opposition candidates lost by wide margins even in their hometowns? Why were no international monitors allowed to oversee the returns?

On Sunday, Ahmadinejad compared the election to a soccer match and the continuing street protests to post-game passions. Yes, it was like a soccer match -- one in which the home team picked the referees and let them keep score. In this case, the outcome looks to have been preordained by the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and the Ahmadinejad-controlled Interior Ministry.

In that respect, Iran's elections share something with its nuclear program: The Iranian regime says "trust us." The best response to both assertions is verification.

If the election were as fair as Ahmadinejad insisted, why shut down internet and cellphone communications? Why detain people associated with Mousavi's campaign? Why not have an official recount with all parties and outside observers present?

If the election results stand, their dubious legitimacy and the continued presence of Ahmadinejad -- a Holocaust-denying hard-liner -- make U.S. engagement efforts with Iran more difficult and threaten to further destabilize the region. In the short run, his re-election decreases Iranians' hopes of more freedom and increases the prospect Israel might consider a pre-emptive strike on Iran's nuclear facilities.

But the passions stirred by the election and expressed in the civil unrest also raise intriguing questions about the mullahs' hold on power. Most Iranians are young. They face high unemployment, a calcified bureaucracy and a weak economy. They are a time bomb for Iran's religious dictators. The parallels between the present outpouring and the 1970s uprisings that brought the mullahs to power and ousted the shah can't be lost on the regime.

If there's a chance to reverse Iran's confrontation with the outside world, much will depend on whether and when this younger generation can gain greater influence.

June 16, 2009 Tuesday Met 2 Edition

A Massive Crowd Defies Ban in Iran; Election Protest Turns Violent at Nightfall

BYLINE: Thomas Erdbrink; Washington Post Foreign Service SECTION: A SECTION; Pg. A01

Hundreds of thousands of Iranians defied a ban by the Interior Ministry and marched through the capital on Monday in support of opposition presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi, posing a rising challenge to the country's ruling clergy over the disputed election.

Though the afternoon march was peaceful and proceeded without police interference, at least one man was killed and several were wounded at nightfall, when members of the Basij, a volunteer militia allied with the government of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, fired from a rooftop into a crowd outside its local headquarters in downtown Tehran.

There were conflicting reports on whether the crowd had threatened to storm the building before the shooting, but the incident ended with angry protesters setting part of the structure and several motorcycles ablaze. Young Basij members on motorcycles have harassed and beaten protesters since Friday's election, in which the government says Ahmadinejad defeated Mousavi by 2 to 1.

The unrest, including scattered reports of violence elsewhere in the country, appears to have unsettled the country's unelected leadership of Islamic clergy. Hours before the march -- the largest unofficial demonstration in Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution -- the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, abruptly reversed course and promised an investigation into allegations of election fraud. Khamenei previously had blessed Ahmadinejad's victory.

"Offenses in elections are not out of the ordinary. We do not want to exaggerate and say that no violation has taken place," a spokesman for the investigating body, the Guardian Council, said on television. "No, humans are involved in this affair, and human beings are not free of faults."

"Bear with us," pleaded the spokesman, Abbas Ali Kadkhodai. "We will investigate and announce the result."

Mousavi, in his first public appearance since the election, told the cheering marchers that he did not put much faith in the independence of the council, a panel of 12 Islamic clerics and jurists selected by Khamenei, the head of the judiciary and Iran's parliament.

"I have appealed to the Guardian Council, but I'm not very optimistic about their judgment," he said. "Many of its members during the election were not impartial and supported the government candidate."

Mousavi added that he was "ready to pay any price" in his fight for an honest election. "I came here to invite everyone to defend their rights calmly," he said as thousands of supporters -- most of them wearing green, the signature color of his campaign -- chanted "Mousavi, we will help you!"

In Washington, President Obama said he was "deeply troubled by the violence" in Iran.

Because no international observers were allowed to monitor the fairness of the election, "I can't state definitively one way or another what happened with respect to the election," Obama said. "But what I can say is that there appears to be a sense on the part of people who were so hopeful and so engaged and so committed to democracy who now feel betrayed. And I think it's important that, moving forward, whatever investigations take place are done in a way that is not resulting in bloodshed and is not resulting in people being stifled in expressing their views."

The march through Tehran began in late afternoon, following hours of tension exacerbated by the government's continued blocking of text-messaging services and Web sites that protesters have used to organize street rallies. On Sunday night, authorities shut off Tehran's cellphone system, and Mousavi's wife, Zahra Rahnava, told a gathering of university students that the march had been canceled because organizers expected Basij and riot police to use extreme force against the demonstrators.

Nevertheless, ardent Mousavi supporters continued Monday with plans to usurp the symbols of the 1979 Islamic revolution by parading from Revolution Square to Freedom Square, two focal points of the uprising that toppled the shah. In the early afternoon, Mousavi issued a statement saying he personally would take part to "calm the situation down."

Around 4 p.m., as the march got underway, dark clouds, highly unusual in this season, blocked the summer sun.

"Let's go, move!" organizers shouted as the first few rows of young men wearing green headbands and young women holding hands stepped forward, shouting in Farsi that "by the end of the week, Ahmadinejad will be gone."

When riot police did not materialize, the broad avenue between the two central squares quickly filled with people, including some families with children. "I'll fight, I'll die, but I'll get my vote back," a group of young men shouted, flashing the V-for-victory sign. Many wore green ribbons or wristbands.

"We are not weeds!" they chanted, a caustic reference to Ahmadinejad's statement over the weekend that the protesters were just "a few weeds that are making problems."

Climbing over fences, surging down Azadi ("Freedom") Street, the march became a sea of people eight across and three to five miles long, surely numbering in the hundreds of thousands and, by some unofficial estimates, over 1 million. The crowds grew ecstatic

when news spread from row to row that Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, another opposition presidential candidate, had arrived.

"Tomorrow we will strike!" the marchers called as they walked through an underpass, their voices and clapping echoing against the ceiling.

Protests also were reported in other cities. Police clashed with pro-Mousavi demonstrators in Isfahan and Mashad, and authorities fired in the air to disperse protesters in Shiraz, the Associated Press reported.

Besides ordering the investigation into allegations of election fraud, Khamenei also sought to calm the opposition by meeting with Mousavi before the march. The supreme leader told Mousavi that "enemies of the Islamic revolution" were behind the two nights of rioting and chaos on the streets of Tehran that followed the election. But "you are of a different kind from these people, and it is necessary to follow up things with composure and calm," Khamenei said, according to the official Islamic Republic News Agency.

Ahmadinejad, meanwhile, kept a low profile but stayed in Tehran, postponing a scheduled trip to Moscow.

It was unclear how easily Iran's leaders could alter the election result. Khamenei and some other leading clergy have already congratulated Ahmadinejad on his victory, and overturning the official results would not only embarrass the government but also might diminish the authority of a wide number of influential clerics, political leaders and military officers who have supported Ahmadinejad since he won a surprise election victory in 2005.

Yet if Ahmadinejad stays on, his legitimacy may continue to be questioned. The head of Iran's parliament, Ali Larijani, also announced the formation on Monday of a committee to look into the election results. He complained of "reports received by the parliament on attacks against the people," an apparent reference to the activities of the Basij and others over the weekend, when vigilantes attacked the dormitories of Tehran University, ransacking rooms and beating students. Farhad Rahbar, the head of the university, vowed Monday to punish the perpetrators.

June 19, 2009

Confrontation Builds in Iran With No Clear Exit

BYLINE: By NAZILA FATHI and MICHAEL SLACKMAN; Nazila Fathi reported from Tehran, and Michael Slackman from Cairo. Alan Cowell contributed reporting from Paris, and Neil MacFarquhar and Sharon Otterman from New York. Pg. 1

As another day of defiance, concessions and ominous threats transfixed Iran's capital, it was increasingly apparent on Thursday that there was no clear path out of a deepening confrontation that has posed the most serious challenge to the Islamic republic in its 30-year history.

The situation had all the hallmarks of a standoff. Hundreds of thousands of silent protesters flooded into the streets. They roared a welcome to their champion, Mir

Hussein Moussavi, the opposition candidate for president whose reported defeat by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Friday's election touched off the crisis.

Iran's leaders offered conciliation, while simultaneously wielding repression.

With one hand, the government offered to talk to the opposition, inviting the three losing presidential candidates to meet with the powerful Guardian Council. While that reflected a continuing retreat from the initial insistence by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, that the election results were accurate, many Iranians saw the offer as an effort to buy time and shield the ayatollah from public accountability. The Guardian Council is loyal to him.

Even Mr. Ahmadinejad, who has kept a defiant if low profile, made an unusual public concession. After insulting the huge crowds that poured into the street by dismissing them as "dust," the president issued a statement on state television, according to The Associated Press:

"I only addressed those who made riot, set fires and attacked people. Every single Iranian is valuable. The government is at everyone's service. We like everyone."

With the other hand, the government continued to arrest prominent reformers, limit internet access and pressure reporters to stay off the streets, and security officials signaled their waning tolerance.

It was not clear whether Iran's government, made up of fractious power centers, was pursuing a calculated strategy or if the moves reflected internal disagreements, or even uncertainty.

"Most analysts believe the outreach is just to kill time and extend this while they search for a solution, although there doesn't seem to be any," said a political analyst in Tehran, who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

"This will only be a postponement of the inevitable, which is indeed a brutal crackdown."

Important clues could emerge Friday, when Ayatollah Khamenei is scheduled to lead the national prayer service from Tehran University. Political analysts said that they hope that the leader will reveal his ultimate intent, indicating a willingness either to appease the opposition, or to demand an end to protests.

There was some speculation among Iran experts in the United States of a possible compromise, with reformers being given positions in a new government. But it was unclear if that would be acceptable to the opposition, which understands that in Iran, positions do not necessarily come with power. For eight years, the reform president, Mohammad Khatami, saw his program stifled by the conservative interests of the religious leadership and its allies.

"There could have been a very easy political solution, and that would have been nullifying the election results, but they have refused to do that so far," said Mashallah Shamsolvaezin, a political analyst in Tehran. "Postponing the resolution means they want the military to find the solutions," he said, referring to the Revolutionary Guards, not the army.

On Thursday the opposition remained firm in its demand for a new election, and it was not immediately clear how it would respond to the council's offer of talks, which could take place as early as Saturday. The meeting would include Mr. Moussavi and two other candidates, Mehdi Karroubi and Mohsen Rezai.

Mr. Moussavi has indicated in the past that he does not trust the Guardian Council because some of its members campaigned on behalf of Mr. Ahmadinejad before the election. State radio said the Guardian Council had begun a "careful examination" of 646 complaints about the vote.

Nor was it clear what role was being played by a former Iranian president, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who supported Mr. Moussavi and is in a power struggle with Ayatollah Khamenei. Today there were unconfirmed reports that two of his children had been banned from leaving the country because of their role in helping the protesters.

The path to resolution is so cloudy because Iran's political system is not based on coalitions or compromise. It has evolved into a winner-take-all contest, with each side holding competing views of what kind of country Iran should be: one in continuing opposition to the West, where individual freedoms are tightly restricted, or one more open to engagement with the world and greater civil liberties.

"We don't have a consensus on who we are," said a political scientist with close ties to Iran's leadership. "Here we have ideology and ways of thinking that have nothing in common."

In Iran's theocracy, the supreme leader has vast power over the military, the judiciary and broadcasting. He also appoints 6 of the 12 jurists on the Guardian Council, which oversees Parliament and certifies election results, and so he exerts a profound influence on the organization.

The president and Parliament are elected by the people, and in recent years, popular demands have grown for social freedoms and economic gains. That pressure was easier to resist with Mr. Ahmadinejad as president, because it meant that conservatives controlled all the levers of power.

If Mr. Moussavi had been declared the winner, his victory would have broken the hard-liners' monopoly, and that possibility was seen as a threat to the group's material interests and its ideological goals.

Not only would the conservatives have lost control of important ministries, but also the new government might have been more amenable to talking with the United States. Opposition to the United States is a central component of the leadership's identity, and legitimacy.

As the streets filled with protesters for yet another day, Ayatollah Khamenei appeared to be arguing that even in this crisis, everyone supported the system over which he holds ultimate power. "The friendly atmosphere that existed before the elections should not turn into an atmosphere of conflict and confrontation after the vote because both groups of voters believe in the system," he was quoted as saying in Iran Daily, an English-language newspaper.

But the streets told a different story -- not one of confidence in the system, but rage. Starting about 4 p.m., thousands of people began gathering in Imam Khomeini Square in Tehran. The crowd quickly grew to hundreds of thousands, stretching beyond the borders of the square, one of the city's largest, and filling the surrounding streets, witnesses said.

The protest seemed to grow larger than demonstrations on previous days. But it was not as big as Monday's rally; that outpouring involved three million people, Tehran's mayor said Thursday, making it the largest protest since the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

"These protests are nothing short of magnificent, hundreds of thousands of people marching in peace and total silence," said a witness to the events in Tehran.

At one point, a car drove into the thick of the demonstration, and Mr. Moussavi, wearing a black shirt and suit, and his wife stood on top of their vehicle to roars of approval.

As on previous days, the police kept to the sidelines. Although vigilante forces appeared, there were no immediate reports of clashes.

In a statement on his Web site, Mr. Moussavi had called on his followers to mourn those protesters killed in clashes with paramilitary forces over the past several days, and protesters responded by wearing black and carrying black candles. Many held up their fingers in a V-sign for victory.

Meanwhile, some protesters expressed growing fears that the government's tolerance of the persistent protests would soon wear out.

The Iranian authorities reported that at least seven people were killed in Tehran in the first days of unrest after the election. Student activists say seven more people have died since then in attacks by government militia on student dormitories in Tehran and in the southern city of Shiraz.

Iranian Web sites have carried reports of violence in some other cities, but given the press restrictions now in place, those could not be verified.

According to news reports and a human rights group, the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, the latest detainees include Ibrahim Yazdi, a former foreign minister who leads an organization called Freedom Movement.

Amnesty International issued a tally of detentions, saying 17 people had been detained in the northwestern city of Tabriz. It added that students appeared to have been "particularly targeted."

The opposition signaled that it would not let up the pressure. State television's Press TV reported on its Web site that Mr. Moussavi was already planning to address a rally on Saturday, called by a group of reformist clerics loyal to Mr. Khatami, the former president.

June 25, 2009 Thursday Suburban Edition

Hope Fades but Anger Is Alive as Iran's Rulers Crack Down BYLINE: Thomas Erdbrink; Washington Post Foreign Service, p. A10

Standing in Tehran's grand Vali-e Asr Street amid a sea of green, the opposition's signature color, Mehrdad was sure Iran was on the verge of a change for the better.

He pulled out his cellphone and started filming the crowd around him: the girls in green head scarves, the ladies in traditional chador with green bands around their wrists, the middle-aged couple holding hands as they marched. All were supporters of Mir Hossein Mousavi, the man Mehrdad was certain would be the next president of Iran.

That was two weeks ago. Now everything has changed.

"I deleted those movies," said Mehrdad, a tall 31-year-old who, like others interviewed for this article, spoke on the condition that his last name not be used. "What if they find those on my cellphone? I could be arrested. Actually, I could be arrested even for wearing green."

Mehrdad is one among millions, part of a movement that has gone in a matter of days from the exultant hope of reforming Iran's government to the disappointment of facing down leaders who have labeled them terrorists and hooligans. For now, at least, the millions are largely silenced. Only small groups venture out to demonstrate, and when they do, they are suppressed violently.

But their anger remains.

In the weeks before the June 12 presidential election, they danced in the streets. After the disputed results were announced, they gathered by the hundreds of thousands in the largest spontaneous demonstrations since the Islamic revolution of 1979. They wanted the result annulled and the vote rerun. But their gatherings were crushed after Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei deemed them illegal. At least 17 people have been killed, and there were reports Wednesday of more violent clashes.

Iranian leaders and state media have accused Western countries, unpopular opposition groups and foreign journalists of starting the riots that followed some of the demonstrations.

Mehrdad, a manager at an import company in Tehran, said he saw the election as an opportunity to move Iran toward a brighter future.

"We thought that with Mousavi as president, Iran would take a step toward democracy and freedom," he recalled. He had spent weeks coaxing people on the street, in supermarkets and at family gatherings to vote for the relatively unknown Mousavi, a former prime minister. "Here in Tehran, people felt we had a choice in this election. That empowered us."

With the official results -- a disputed landslide victory for incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad -- came the blow, felt most keenly among urban dwellers, that would send Mehrdad back to the streets, this time with a stone in his hand aimed at the Basij, Iran's volunteer paramilitary force. "You could see the amazement and disappointment on people's faces," he said. "Nobody believed the results."

After election day, Mehrdad stepped out of his gym, where he had gone to work off his anger, to find the streets full of people lighting fires and throwing stones at panicking security forces. "Our streets had turned into Palestine," he said. "I'm a peaceful

person, but that night I threw stones, too. They had only used us to legitimize their election of a president who turned out to have been selected. The anger still rages through my body."

When Mousavi asked supporters to join a major rally on June 15, Mehrdad was afraid he would be shot, but he went. Reluctantly approaching the main street from an alley, he said, he was overwhelmed by the crowds. "There were over 2 million people there; they reached as far as the eye could see," he said. " 'This is it,' I said to myself. 'If this continues, the outcome of the election will be altered.' "

Wearing a black shirt and green wristbands, he joined the crowds, raising his fingers in a gesture of peace. "We were not there to change the regime or even the leader; we just wanted to change the outcome of the election," he said. "Of course, the atmosphere became much more tense after that day."

For many protesters, the crackdown meant not knowing the fate of loved ones, as authorities rounded up hundreds of opposition members. Aida, a 22-year-old classical music student, was relieved Tuesday to hear that the name of her brother, who had been arrested while walking to the bus stop from work, had appeared on a list of prisoners.

Petite and elegant, Aida wears a green head scarf, a color that is almost reason enough to be beaten by security forces. "I wear that color to show that we are still here, that the movement is not dead," she said firmly.

Like many others, she said she thought Mousavi could ignite the process of reforming Iran's political system, possibly taking gradual steps toward a broader democracy and greater civil freedoms. "We were realistic. No one promoted change overnight," she said.

Aida had campaigned for Mousavi in the streets, handing out green ribbons and trying to persuade people to vote for him. For a time, she forgot about her cello, her favorite instrument. "The unity among the people was amazing. I never experienced anything like this in my life," she said. "In the supermarket, people would smile when we spotted one another's green wristbands. Total strangers suddenly understood each other with the wink of an eye."

The first demonstrations that followed the disputed election gave her hope. But then protesters attacked a Basij base, and the Basij opened fire. "It was clear the outcome would not be changed," she said. "I became afraid to go out."

Maysam, a tall, slim 29-year-old whose father was killed in the war with Iraq and had achieved honor as a famous martyr, said he never expected to take to the streets to demonstrate against his own government. "My father died for the Islamic republic," he said. "But if he were alive today, he would fight these people."

When Mousavi asked his supporters to demonstrate on June 15, Maysam told his wife, his mother and his friends to stay home. "I was sure that there would be shooting. So I sat at home. But I couldn't control myself," he recalled. He ran outside, hopped on a motorbike and rode to Azadi Street, the locus of the demonstrations. "I needed to be there."

Despite the reported millions who joined Maysam in that protest, hopes of overturning the election were crushed Friday when Khamenei made clear in a sermon that he would not back down. "The competition is over," he said decisively.

The next day, at least 10 people were killed on the streets, state media reported, blaming "extremists" and "foreigners." Protesters say pro-government forces opened fire. The violence has deterred further large-scale demonstrations.

"I didn't go out anymore. I was sure that people would die," Mehrdad said. "I felt bad not to go, but it was clear that there would be shooting."

Maysam has also stayed home. "We can't stand up to the security forces," he said.

"You can feel the anger," Aida said. "Some are ready to die."

With a demonstration Wednesday dispersed by security forces and lines of communication cut by the government, Mousavi's movement is at a crossroads. Nobody is sure what the next step will be, or whether there will even be a next move. Many speculate that Mousavi is under house arrest, because he has not been heard from in days.

"There is a total media blackout," Maysam said. In recent days, he has been unable to open his e-mail, and text messaging has been disrupted since the election.

Mehrdad was surprised by the reaction of Iran's leaders to the protests. "We were there participating in one of the pillars of the political system, the election. Nobody shouted slogans against the leader. But now people say extreme things," he said. "If there is any upside to this dark period, it is the self-confidence and unity of normal people."

But it is a confidence tinged with deep sadness.

"There is lots of crying going on in Tehran," Aida said.

At night, Mousavi supporters go to their balconies and shout "Allahu akbar," or "God is great," in support of their candidate. But even as they shout, the protesters wonder whether it does any good.

"Our only hope is Mousavi," Maysam said. "But what can he do? Our future is dark. It hurts us to think of it. I'm in pain. I don't know where this will end."

Appendix B

Twitter Data

Dear Iranian People, Mousavi has not left you alone, he has been put under house arrest by Ministry of Intelligence #IranElection 4:37 PM Jun 13th, 2009 via web

Iran's Supreme Leader's official English website: <http://english.khamenei.ir> #Iraelection (via <http://ff.im/485HP>) <http://ff.im/486qy>

@username: Shiraz is burning - <http://tinyurl.com/kprzae> & <http://tinyurl.com/llvk5g> #Iraelection

@username: Photo: Tehran People's rally (Pro Ahmadinejad) today <http://bit.ly/y95pG> & <http://tinyurl.com/kq9zho> #Iraelection Jun 16, 2009

Iran / today / Krimkhan St / protest NOW #Iraelection on Twitpic <http://ree.tw/bzk> (retweeted 131x <http://ree.tw/bzl>) Jun 17, 2009

Iran / today / hafttir Sq / protest NOW #Iraelection on Twitpic <http://ree.tw/bzm> (retweeted 123x <http://ree.tw/bzn>) Jun 17, 2009

@username: ALL internet & mobile networks are cut. We ask everyone in Tehran to go onto their rooftops and shout ALAHO AKBAR in protest #IranElection Jun 13, 2009

@username: RT @username Pictures from today <http://bit.ly/3wDOHT> <http://twitpic.com/7gtaq> <http://twitpic.com/7gt95> #Iraelection (via @username) Jun 15, 2009

@username: RT The Iranian Revolution Must Start Now <http://bit.ly/vkVq5> #Iraelection Jun 20, 2009

Today's march Tehran The numbers! <http://twitpic.com/7mi5l> <http://twitpic.com/7mi3f> <http://twitpic.com/7mi9j> (via @usernamei) #Iraelection "

RT @username: Pictures from today <http://bit.ly/3wDOHT> <http://twitpic.com/7gtaq> <http://twitpic.com/7gt95> #Iraelection Jun 15, 2009

@username: "perhaps a million protesting" <http://bit.ly/QGk19> pic: <http://twitpic.com/7gtbu> #Iraelection #Iran Jun 15, 2009

Yesterday <http://tinyurl.com/lbozp7> & <http://tinyurl.com/lyut5k> #IranElection Stand in #Solidarity -><http://tinyurl.com/nc2nnn> Jun 19, 2009

RT @username Iran Election Whistleblower Killed, From Guardian: <http://bit.ly/3NC7x> <http://bit.ly/12kqL4> #Iraelection

@username Tweeps; you're part of our revolution! keep these websites open <http://bit.ly/12UQW0> & <http://bit.ly/4y3eM> #Iraelection Jun 14, 2009

RT from Iran: <http://twitpic.com/7r4nw> - <http://twitpic.com/7r4pv> - Iran / Tehran / protesters / Topkhone Sq #Iraelection Jun 18, 2009

@username: New YouTube #video — <http://bit.ly/TvILL> & <http://bit.ly/ZOOGK> #IranElection

@username: Pictures from Tehran <http://bit.ly/eTFuZ> & <http://bit.ly/132TNt> #Iraelection Jun 13, 2009

RT proxy list for Iran: <http://bit.ly/KFBtQ> and in Farsi <http://is.gd/136wy> - #IranElection Jun 16, 2009

@username: WARNING: <http://www.mirhoseyn.ir/> & <http://www.mirhoseyn.com/> are fake, DONT join. #IranElection Jun 16, 2009

@username: People in Tehran shout : Down with dictator from their house roof <http://bit.ly/gbVW1> #Iraelection Jun 14, 2009

@username: RT @miki_em: "perhaps a million protesting" <http://bit.ly/QGk19> pic: <http://twitpic.com/7gtbu> #Iraelection #Iran Jun 15, 2009

@username: Check this video out -- protest in Tehran <http://bit.ly/cmGnX> #Iraelection "

RT Iran: People are being shot on streets. <http://ow.ly/eGU3> #Iraelection http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qo8_oBoTX4 Jun 18, 2009

information on using Tor to remain anonymous: <http://www.torproject.org> ... Tor + Wordpress: <http://is.gd/12g1P> #Iraelection Jun 15, 2009

<http://twitpic.com/7c7w5> - she is... #Iraelection Jun 14, 2009

RT from Iran: Check this <http://bit.ly/auv79> and <http://bit.ly/3s9oY4> and <http://bit.ly/PPZiD> they killed people #Iraelection Jun 15, 2009

RT Iran - More vids from today's protests in Tehran <http://is.gd/13IZ5> in front of IRIB building: <http://is.gd/13IZQ> #IranElection 6/16 Jun 17, 2009

@username: <http://twitpic.com/7gkrq> - attacked to university #Iraelection Jun 15, 2009

@username: Check this video out -- Iran <http://bit.ly/1860DA> #Iraelection Jun 14, 2009

@username: <http://twitpic.com/7h2nx> - Iran / today / police & people #IranElection Jun 15, 2009

@username: <http://twitpic.com/7gur5> - Iran / today / Tehran #IranElection Jun 15, 2009

@username: Check this video out -- crime <http://bit.ly/1JsE9K> #Iraelection Jun 18, 2009

RT @username: <http://twitpic.com/7j6ox> - Tehran / yesterday / crime #Irenelection Jun 16, 2009

@username: <http://twitpic.com/7sv7j> - She write: change for Iran #Irenelection Jun 19, 2009

@username: <http://twitpic.com/7fmo8> - Iran is the same as Palestine #Irenelection Jun 15, 2009

@username: <http://twitpic.com/7c6jz> - Iran / Tehran / fire & blood #Irenelection Jun 14, 2009

@username: Check this video out -- university of Tehran <http://bit.ly/noCol> #Irenelection Jun 15, 2009

Dispatch from Tehran: "The police are coming!" <http://tr.im/oMZL> #IranElection Jun 17, 2009

@username: <http://bit.ly/jUY5K> VOTE ... my friends #IranElection Jun 16, 2009

@username: Check this video out -- COME ON MOUSAVI <http://bit.ly/12rrlX> #Irenelection Jun 14, 2009

@username: <http://edition.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2009/news/Iran.election/> check this page #Irenelection Jun 16, 2009

@username: <http://twitpic.com/7gghp> - attack to university of Tehran / crime #Irenelection Jun 15, 2009

@username: Check this video out -- conflict in Shiraz <http://bit.ly/rfRyU> #IranElection Jun 15, 2009

RT Iran: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Mir-Hosseini-Mousavi-/45061919453?ref=mf> - #Irenelection - PLS RT Jun 18, 2009

@username: Check this video out -- conflict in Shiraz <http://bit.ly/rfRyU> #IranElection Jun 15, 2009

@username: <http://twitpic.com/7fb1y> - Police and security forces are beating people #Irenelection Jun 15, 2009

@username: Check this video out -- Iran / last night / <http://bit.ly/148qJe> were is our vote? #IranElection Jun 14, 2009

RT Open Letter to the World from the People of Iran: <http://tinyurl.com/nw95ev> Please RT. #IranElection (via a user) Jun 16, 2009

@username: <http://twitpic.com/7h65h> - Iran / Esfehan / fire / police & people
#Iraelection Jun 15, 2009

@username: Check this video out -- they said: down with dictator <http://bit.ly/1Anz7Q>
#Iraelection Jun 15, 2009

@username: Check this video out -- one person dead in protest in Iran <http://bit.ly/fXdoV> #IranElection Jun 15, 2009

@username: Check this video out -- Iran university/shiraz / tonight <http://bit.ly/MV4Z7>
#Iraelection Jun 14, 2009

@username: #IranElection Mousavi's letter to the Iranian people in English: <http://ow.ly/dWZ8> Jun 13, 2009

@username: Check this video out -- People wounded by police in Tehran <http://bit.ly/45Gxtr> #Iraelection Jun 17, 2009

@username: Guy beaten to death video is up again <http://bit.ly/12oZDT> #Iraelection
Jun 14, 2009

@username: Check this video out -- Mourning gathering in Tehran. <http://bit.ly/LKRzP>
#Iraelection Jun 18, 2009

@username: Check this video out -- shooting to people Azadi Sq <http://bit.ly/mH2JE>
#Iraelection Jun 16, 2009

@username: <http://twitpic.com/7mrcj> - Iran / Karimkhan ST / protest NOW #Iraelection
Jun 17, 2009

@username: <http://twitpic.com/7p8zf> - Tehran / karimkhan St / protest #Iraelection Jun
18, 2009

@username: <http://twitpic.com/7qs4t> - we are stay #Iraelection Jun 18, 2009

@username: Check this video out -- crime crime crime_ Injured people <http://bit.ly/5MEWb> #Iraelection Jun 16, 2009

@username: <http://twitpic.com/7k48l> - attacked to people's home last night/north of
Tehran #IranELECTION Jun 16, 2009

mousavi is posting direct here <http://sites.google.com/site/mousavi1388/> tell everyone.
#Iraelection

This is what real Iranians are: <http://bit.ly/VhocZ> #Iraelection

US rejects victory claim by Iran's Ahmadinejad <http://bit.ly/o4mFo> #Iraelection

Iranians in Belgium will gather in front of Iran embassy today <http://www.Iranian.be/news/2009/06/003396.htm> #IransElection

Violence in Iran Tehran - <http://bit.ly/Zliym> #IranElection

Pictures from Tehran <http://bit.ly/eTFuZ> & <http://bit.ly/132TNt> #IransElection

Wikipedia listed 13 June of Iran in its Coup d'état page! <http://bit.ly/Sh9jm> #IransElection

Etemad Melli" newspaper: Iran interior ministry announced Karubi in the 5th place in the election! <http://twitpic.com/7d2ft> #IransElection

Isfahan University Dormitories were attacked last night. #IransElection <http://javaneferda.com/News.aspx?ID=585>

RT @username: Confirmed. Final exams of Sharif Univ postponed for two weeks

RT @username: World is watching #IransElection - GulfNews frontpage in Dubai today <http://mypict.me/3OwW>

RT @username : 120 faculty of Sharif uni. have resigned. Protest in front of the uni. <http://tinyurl.com/nqaxbc> #IransElection

at Valiasr, Karubi told he will stand till the end. link is in #persian #IransElection <http://bit.ly/66KTg>

RT @username Entekhab News reported that Karroubi, Karbaschi and Mousavi are under home arrest. <http://ping.fm/8Zvc7> #IranElection

Vote for Mirhussein Mousavi on CNN quick poll (<http://cnn.com>)

Follow #IranElection News on Twitter: <http://ping.fm/Z3cil>

Live coverage of Iran Presidential Elections by Guardian (<http://ping.fm/Ri4Dd>) #IranElection

#BBC coverage of Iran Election (<http://ping.fm/AlghW>) #IranElection

RT @TIME: The Man Who Could Beat Ahmadinejad: Mousavi Talks to TIME | <http://tr.im/oj9J> #IranElection

Iran votes in tight presidential election (<http://ping.fm/R8GBQ>) #IranElection #BBC

Mowj online TV website has been blocked by government <http://Iran.mowj.ir/> #IranElection

Website of Iran's Interior Ministry is down: <http://ping.fm/z52gj> #IranElection

RT @username Los Angeles Times: Iranians ready to decide presidency -- and maybe much more <http://is.gd/ZWg1> #IranElection

Website of Interior Ministry now has a server side error due to heavy visits: <http://www.moi.ir> #IranElection

RT @username: Mousavi's Tehran press conference audio recording <http://www.mediafire.com/?lz2zzd2jnww> #IranElection

#CNN Coverage: Iranians head to polls in crucial vote (<http://tinyurl.com/msm2g8>) #IranElection

RT @@username: Iranians in the US: now it's your turn to take this dictator down! <http://is.gd/ZS7> #IranElection

BBC Persian special page for Iran Election (<http://ping.fm/6E9gp>) #IranElection

RT @username: #IranElection Mousavi in Tehran press conference: thank you for your vote, get ready to celebrate <http://is.gd/103sw>

RT @username: Thank you, Obama! Whoever wins election, U.S. wants talks with Iran <http://is.gd/10bMB> #IranElection

@username: Allah - you are the creator of all and all must return to you - Allah Akbar - #Iraelection Sea of Green

@username: This chilling tweet by "arrested" @@username could force rethink of Twitter as dissident tool <http://tr.im/q0IV> #Iraelection 06/27/2009

@username thank you ppls 4 supporting Sea of Green - pls remember always our martyrs - Allah Akbar - Allah Akbar - Allah Akbar #Iraelection 06/24/2009

@username we must go - dont know when we can get internet - they take 1 of us, they will torture and get names - now we must move fast - #Iraelection 06/24/2009

@username they pull away the dead into trucks - like factory - no human can do this - we beg Allah for save us - #Iraelection 06/24/2009

@username in Baharestan we saw militia with axe chopping ppl like meat - blood everywhere - like butcher - Allah Akbar - #Iraelection RT RT RT 06/24/2009

@username <http://bit.ly/RbGhb> - Article by Mohsen Makhmalbaf - #Iraelection RT RT 06/22/2009

@username People of Iran - THIS IS THE DAWN - This is the new beginning - have hope and prepare - #Iraelection RT RT RT 06/21/2009

@username mousavi is posting direct here <http://sites.google.com/sit...> tell everyone.
#Iranelection 06/14/2009

@username MOUSAVI - on his website - Wed Sea of Green is 100% confirmed - no cancellation will be made #Iranelection RT RT RT

@username Karoubi - I demand release of all political prisoners immediately -
#Iranelection

@username MirHossein Mousavi I am prepared For martyrdom, go on strike if I am arrested #IranElection 06/20/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi BBC broadcasting details in Iran (Tell Everyone), بی بی سی فرکانس برنامہ ہا <http://sites.google.com/site/mousavi1388/bbc> #IranElection 06/19/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi New photos from today in Tehran <http://flickr.com/mousavi1388> #IranElection 2009/18/06 عکس های امروز تهران - میدان امام

@username MirHossein Mousavi WARNING: <http://www.mirhoseyn.ir/> & <http://www.mirhoseyn.com/> are fake, DONT join. این سایت ها تقلبی هستند، عضو نشوید.
#IranElection 06/16/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi Mousavi's message from GhalamNews now on <http://mousavi1388.wikispaces.com/Ghalamnews.org> and <http://ghalamnews.tumblr.com/>
#IranElection 06/16/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi @xarene <http://mousavi1388.wikispaces.com/Ghalamnews.org> and <http://ghalamnews.tumblr.com/> are now saying ghalamnews
06/16/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi All Mousavi's news from GhalamNews is now on google: <http://sites.google.com/site/mousavi1388/> they cant block google #IranElection 06/16/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi Mousavi & Karoubi will be on the way to the protest to ask people to remain calm <http://is.gd/12m1a> #IranElection 06/15/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi Due to widespread filtering, please view this site for latest news from Mousavi (via GhalamNews): <http://sites.google.com/site/mousavi1388/>
06/14/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi Latest Mousavi Letter to Iranian People: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mousavi1388/3625088310/> #IranElection 06/14/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi New YouTube vids. <http://www.youtube.com/mousavi1388> & <http://bit.ly/ZOOGK> #IranElection 06/14/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi Although several reports say that Mousavi is under house arrest, BBC confirms that Mousavi is NOT under house arrest: <http://is.gd/11APp> 06/14/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi Latest YouTube vids. of protests in Mashhad tonight: <http://bit.ly/4pJNYh> #IranElection 06/13/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi #IranElection Latest YouTube vid. from Shiraz (attack on Shiraz Univesity): <http://bit.ly/J4qyd> 06/13/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi ALL internet & mobile networks are cut. We ask everyone in Tehran to go onto their rooftops and shout ALAHO AKBAR in protest #IranElection 06/13/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi Use this to access Facebook from Iran: <http://www.wwww.wwww.facebook.com/home.php> 06/13/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi #IranElection New YouTube vid. from Tehran: <http://bit.ly/15kHdW> 06/13/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi Official: Obama Administration Skeptical of Iran's Election Results <http://is.gd/10QAz> #IranElection 06/13/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi #IranElection Latest Mousavi letter to Iranian people (10 minutes ago): <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mousavi1388/3622281658/> 06/13/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi #IranElection Latest YouTube vid from Tehran (riots in Vanak): <http://www.youtube.com/mousavi1388> 06/13/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi رییس کمیته صیانت از آرا می گوید انتخابات باطل است <http://is.gd/10LTN> This Election Is Void. 06/13/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi #IranElection Mousavi's supporters on streets of Tehran at 4pm local time (YouTube vid): <http://bit.ly/QEyNr> 06/13/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi #IranElection Mousavi's Facebook page: <http://bit.ly/15JH6O> 06/13/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi #IranElection Mousavi's press conference originally scheduled at 2pm Tehran time is postponed 06/13/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi <http://bit.ly/Pjt4v> 2009/13/06 بیانیہ مہندس موسوی

@username MirHossein Mousavi According to our 50,000 election representatives throughout Iran, Mousavi is the definite winner <http://is.gd/10dz0> #IranElection 06/12/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi موشوی امشب می‌رسد حسین Mousavi's Tehran press conference audi recording <http://www.mediafire.com/?lz2zzd2jnww> #IranElection 06/12/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi #IranElection Mousavi in Tehran press conference: thank you for your vote, get ready to celebrate <http://is.gd/103sw> 06/12/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi Mostafa Tajzadeh and Mohsen Aminzadeh (senior Mousavi campaign team members arrested) according to IRNA, <http://bit.ly/JlYtq> 06/12/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi Mousavi will hold emergency press conference in 15 mins in Tehran <http://havadaran.net/archive/00309.php> #IranElection 06/12/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi Huge turnout in Iran presidential poll, photos from today: <http://www.flickr.com/mousavi1388> (SMS network still down). #IranElection 06/12/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi @GreenMousavi #IranElection Iran's SMS system is take down! News from within Iran and also confirmed by GhalamNews <http://is.gd/Z5d9> 06/11/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi #IranElection Overseas Iranians can find out where to vote here: <http://bit.ly/3N4YcC> 06/11/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi <http://is.gd/XD8i> موشوی امشب به سید احمدی نمی‌رود Mousavi boycotts TV debate due to unfair time allocation, 20 mins to Ahmadinejad, 1:41 to Mosuavi 06/10/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi Ahmadinejad makes a quick exit from Sharif university after crowds shout "Ahmadi Bye Bye" and "Liar Liar" slogans: <http://is.gd/XCmp> 06/10/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi Mousavi's internet TV channel blocked by AN's government less than 48 hours to election, see this to bypass filter: <http://snurl.com/jttuv> 06/10/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi Election opponent accuses Ahmadinejad of lying in TV debate <http://is.gd/Vot3> 06/09/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi Rafsanjani family to file lawsuit against Ahmadinejad <http://bit.ly/10J5XP> 06/09/2009

@username MirHossein Mousavi <http://is.gd/Tiqs> (PDF file) Mousavi's plans as shown in TV debate last night 2009/08/06 برنامۀ مهندس موشوی

@username MirHossein Mousavi We beg EVERYONE to ask their family & friends to VOTE on Friday. Please call your friends & family and ask them to vote 06/06/2009

@username Free Iran <http://bit.ly/F3PqO> Mohsen Sazegara Monday June 29, 2009 Iran Tehran ایران تهران Call for 3 day strike in Iran Neda gr88 Iran/election 06/30/2009

@username Free Iran NEDA Tehran ELECTION Iran gr88 Watch March in support of the Iranian people, Paris 28 June 2009 5000 thousand people <http://bit.ly/zyFZo> 06/30/2009

@username M. Zand RT @username: <http://bit.ly/aDvDA> #Iran June 28th 2009 #Irenelection 06/29/2009

@username M. Zand RT @username Mosque Ghoba June 28, 2009 Iran Protest video: <http://bit.ly/qoCRq> 06/29/2009

@username A Khatami just so everyone knows there was not a coup d'etat in Iran in 2009, it was all legal under the system of velayat faqih #Irenelection 06/09/2010

@username Iran RT @phloflo can u help us get the word out? Boston Protest: 20 June 2009 15:00-17:00 Copley Sq <http://bit.ly/xuklX> #Irenelection 06/19/2009

@username Iran (video) -- 18th June 2009 - 100000's protest against election fraud in Iran <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bo65c1VEUXU> #Irenelection 06/18/2009

@username Iran Peacefully demanding our freedom: Iranians silent protest 17 June 2009 <http://bit.ly/OiWMp> #Irenelection 06/17/2009

@usernameIran (video)-- Millions of Mousavi supporters in Tehran; today- June 17, 2009 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VmhKQqRIsfo> #Irenelection 06/17/2009

@username Iran "Iran Election protests in Paris- 14 June 2009" <http://bit.ly/AoqCf> 06/14/2009

@usernameIran 2009 Iranian election protests now on wikipedia: <http://bit.ly/2L9TbU> (not complete yet #Irenelection 06/14/2009

Calling but can't get through to Iran. Following news here <http://Iran.twazzup.com/> and here <http://memeorandum.com/> #Irenelection Jun 14, 2009

ystrday's rally:<http://bit.ly/uNfft> <http://bit.ly/om5oD> <http://bit.ly/vcvFC> <http://bit.ly/w55ov> <http://bit.ly/YUFXC> #Irenelection Jun 19, 2009

@username RT @username: Role of Mousavi in founding of Hezbollah + Iran's intel service. <http://bit.ly/2AVUH> & <http://bit.ly/DED6c> #Irenelection

RT @username Pictures from Tehran <http://bit.ly/eTFuZ> & <http://bit.ly/132TNt> #Irenelection #Iranrevolution #IrenelectionJun 13, 2009

@username: RT @username: #Irenelection Paris Protests <http://bit.ly/HuyGr> , <http://bit.ly/Xq3nU> Jun 14, 2009

@username More vids from today's silent protest in Tehran <http://bit.ly/LA907> <http://bit.ly/yykP0> <http://bit.ly/27IB18> #Iraelection #gr88 Jun 16, 2009

how to deal with tear gas: <http://bit.ly/KfAGs> #Iraelection Jun 16, 2009

@username: YouTube Blocked in Iran? Here's How to Circumvent an internet Proxy <http://ping.fm/m3rkN> #IranElection Jun 19, 2009

@username: whoa! Photo taken this afternoon of unofficial rally in Tehran. #Iraelection <http://twitpic.com/7ki6e> Jun 17, 2009

@username: Tehran, Twitter, And Human Connections <http://tinyurl.com/kkq2b3> #Iraelection Jun 16, 2009

@username: #Iran timeline and how to find the latest on #IranElection from Breaking Tweets <http://bit.ly/SYjQH> (please RT) Jun 18, 2009

@username: <http://blip.fm/~835r1> more music for u #Iran9 #Iraelection Jun 16, 2009

@username: RT @judyrey Updated fake #Iraelection tweeter list -- <http://twitspam.org/> Take a look Jun 17, 2009

@username: Iran protest images from around the web <http://twurl.nl/ojigeo> #Iran9 #Iraelection Jun 16, 2009

@username: Simple ways to help Iranian free speech: <http://is.gd/13U0V> #IranElection #gr88 Pls RT Jun 17, 2009

@username: BBC - Protest against Iran election results -please share- <http://bit.ly/QKbxF> #Iraelection PLZ RT Jun 17, 2009

@username: For all my brothers and sisters in #Iran9 <http://blip.fm/~3ua5k> #Iraelection please please retweet this ... please Jun 16, 2009

@username: #Iran9 #Iraelection <http://blip.fm/~3yt0y> just some music from the big Z @username Jun 16, 2009

@username: We WANT A RE-VOTE NOT A RE-COUNT!! This will not stand. #Iraelection REMEMBER DO NOT TWEET NAMES FROM PPL IN Iran! <http://blip.fm/~5ervw> Jun 17, 2009

@username: For all my brothers and sisters in #Iran9 <http://blip.fm/~3ua5k> #Iraelection please please retweet this ... please Jun 16, 2009

@username: We WANT A RE-VOTE NOT A RE-COUNT!! This will not stand. #Iraelection REMEMBER DO NOT TWEET NAMES FROM PPL IN Iran! <http://blip.fm/~5ervw> Jun 17, 2009

@username: list of hundreds of useful websites to inform yourself or find a way to help out #Iraelection <http://bit.ly/Irannews> Jun 18, 2009

@username: RT @username #IranElection Let Iran Know that the Global Community is Monitoring Their Every Move <http://bit.ly/T03n8> Jun 19, 2009

@username: List of fake & spam twitters: RT <http://bit.ly/JcylU> good site to block spam misinfo #IranElection Jun 18, 2009

@username: Protests Flare in Tehran as Opposition Disputes Vote <http://bit.ly/EOFlu> NYT #Iraelection Jun 14, 2009

so they say "Ahmadinejad 'nearing Iran election victory' " <http://bit.ly/5uhkZ> either cheating going on or I have change country of birth! " @username Jun 13, 2009

Girl gets shot in Tehran <http://bit.ly/LK5Zs> #Iraelection

RT Iran: Very brutal death of a brave man <http://twitpic.com/7nv7z> - all I can do is to pray and CRY "

Esfahan - Iran #Iraelection <http://twitpic.com/7ki6e> amazing

Calling but can't get through to Iran. Following news here <http://Iran.twazzup.com/> and here <http://memeorandum.com/> #Iraelection

wearing a green shirt "this is for the people of Iran," said Wyclef Jean @wyclef ,with 300,000 followers. <http://bit.ly/5D5PU>

"Obama reluctant to criticise Iran" <http://bit.ly/m16ar> - he's correct, otherwise demonstrators will be called US spies #Iraelection "

pictures of today - <http://twitpic.com/7gtbu>. #Iraelection (via @username)

Just saw this "Google translation tool aims to improve Iran info access" <http://bit.ly/NjV49> #Iraelection

Ahmadinejad re-election sparks Iran clashes <http://bit.ly/19RZ2x>

first aid info in Farsi: <http://gr88.tumblr.com/> #Iraelection #gr88

RT @username: RT@BreakingNews: AP: latest pictures from Tehran <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mousavi1388/>

The weapons have come out! <http://bit.ly/1SrEWs> #Iraelection "“Sky News has been running live tweets from inside Iran on it's home page since start of demonstrations <http://bit.ly/1hi2S> #Iraelection

Iran to hold election recount' <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/8102400.stm>

NYC #IranElection rally @ Union Square <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t15uhr0s3UU>

sad sad story by a student <http://bit.ly/2QjZS2> #Irenelection

RT from Iran. This is the picture of the man who killed 8 people on Monday <http://tkp.gu.ma/> #IranElection #GR88

RT: Young Iranians girl after being shot at protest in Iran. <http://tinyurl.com/kp3x7j> #IranElection #gr88

RT: Iranians want peace, thousands of people rally for fair elections and peace in Iran PHOTOS: <http://ow.ly/eGlj> #Irenelection

@username: Execution in Iran, might be hard for some to watch <http://www.ireport.com/docs/DOC-273840> #IranElection - this is not Iran

Demonstration in silence in front of governmental TV station #Irenelection <http://twitpic.com/7khkw>

Bassij Open Fire on People at Azadi SQ/Tehran...#Irenelection <http://bit.ly/4yubyQ>

RT @username <http://bit.ly/TITsQ> #Irenelection - citizen journalism = evidence of thuggishness

Amnesty says up to 10 dead in Iran protests <http://bit.ly/4qKT2> #Irenelection

Footage of 'Iran university attack' <http://bit.ly/zsiPe> #Irenelection like cockroaches

Mr Mousavi calls off the rally after being warned militias would be equipped with live rounds <http://bit.ly/11gzES> #Irenelection

Iranian who leaked election results may have been assassinated <http://bit.ly/11qpCk> - needs to be confirmed

RT @jimsciuttoABC: #Irenelection here's out story from ABC incl cellphone video <http://tinyurl.com/llvmh2>

“RT @username: NEW footage of BASIJ in Tehran invading homes terrorizing ppl TONIGHT <http://bit.ly/MKzXX> #Irenelection #gr8

Iranian opposition vows to keep pressure on regime with shows of strength <http://bit.ly/fXReU> #Irenelection

RT @username: BLOG: U of #Tehran dorms after last nights attacks! <http://25khordad.wordpress.com/> - scrollbar on left hand side

Mousavi ignores government order, calls for peaceful demonstrations <http://bit.ly/19UTXq> #Iranselection very brave man

RT @wired Activists use Twitter+web tools to launch online attacks on Tehran regime: <http://bit.ly/19mf7h> #Iranselection

RT @username: <http://twitpic.com/7h41m> pictures of killings in tehran today. #Iranselection (via @@username) - saddening

RT @username: another brave video from Iran <http://bit.ly/15Oc6u> #Iranselection - animals

mass arrests and campus raids as regime hits back <http://bit.ly/IOJYC> 500 opposition supporters arrested across country #Iranselection

RT @username: RT: Fear has gone in a land that has tasted freedom: <http://bit.ly/CKJsz> #IranElection GREAT ARTICLE!

Protests in other cities Isfahan, Shiraz, Rasht, Tabriz (from yesterday) <http://bit.ly/12XDgY> #Iranselection

U.S. Persian Gulf forces cautioned on encountering any Iranian military forces during potential unrest <http://bit.ly/18EEnc> #Iranselection

RT TIMES: <http://tinyurl.com/mfbz8w> More than 100,000 join defiant silent protest in Tehran #Iranselection #gr88

Iranian footballers wore green wristbands earlier today. They've been my heroes now they are angels to me <http://bit.ly/wJUEj> #Iranselection

RT @username RT @TimOBrienNYT: Mousavi reportedly arrested on way to Khamenei's house in Tehran: <http://tinyurl.com/l3xblq>

Breaking news 'Fatal Shooting At Tehran Protest Rally' <http://bit.ly/RHPa>

RT @username: Mousavi will hold emergency press conference in 15 mins in Tehran <http://havadaran.net/archive/00309.php> #IranElection

RT @username: Police and terrorist groups have attacked to some Mousavi campaigns and offices in Tehran. <http://is.gd/ZQCX> #IranElection #fb

RT @username: Mousavi's also leading in Malaysia 70% [Persian] <http://is.gd/ZU1a> #IranElection

RT @username: Mostafa Tajzadeh & Mohsen Aminzadeh (senior Mousavi campaign team members arrested) according to IRNA, <http://bit.ly/JIYtq>

RT @username: Breaking news about the wild attacks to Mousavi and his supporters in Shahre-Rey [Persian]: <http://is.gd/ZBKR> #IranElection

RT @username: Karroobi supporters are going to light candles in front of The Ministry of Interior: <http://is.gd/ZG9q> #Iранеlection

@username Ahmadinejad: 14,011,664 (66%), Moussavi: 6,575,844 (33%) See here: <http://tinyurl.com/n7oyde>

@username@username 16 JUNE 2009 - Doctors and nurses protesting in a major hospital <http://bit.ly/lxAW4> #Iранеlection #Iранеlections 06/16/2009

@username RT @username can u help us get the word out? Boston Protest: 20 June 2009 15:00-17:00 Copley Sq <http://bit.ly/xuklX> #Iранеlection 06/19/2009

Iran_news Payvand PDF report: Preliminary Analysis of the Voting Figures in Iran's 2009 Presidential Election from Chatham <http://tinyurl.com/me9dyv> 06/24/2009

Iran_news Payvand PDF file: Iran /death penalty - A state terror policy - April 2009 (fidh.org) <http://bit.ly/124pqg> 06/28/2009

aslanmedia Aslan Media Reza Aslan in TIME on how 2009 looks a lot like 1979: reading from @time <http://bit.ly/4nRwvu> 06/19/2009

Iranrevolution Iran Revolution Yesterday - Tehran June 22 2009 <http://bit.ly/hWxdG> 06/23/2009

Iranrevolution Iran Revolution CNN Video - Tehran June 24, 2009 (via Huffington Post) <http://bit.ly/BuyRN> 06/24/2009

Appendix C

“Where Is This Place” Transcript

Transcript of “Where Is This Place” June 19th, 2009, Poems for the Rooftops of Iran
uploaded YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKUZuv6_bus

Friday the 19th of June 2009
Tomorrow, Saturday
Tomorrow is a day of destiny
Tonight the cries of Allah-o Akbar
are heard louder and louder than the nights before

Where is this place?
Where is this place where every door is closed?
Where is this place where people are simply calling God?
Where is this place where the sound
of Allah-o Akbar gets louder and louder?

I wait every night to see if the sounds
will get louder and whether the number increases
It shakes me
I wonder if God is shaken

Where is this place where
so many innocent people are trapped
Where is this place where no one comes to our aid?
Where is this place where only with our silence
we are sending our voices to the world
Where is this place where the young shed blood
and then people go and pray?
Standing on that same blood and pray...

Where is this place where citizens
are called vagrants?
Where is this place? You want me to tell you?
This place is Iran.
The homeland of you and me.
This place is Iran.