

MANUEL CASTELLS' 'NETWORK SOCIETY' AND THE WAR ON TERROR:
JIHADI TERRORISTS AND NATION-STATES IN AN INFORMATION AGE

Amanda Laura Fanshawe Tapp
MA Terrorism, Security & Society (FT)
Supervisor: Dr. Thomas Colley
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Abstract

This study looks at whether states are at a disadvantage in the theorised information society in regards to the “war on terror,” by examining Manuel Castells’ theorised decreasing sovereignty of nation-states in an information society and his discussion of the evolution of information and communication technologies (ICTs) through events from today. The results showed that states are not necessarily simply at a disadvantage in an information society. The rise of nativist nationalism in the West today may both aid and hinder jihadi terror networks. Nationalism has a complex relationship with Islamism due to its nuance- how it manifests differently across the globe and the form it takes. China’s harsh control over the Internet today shows that although phenomenon like “Jihad 3.0” demonstrate non-state actors as having more influence in the communication process than before, the communication of power is still largely in the hands of the state.

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Declaration

This dissertation is the sole work of the author, and has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree; all quotations and sources of information have been acknowledged.

I confirm that my research did or did not require ethical approval.

Signed: 
Amanda Tapp

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I. Introduction

Changes brought on by technology, digitisation, the advent of the Internet, globalisation, etc., have led to an upsurge in research on the current “Information Society”.¹ Perhaps one of the most influential in regards to the theorised information society, Manuel Castells is one of the most cited social theorists today, yet his network society theory, in particular, is mentioned often but rarely examined closely. According to Castells, the network society is the result of the evolution of technologies that has brought about a shift from the industrial society to the informational age, leading to a society dominated by network structures.² Although he notes networks and information are not new, in the “network society,” there has been an informational shift, and networks have become a “key feature of social morphology” due to the decentralisation occurred through communication technologies like the Internet.³

It is within this framework this study will embark on an analysis on the current war on terror. As a “hot topic” within academia and the public sphere, there has been an exponentially growing multitude of research on the war on terror. However, much of the literature focuses on military strategy and war theories – neglecting to examine how larger structural shifts in society may be shaping these changes. According to Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) put forward by scholars like Gunning and Cox, the dominant literature in terrorism studies takes a state-centric perspective, with a practical policy-making goal; neglecting multidisciplinary approaches and instead going for a one-size-fits-all solution. Scholars like Duffield focusing on netwar,⁴ Betz examining the narratives of counter-

¹ Kai Rannenberg, Denis Royer and André Deuker, *The Future of Identity in the Information Society: Challenges and Opportunities* (London: Springer, 2009).

² Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996).

³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴ Mark Duffield, “War as a Network Enterprise: The New Security Terrain and Its Implications”, *Cultural Value* 6 No. 1 (2002), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1362517022019793>.

terrorists and terrorists,⁵ Sageman and Mackinlay looking at how insurgents may or may not have evolved,⁶ Lind, Schmitt and Wilson looking at fourth-generation warfare,⁷ and Arquilla discussing the structures of terrorist groups,⁸ etc. – the literature within traditional terrorism studies (TTS) is, as CTS puts forth, lacking in a holistic perspective. By utilising Castells’ network society theory as a framework, further understanding on how the information age differently impacts states and jihadi terrorists may be obtained by assessing larger structures that have previously not been commonly focused upon in one of the most relevant and discussed topics today – the war on terror.

Using his trilogy, *The Information Age (The Rise of the Network Society, The Power of Identity and The End of Millenium)*,⁹ this study will engage in a close reading of two theories that he postulates in this trilogy and that exist within the larger framework of the network society, to examine how jihadi terrorists and states exist in an information age. Examining events today to assess Castells’ theory on the network state – whereby states are losing their sovereignty due to increased horizontal corporation in the network society as states must adapt to survive in the information age – leads to a discussion on the relationship between nationalism and Islamism, and how this may occur differently across the globe. Castells’ theory on information and communication technologies (ICTs) as becoming more open for both non-state actors is assessed using China as a case study and the theorised ‘Jihad

⁵ David Betz, “The Virtual Dimension of Contemporary Insurgency and Counterinsurgency,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 19 no. 4 (2008), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592310802462273>; David Betz and Vaughan Phillips, “Putting the Strategy back into Strategic Communications,” *Defence Strategic Communications: The Official Journal of the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence Vol. 3* (2007).

⁶ Marc Sageman, “‘New Terrorism’ in the Western World,” *NATO Review*; John Mackinlay, *The Insurgent Archipelago: From Mao to bin Laden* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2009), <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2012/Threats-Within/New-Terrorism-Western-World/EN/index.htm>.

⁷ William S. Lind, John F. Schmitt, and Gary I. Wilson, “Fourth Generation Warfare: Another Look,” *Marine Corps Gazette* (1994).

⁸ John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001).

⁹ Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996-1998).

3.0' to examine how ICTs have been utilised by both non-state and state actors today, discussing the implications this may hold for the future. As *The Information Age* trilogy was published between the years of 1996-1998, and with the continued advancements of technologies and changes in the structures of our society, this assessment, two decades later, makes for a current and relevant analysis of Castells' predictions two decades ago that brings in a more holistic perspective to the current body of literature.

II. Literature Review

The fallen dictators of Arab Spring – Mubarak overthrown, Ben Ali exiled, Gaddafi killed, Saleh ousted, and the civil uprisings in Syria, Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Morocco and Jordan, have been almost unilaterally agreed would not have occurred without the mobilisation that occurred through both traditional and new forms of media.¹⁰ However, the extent and ways in which the social and structural transformations of the information age affects state and non-state actors, is greatly disputed.

The current global, complex threat of jihadi terrorism has resulted in many internal conflicting debate within terrorism studies and military strategy as to how to combat this problem which may be understand through two main conflicting schools of thought. The first school of thought depicts that there is an overemphasis on the importance of the theorised information age, including how this is perceived to have affected informational warfare, networking and the fear of jihadi terrorists as a new form of insurgency. The second school of thought posits jihadi terrorists as at an advantage in the theorised information age, as the dynamics of the information age are perceived to benefit non-state actors, and therefore governments are fundamentally at a disadvantage. The two schools of thought are not mutually exclusive and are categorised in this way here for the sake of clarity.

The First School of Thought: A Double-Edged Sword

The first school of thought holds proponents who argue the information age does not necessarily benefit jihadi terrorists more so than conventional forces. This sees an overemphasis in the newness of warfare, war, and terrorism, and believes each of these things as they are today not as having fundamentally changed but merely as entities now holding various differing characteristics. Here “cyberspace is a valuable, even invaluable, overlay in

¹⁰ Hamid Dabashi, *The Arab Spring* (New York: Zed Books, 2012).

[...] geographical environments” but it “does not transcend, transform, or neutralize the significance of those environments.”¹¹ The influence of evolved technologies and informational warfare has altered the ways in which wars are fought but has not changed their essence; the “newness” of the new wars here does not call for a complete new version of new wars, unlike what academics like Münkler propose – whereby there is a categorisation between new wars and old.¹² Similarly, as Sageman argues, lone wolf terrorism is not new, as terrorism in the West, for example, has almost always historically been homegrown with the exception of the 9/11 attacks, although the role of the Internet in “new terrorism” *is* new.¹³

Betz in *Carnage and Connectivity* addresses this and sums up that “overall, in terms of the balance of power among states it does not appear to change very much.”¹⁴ The argument that “war itself has not changed” focuses on characteristics of war that are still consistent today, such as the importance of chance and escalation in war.¹⁵ As such, states are therefore not fundamentally at a disadvantage in the information age. Following this line of thought, Betz and Lee argue Information War (IW) is not enough to achieve victory on a strategic level, and its capabilities are limited to the information-driven battlefield.”¹⁶ Indeed, many theorists argue that counterinsurgency (COIN) should be conducted the same way as it was decades ago. This is the prevailing assumption in military doctrine currently, ever since

¹¹ Colin Gray, “Information and Security: A Rejoinder,” *Orbis* 50 no. 1 (1996), 276.

¹² Herfried Münkler, *The New Wars* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005).

¹³ Sageman, “New Terrorism”.

¹⁴ David Betz, *Carnage and Connectivity: Landmarks in the Decline of Conventional Military Power* (London: C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, 2015), 180.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Conclusion.

¹⁶ David Betz and Sang-Ho Lee, “Information in the Western Way of Warfare: Too much of a Good Thing?” *Inha Journal of International Studies* 21 no. 2 (2008), 197-8, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1976-5118.2006.tb00324.x>.

Counterinsurgency: F3.24 published in 2006 by the United States (US) military, which established the doctrine for military operations in COIN environments.¹⁷

This school of thought also believes the fear of the power of networks as tipping the scale fervently in favor of non-state actors is an exaggerated fear. Sangiovanni and Jones make a case against networks, arguing there is a limitation on the existing literature on networks due to a lack of focus on weaknesses of networks.¹⁸ They point out the many cons of networks which may not often be focused on, such as excessive risk-taking, slower decision-making, and increased possibilities of misinterpretation as well as the horizontalisation of networks leading to splintering.¹⁹

Within this school of thought, Conway argues that although the Net is used by terrorists to their aid, there are trade-offs like increased levels of vulnerability due to higher levels of visibility.²⁰ Similarly, Amble argues the new media offers services to security services and proponents combatting jihadist terrorism – such as promoting counter-narratives, providing an abundance of valuable information, increased ability to monitor as well as stop money flows.²¹ While the Internet is understood as “an active venue, where users contribute to, adapt, and delete content horizontally,”²² thereby giving civilians agency, this is problematic as it overlooks the agency of states, particularly autocratic states.

However, some theorists within this school of thought argue that while that there isn't

¹⁷ Headquarters: Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency: FM 3-24* (Washington: United States Marine Corps, 2006).

¹⁸ Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Calvert Jones, “Assessing the Dangers of Illicit Networks: Why A.Q. May be Less Threatening Than Many Think,” *International Security* 33 no. 2 (2008), 42, <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.2008.33.2.7>.

¹⁹ Sangiovanni and Jones, “Dangers of Illicit Networks.”

²⁰ Maura Conway, “Terrorism and the Internet: New Media – New Threat?” *Parliamentary Affairs* 59 no. 2 (2006), 283-298, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsl009>.

²¹ John Curtis Amble, “Combating Terrorism in the New Media Environment,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35 no. 5 (2012), 339-353, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2012.666819>.

²² Johnny Ryan, *Countering Militant Islamist Radicalisation on the Internet: A User Driven Strategy to Recover the Web* (Dublin: Institute of European Affairs, 2007), 11.

an overblown fear of new technologies but, as Betz argues, the West is faltering in the virtual, informational battle with Islamists due to a lack of a narrative coherence and because nowadays, “both sides in the ‘war of ideas’ conduct propaganda,” but one side utilises this (jihadi terrorists) while the other (the West/states) does not.²³ While the capabilities may be there for states to counter terrorism through the tools the information age provides us – in other words, the information age acting as a double-edged sword – this does not ensure the success of states’ to be as great as jihadi terrorists’ efforts have been.

The Second School of Thought: Jihadi Terrorists Benefit More

The second school of thought follows the understanding jihadi terrorists existing within an information age allow nation-states and conventional forces to be at a disadvantage, in an age where networking structures are more effective, and therefore, networks are needed to fight networks.²⁴ As such, it is argued that war is evolving in the direction of netwar, the “emerging mode of conflict and crime at societal levels,”²⁵ which “will create new difficulties for counterterrorism.”²⁶ Theorists within this school of thought vary in the ways to which they perceive new forms of insurgents, wars, and warfare as having evolving, however they hold a commonality in that there is a belief that there has been a significant shift to new forms of the subject matter, dictating an era where non-state actors are benefiting.

The emphasis on new forms of warfare and terrorists are a strong dynamic within this school of thought. Theorists within this school of thought such as Mackinlay, in his influential *Insurgent Archipelago*, denotes the information age as connecting people

²³ Betz, “Virtual Dimension of Contemporary Insurgency,” 511, 532.

²⁴ Arquilla and Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars*.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

²⁶ John Arquilla, David Ronfeldt and Michele Zanini, “Information-Age Terrorism,” *Institutional Archive of the Naval Postgraduate School*, April 2000, <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/36377>.

previously territorially separated, as insurgents are now “part of the same global movements” which also “protects them from hostile governments and security services.”²⁷ These “globalised insurgents” that “tend to attract globalised responses” means that a “different operational approach” is dictated which is “hard to understand from a structured, military perspective.”²⁸ Here Mackinlay suggests we are witnessing the “strategic adaptation to a globalized world where the old parameters of success are no longer valid.”²⁹ In this case, the centre of gravity is the “archipelago of diaspora communities, ideological support networks, and online sympathizers scattered around the world.”³⁰

Due to these theorised new forms of insurgents, theorists like Lind, Schmitt and Wilson within the second school of thought argue that “the nation-state is losing its monopoly on war, and its hold on its citizens loyalty, in a growing portion of the world.”³¹ This ties into theories of fourth generation warfare (4GW), characterised by a non-state actor being involved, and which ultimately seeing the decentralisation of warfare affecting the monopoly states have on war. While others may argue the theory of 4GW is a myth,³² the point of focus here is the idea that the information age has aided terrorist groups.

Beyond theorised new forms of insurgents, proponents within this school of thought typically argue for new forms of war in today’s information society. Duffield’s argument of the new security terrain of netwar as characterised by globalisation concludes that this, in turn, has created new forms of organised violence, and that both sides of the new security

²⁷ Mackinlay, *The Insurgent Archipelago*, 222.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 223-24.

²⁹ Lia Brynjar, “Understanding Jihadi Proto-States,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9 no. 4 (2015), 38, <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/441/html>.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

³¹ Lind, Schmitt, and Wilson, “Fourth Generation Warfare,” 36.

³² Antulio J. Echevarria II, “Fourth-Generation War and Other Myths,” *Strategic Studies Institute* (2005), <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a442343.pdf>.

terrain have “both assumed a networked and nonterritorial appearance.”³³ The “general trend toward networking” has been developed unevenly, as “they”, that is, the insurgents and terrorist networks, have “adapted and develop the power of the network more effectively than “us””.³⁴ September 11 is an example of this, unprecedented in its lethality and its amount of preparation and planning, and which resulted in Hoffman and other terrorist experts denoting Osama bin Laden as having harnessed the West’s own weapon against themselves – modernity – running a transnational terrorist organisation as a large multinational business.³⁵ The Arab world coming to support Afghanistan to fight the Soviet occupation further shows the transnational, transregional dimension of network war, just Al Qaeda and the Taliban may also be understood as transnational enterprises.³⁶

Here the theorised shift to netwar, has, in turn, led many counter-terrorism theorists and academics to re-theorise counter-terrorism strategy. Much like the myth of Hydra, “cut off one head and two more will grow,” the decentralised structure is perceived here to grant immunity from conventional militaries. Terrorist organisations have been able to create war economics of terrorist networks that act “like a living organism,” being able to mutate and adapt to change; as war is a network enterprise, referring to the networking structure in which economic activity is now performed around,³⁷ and which “does not follow the traditional state-based pattern of escalation, stalemate and decline” and, as such, “one cannot assume that exhaustion will occur in transnational wars.”³⁸

³³ Duffield, “War as a Network Enterprise,” 153.

³⁴ Ibid., 156.

³⁵ Bruce Hoffman, “Rethinking Terrorism and Counterterrorism Since 9/11”, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 25 No. 5 (2002), 307-309, <https://doi.org/10.1080/105761002901223>.

³⁶ Duffield, “War as a Network Enterprise,” 159.

³⁷ Manuel Castells and Gustavo Cardoso, *The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy* (Washington: John Hopkins Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2005), 9.

³⁸ Duffield, “War as a Network Enterprise,” 158.

According to the second school of thought, this is because “they [insurgents] have the organizational edge, as it is “perhaps easier for them to adapt and exploit the power of the network” due to the “new opportunities afforded by globalization.”³⁹ Research within this school of thought focuses on jihadi terrorists’ successful use of the Internet to aid their goals, such as Hoffman’s examination of Al Qaeda’s harnessing the Internet in three main ways: for recruitment, disseminating information and manuals, and the planning and mobilisation of attacks.⁴⁰ Due to this focus, many believe a result of terrorists harnessing the Internet to these means led to “the strategic and operational conditions that define the modern context of war are being challenged by a new reality,” such as cyberterrorism and asymmetrical warfare.⁴¹

As terrorism may be understood as a signaling game with a “deceptive quality [...] designed to simulate (show) an image of strength and determination, and dissimulate (hide) the group’s real state of play,”⁴² therefore, here it is commonly perceived that the growing virtual presence of Jihadi terrorists aids their need for theatricality, following the Propaganda by Deed strategy.⁴³ Although, as Betz argues, the West has an undeniable technological advantage over its opposing insurgents, but due to this, the West has ironically become highly vulnerable to entities like the Islamic world as an “irresistible and insensate force of cultural contamination and ideational infiltration”.⁴⁴ It is ultimately a paradox, as the West

³⁹ Duffield, “War as a Network Enterprise,” 161.

⁴⁰ Bruce Hoffman, “The Use of the Internet by Islamic Extremists,” *RAND Corporation* (2006), 1-20, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/2006/RAND_CT262-1.pdf.

⁴¹ Keith Dickson, “War in (Another) New Context: Postmodernism.” *Journal of Conflict Studies* 24 no. 2 (2004), 81, <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/JCS/article/view/203/360>.

⁴² Bruce Hoffman and Gordon McCormick, “Terrorism, Signaling and Suicide Attack,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 27 no. 4 (2004), 247, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100490466498>.

⁴³ Betz and Phillips, “Putting the Strategy back,” 43.

⁴⁴ David Betz, “The More You Know, The Less you Understand: The Problem with Information Warfare,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 29 no. 3 (2006), 510, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390600765900>.

has provided a massive Infosphere for global insurgents to infiltrate with low cost of entry, having “provided it with more scope for its impact to be felt.”⁴⁵

Proponents within school of thought ultimately do not see the victory of Abu Kamal in Syria, and Qaim and Rawa in Iraq as the beginning of the end of Islamic State, because they see Islamic State as a much greater threat due to their decentralised, global, networking structure.⁴⁶ According to Hoffman, we are observing “a new information revolution [that] has occurred to empower these movements”, allowing them (terrorists) to “bypass completely traditional, established media outlets.”⁴⁷ The “New Economy’s Dot-com bubble burst” of 2000 ushered in the ‘Web 2.0’, an evolution of ICTs that allows interactive potential and also multimedia (multiple forms of communication), without the intervention of the traditional media,⁴⁸ and which has witnessed an era whereby “non-state insurgents benefit far more from the new media than do governments.”⁴⁹

Much of the literature within this school of thought focuses on how jihadi terrorists have “embraced the possibilities offered by the Internet” and its “far-reaching” potential, speeding up processes of radicalisation and mobilisation.⁵⁰ While the inventions of the Industrial Revolution and the theorised information revolution have traditionally benefited states and regular armies, one of the “unintended consequences” of the Web 2.0, according to Rid and Hecker, is that it benefits non-state actors more so than state actors precisely because

⁴⁵ Betz, “The More You Know,” 510.

⁴⁶ Michael P. Dempsey, “The Caliphate is Destroyed, But the Islamic State Lives On,” *Foreign Policy*, November 22, 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/11/22/the-caliphate-is-destroyed-but-the-islamic-state-lives-on/>.

⁴⁷ Hoffman, “The Use of the Internet,” 2.

⁴⁸ Betz, “Virtual Dimension of Contemporary Insurgency,” 517.

⁴⁹ Thomas Rid and Marc Hecker, *War 2.0: Irregular Warfare in the Information Age*. (Westport, Praeger Security International, 2009), 14.

⁵⁰ Andrew Silke, “The Internet and Terrorism: Pathways Towards Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism,” Chapter in *The Psychology of Counter-Terrorism* ed. Andrew Silke (London: Routledge, 2010).

it “inadvertently mimics” the “principles of subversion and irregular war.”⁵¹ Overall, the two schools of thought have largely dominated the focus in terrorism studies; largely revolving around the discussion of the extent to which terrorism strategies, insurgents themselves, warfare and war has evolved or not.

Critical Terrorism Studies

CTS calls for the necessity of a critical turn in “traditional” terrorism studies (TTS) – to focus more on *how* and *why*, looking beyond simply finding quick, one-size-fits-all solutions to the issues of terrorism.⁵² It aims to open up the previous produced literature to a more multidisciplinary approach, “including voices and perspectives that are frequently missed in the orthodox literature”, including a multitude of disciplines like psychology, sociology, political science, area studies, feminist studies, to “enrich and enliven the analyses with multiple and diverse perspectives.”⁵³

According to CTS, TTS has a “tendency to treat contemporary terrorism as a ‘new’ phenomenon that started on September 11th, 2001,” and as its origins are rooted in security studies and counterinsurgency studies, and the experts and scholars are therefore “directly linked to state institutions,” it inevitably has biases in its research.⁵⁴ This is furthered by a “problem-solving” attitude, neglecting to question the status-quo and the inherent hierarchies and powers of norms, and “takes world as it is, with the prevailing social and power relationships [...] as the given framework for action.”⁵⁵

⁵¹ Silke, “Internet and Terrorism,” 13-14.

⁵² Jeroen Gunning, “A Case for Critical Terrorism Studies,” *Government and Opposition* 42 no. 3 (2007), 363-393, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2007.00228.x>.

⁵³ Richard Jackson, Marie Smyth and Jeroen Gunning, *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda*. (London: Routledge, 2009), 4.

⁵⁴ Richard Jackson, “The Core Commitments of Critical Terrorism Studies,” *European Political Sciences* 6 No. 3 (2007), 1-2, <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.eps.2210141>

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

Horgan and Boyle's "A case against 'Critical Terrorism' Studies" article defends TTS as multi-disciplinary, arguing CTS advocates "a false dualism" – an "us" vs "them" within terrorism studies that CTS components criticise TTS of doing with terrorists.⁵⁶ However, the existing literature, despite its claim and attempts to be multidisciplinary, is primarily "concerned with the interrelationships among states" as "the principle aggregations of political power," and therefore has "obvious practical importance."⁵⁷ It is due to this distorted perspective that dictates a critical turn is highly beneficial.

In contrast to the problem-solving theory, critical theory does not take things as they are, but instead questions what one might typically assume as normative, as it is a theory "concerned not just with the past but with a continuing process of historical change."⁵⁸ This study aims to bring more holistic and critical understanding within the literature by employing Castells' framework to examine the relationship between jihadi terrorists and states in an information age in order to answer questions like who may be benefiting more from the information age.

Manuel Castells

Castells' revolutionary theory of the network society, as explained, drawn out and theorised in his *The Information Age* trilogy, denotes the network as the basic unit of the very fabric of society. Castells defines it as "the techno-economic transformation of society" that is derived from multiple historical processes. This includes the information technological revolution, the economic crisis leading to the emergence of the global capitalist economy and of cultural social movements like libertarianism, human rights, feminism and environmentalism, which

⁵⁶ John Horgan and Michael Boyle, "A Case Against 'Critical Terrorism' Studies", *Critical Terrorism Studies 1* No. 1 (2008), <https://doi.org/10.1080/17539150701848225>

⁵⁷ Robert W. Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies 10* No. 2 (1981), 126, 128.

⁵⁸ Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders," 129.

has led to a new space of flows, informational cities, emerging resistant identities and decreasing sovereignty of the nation-state alongside the crisis of democracy in a culture of real virtuality.⁵⁹

Castells sees a shift from the industrial age to the information age brought about by new information technologies, and while he addresses that networks are not new, their key function in today's society have brought about new dynamics that have increased the effectiveness of networks. Metcalfe's Law is an underlying notion within the network society theory, denoting network structures as exponentially stronger than a singular node. It may be understood as: "the power of the network is equal to the square of the number of nodes that it contains. So an enterprise with ten nodes is not just ten times stronger but *one hundred times more effective* than an enterprise with just one."⁶⁰ The units that denotes the network are flexible, endlessly configuring, and within each network, the culture is embedded within, infinitely adaptable.

While Castells might not be considered a terrorism-studies academic, his theories in *The Information Age* may be largely characterised within the first school of thought – seeing states as in a crisis and fundamentally at a disadvantage in the information age, due to the decentralisation permeating through the economic, public, social and political spheres; understanding fourth-war generation, the asymmetry of the new wars, the new form of global terrorism, etc. as new entities to be understood; seeing an era whereby states are at more of a disadvantage than non-state actors. By assessing Castells' predictions and theories within the larger framework of his network society, through today's events and discussing the

⁵⁹ Castells, *The Information Age* trilogy.

⁶⁰ Duffield, "War as a Network Enterprise," 155.

implications of these theories through today's society, research may be expanded in terms of the war on terror and the current literature so focused on military strategy and war theories.

III. Theoretical Framework

In order to answer the research question, who benefits more in an information age – jihadi terrorists or states – this study will adopt the theoretical framework of Manuel Castells’ networked society. This is because it will provide a more holistic perspective to the orthodox terrorism studies body of literature on the subject matter. The network society has, according to Castells, become the basic building blocks of society. This is a useful concept to apply to the analysis of jihadi terrorists that hasn’t been widely studied or widely applied to terrorism and/or counter-terrorism studies in depth because it takes into account technological, social, political, economic and cultural changes.

The network society is one of the many outcomes of the “information age”. The “information age” is a broad term that encompasses countless definitions, precisely due to its wide-reaching nature, but is often used to define the age in which we live in today, touching upon topics like globalisation, interconnectedness, and decentralisation with the advancement and continued evolution of technologies; an era in which information is the defining characteristic. Webster, in “Is this the Information Age?” brings forth a compelling critique of Castells’ *The Information Age* trilogy. His two main criticisms postulate Castells of being faulty in overstating the degree to which the changes in technologies has affected society, and that Castells’ definition of the information age is unclear.⁶¹

In the first criticism, Webster claims Castells is “committed to a *technocratic* view of development,” as he states Castells’ theorised information technology revolution “is the edifice on which all else of the ‘network society’ is built.”⁶² Upon close examination, it becomes clear Castells is not quite simply a technological determinist, seen when he refers to

⁶¹ Frank Webster, “Is this the Information Age?” *City* 2 no. 8 (1997), 71-84, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604819708713517>.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 80.

sociologist Claude Fischer's study of the social history of the telephone until 1940 in America, and whose study showed, Castells wrote, that "the telephone was adapted, not just adopted," as "people shape technology to fit to their own needs" to "reinforce pre-existing social patterns."⁶³ Furthermore, in *The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy* he writes, "we are in a network society, *although not everything or everybody is included in its networks*" (italics mine).⁶⁴ While it is indisputable that Castells, as a social theorist, places heavy emphasis on the effects of technological changes in how this affects modes of power and production, he also goes to great lengths to assess the role of informationalism *amongst* other processes – such as the rise of "toyotism", the network enterprise, space of flows, changes in identity, etc.

In regards to Webster's second criticism that Castells does not have a clear definition of the information age, it may be understood that Castells sees the information age to be a phenomenon closely related to the evolution in ICTs, seen by the shift from industrial society to an information society from the 1970s.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the lack of a coherent, one-line definition clearly stated by Castells on the "information age" may be due to the nuance and complexity of the term itself. To Castells, the decentralisation that comes with the growth of networks in tandem to the processes of globalisation ultimately has resulted in the spread of horizontal corporation, resulting in a rise of a global network society which aids grassroots mobilisation.

Two of Castells' arguments will be utilised in this study. The first, his theory of the network state, is discussed in *the Power of Identity*, where Castells argues states are adapting and must continue adapt to become a unit or node of the larger network state, comprised of

⁶³ Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*, 393.

⁶⁴ Castells and Cardoso, *Network Society*, 11.

⁶⁵ Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*.

nation-states around the globe. In order to adapt and engage in increased horizontal corporation, states are experiencing a loss of sovereignty due to the paradoxical nature of the nation-state as sovereign and autonomous versus the nature of the network state – whereby states must work dependently on each other. According to Castells, states are becoming less powerful in an age of multilateralism, citing Richard Sennett in what he referred to as the “fall of public man”, or what Habermas called a “legitimation crisis”.⁶⁶ For example, September 11 changed everything for the United States, as “for the first time in its young history it felt vulnerable” because the threat was no longer symmetrical to itself (coming from the Soviet Union) and the American people felt personally threatened by the exaggerated fear perpetuated by jihadi terrorist groups.⁶⁷ This has been followed by what he calls the “crisis of the nation-state as a sovereign entity”, as states realised they could no longer survive independently, but rather, as a node in a network of states.

The second argument utilised in this study is drawn out in *The Rise of the Network Society*, where Castells divides the evolution of ICTs into three stages. The first stage being a one-way communication system largely dominated by governments and corporate oligopolies, addressing largely homogenous audiences; to the second stage of the 1980s, depicted by the diversification of the media and therefore the segmentation of audiences, which goes against McLuhan’s famous line, “the globe is no more than a village,”⁶⁸ as instead Castells argues we exist in “*customized cottages globally produced and locally distributed*” due to the diversification of TV programs; and the third stage – the 1990’s “multimedia system”, witnessing the interactive, multimedia potential of the Internet.

⁶⁶ Castells, *Power of Identity*, 334.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 346.

⁶⁸ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Massachusetts: MIT, 1994), 5.

As such, Castells argues the evolved ICTs have allowed for a more “open”-ness of communication systems, giving power where there wasn’t before to non-state actors.

Increased opportunities are provided by ICTs for everyday people to “enhance political participation and horizontal communication,” allowing citizens to participate more so than previously in the political realm, “circumventing established political structures.”⁶⁹ He also theorised a diffusion and decentralisation of surveillance by the state to many third-party companies, predicting an era of “little sisters” rather than the Orwellian Big-Brother fear.

Looking beyond mere strategy, which must exist within a certain framework, and instead using examples from today to look at Castells’ ideas on ICTs as well as his discussion on the sovereignty of the nation-state, this study attempts to shed light on questions not widely discussed in TTS but which may provide valuable information to the orthodox literature, such as – how has the information age impacted, differently, states versus jihadi terrorists? How have ICTs evolved to the benefit of each? Will the effects of the information age affect the very essence of states? These questions fall under the research question of this study- *Who is benefiting more in an information age, jihadi terrorists or states?*

⁶⁹ Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 415.

IV. Methodology

Although Castells published an edited version in 2000 that was 40% different from the first edition of 1996, the trilogy, being published in 1996-1998, is inevitably victim to the limitations of being obsolete.⁷⁰ Castells addresses the limitations of discussing and analysing something which we are still undergoing and therefore are lacking in hindsight, as he wrote, in his preface of *The Power of Identity*: “I was very careful not to make any predictions,” indeed, acknowledging that “it was too early to identify fully the profile of some of these social movements.”⁷¹ Castells wrote numerous other publications in more recent years, looking at communication, the influences of the Internet, and more, but this study will focus on *The Information Age* trilogy only as it is widely appreciated as the founding, ground-breaking publication for the larger context and theory of the network society, and a culminating work that has touched many interdisciplinary areas that look at the topic of the information society. Furthermore, the limitations due to time that has passed since when the trilogy was published is specifically addressed in this study by focusing on events of today, used to analyse his predictions, discussions and theories published almost two decades ago now.

The first chapter of the Analysis section examines Castells’ theory of the “network state” by examining trends of this today in the West, then delves into a discussion between the relationship of nationalism and Islamism and how this may occur across the globe. The second chapter of the Analysis section examines Castells’ theory of the evolution of ICTs, discussed in *The Rise of the Network State*, and will also look at Castells’ discussion on China in *End of Millenium* by examining China as a case study of how states may utilise

⁷⁰ Manuel Castells and Martin Ince, *Conversations with Manuel Castells* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2003), 20.

⁷¹ Castells, *The Power of Identity*, xxxvii – xxxviii.

ICTs to their benefits, and Jihad 3.0 as a case study to show how non-state actors may utilise ICTs to their benefits today.

These two theories were chosen out of the multitude present in the trilogy for multiple reasons. The density of the trilogy calls for more insightful and useful conclusions to be drawn with meticulous examination of a select few theories rather than a superficial analysis of many. In addition, these theories are particularly useful to examine the war on terror. Castells' theory of the network state touches upon topics like sovereignty, nationalism, and the relationship this has with resistant identities like Islamic fundamentalism, which, while theorists within TTS discuss topics tandem to this (such as whether states need to have a more coherent narrative or need to decentralise in order to have networks to fight networks), is an area not widely discussed within TTS. Castells' theory on ICTs brings in a more holistic perspective of a social theorist on ICTs and may also shed light on previously unfocused areas when applied to the discussion on the war on terror.

Jihadi terrorists were chosen for this study due to their stature as one of the top threats to states around the globe – and are therefore deemed relevant – as well as due to their sophisticated utilisation of technologies, transnationalisation and ability to employ decentralised models; the epitome of the modern terrorist. Employing Boaz Ganor's definition of "terrorism", which addresses the underlying moral relativism inherent in the term and weaponisation of the term ("is one man's terrorist another man's freedom fighter?"), this study will use Ganor's proposed definition: "terrorism is the intentional use of, or threat to use, violence against civilians or against civilian targets, in order to attain political aims."⁷²

⁷² Boaz Ganor, "Defining Terrorism: Is One Man's Terrorist Another Man's Freedom Fighter?" *International Institute for Counter-Terrorism*, Vol. 3, Issue 4 (2002): 294, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1561426022000032060>.

V. Analysis

Chapter I: Nationalism and Islamic Fundamentalism

This chapter will examine Castells' theory that globalisation and the horizontalisation of society has caused a loss of sovereignty of nation-states, which has, in turn, led to a rise of defensive reactions by citizens in the world.

Castells' Argument: The Decreasing Sovereignty of Nation-States

According to Castells, both non-state actors like jihadi terrorists and states are adapting to the information age, with non-state actors benefiting more, as horizontal corporation is fundamentally contradictory to the sovereignty and essence of the nation-state. The nation-state, in the network society, must function as a unit or node in a larger network of states, the "network state," but this, he argues, *does not increase their effectiveness*, as this "directly contradict[s] the exercise of their authority."⁷³ This is the paradox of the network state, as states must de-nationalise and internationalise in order to fulfil their national interests, and therefore, "actual sovereignty can only be accrued by losing autonomy" which goes against the very essence of a nation-state."⁷⁴ He gives the example of the US – if it "imposes its military domination by force" it will "lose its legitimacy in relation to the other states in the network" and go on to affect the legitimacy of the nation-state itself.⁷⁵

The network state, he argues, has multiple shortcomings – economically, politically, and in terms of security. Economically, the interdependence of global financial markets like the European Union (EU), European central bank, global financial markets, and the globalisation of crime, each undermines states' autonomy and decision-making due to the

⁷³ Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 357.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 364.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 363.

dilution of control.⁷⁶ In terms of security, Castells argues nation-states are struggling to respond to new threats and new technologies of warfare. We are witnessing, according to Castells, the outdatedness of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in an age of a new, global, collective security where there is a long process of “relentless conflict, alliance and negotiation” that make “international institutions rather ineffective, so that most of their political energy is spent in the process, rather than in the product”, effectively slowing down nation-states’ capabilities who are “unable to act by themselves, yet paralyzed when trying to act collectively.”⁷⁷ Nation-states, according to Castells, are rendered ineffective and powerless as a node in the larger network state, with “relentless conflict, alliance and negotiation” so that most of the state’s efforts are “spent in the process, rather than in the product”, essentially slowing them down.⁷⁸

However, Castells argues this does not mean the nation-state is “on its way out”, but merely reforming and reshaping to fit larger shifting structures. As such, the crisis of the nation-state has therefore been followed by a “return of the state”, according to Castells, with new power relationships, as nodes of a broader network of power of the network state. This return, in essence, is discussing the structure-agency debate: do states have enough agential power to mitigate, create, and shape global agendas and structures, or do they need to adapt to shifting larger structures like globalisation?

The structuralism vs. agent-centric debate does not provide a holistic answer, forcing the observer to choose one or the other. A third view that synthesizes the two together is more apt to help explain the phenomenon – precisely that the state affects and shapes, to some degree, larger social dynamics and structures such as globalisation, just as large

⁷⁶ Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 305-312.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 331.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

dynamics in turn, influence how states function. In other words, as Hobson and Ramesh argue, “states are nested or socially embedded within the domestic and global realms” and so, states do hold some agential power and are able to affect or have some impact on the larger structures, but do not entirely shape larger trends.⁷⁹

Castells seems to fall under the third view. At the end of the trilogy in *End of Millenium* he argues “societies, however, are not just the result of technological and economic transformation”, and similarly, “nor can social change be limited to institutional crises and adaptations.”⁸⁰ In more detail, in *Power of Identity* he states that agency does prevail over structure, but the structure – the global network society – *determines the parameters*.⁸¹ This view allows us to go beyond the zero-sum game. As Hobson and Ramesh argue, states may resist and work with or against social forces “at the domestic, regional and global levels,” and therefore, “social forces both enable and constrain states.”⁸² In this sense, according to Castells, while states adapt to the horizontal dynamic of globalisation by working as a node in the larger network state (which led to their sovereignty suffering as a result), they are now reacting to this by asserting their own sovereignty, resisting against social forces like globalisation.

Weiss provides a counter-argument to this, arguing that although globalisation has led to governed interdependence, “this is not to say that their [governments’] control is less *consequential* or *effective*.”⁸³ Weiss agrees with Castells that states have forged new or adapted old measures of functioning by working more so with other states, yet they depart in

⁷⁹ John M. Hobson and M. Ramesh, “Globalisation Makes of States What States Make of it: Between Agency and Structure in the State/Globalisation Debate,” *New Political Economy* 7 No. 1 (2002), 8, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563460120115499>.

⁸⁰ Castells, *End of Millenium*, 375.

⁸¹ Castells, *Power of Identity*, 362.

⁸² Hobson and Ramesh, “Globalisation Makes of States,” 9-10.

⁸³ Linda Weiss, “Is the State being ‘Transformed’ by Globalisation?” in *States in the Global Economy: Bringing Domestic Institutions Back In*, ed. Linda Weiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 309.

their view of whether or not this results in a loss of sovereignty. Due to the difficulties in being able to accurately empirically assess whether or not states are becoming less effective and whether or not changes in state-building capacity is a threat to the identity of the nation-state, Anderson's well-known theory, the "imagined community", is useful here. Nationalism is, according to Anderson, an *imagined political community*, as one cannot ever know everyone else in their nation, with each 'community' "distinguished [...] by the style in which they are imagined."⁸⁴ Therefore, today, there is a *perceived* loss of this "imagined sovereignty"⁸⁵ that has resulted in the defensive reactions of the citizens throughout the globe – in the form of rising nationalism.

The Reaction to Globalisation: A Rise in Nativism

Castells stated, as seen in today's world, that the "whirlwind of globalization is triggering defensive reactions around the world" due to insecurity in an age of "growing multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism in European societies", triggering racism and xenophobia.⁸⁶

Postelnicescu argued the struggle with the concept of the identity of the nation-state in an age of globalisation has led us to witness now, "after a long process of integration, a return to instinctive national sentiments."⁸⁷ These "national sentiments" here refer to nativism, whereby immigrants are less accepted into the nation than native inhabitants and which may be seen in many instances today, including the Charlottesville rally, the radical right-wing desire in the Netherlands to preserve the Dutch-ness of the Netherlands, Trump's "Make America Great Again", Brexit, and others.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983), 49.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁸⁶ Castells, *Power of Identity*, 326.

⁸⁷ Claudia Postelnicescu, "Europe's New Identity: The Refugee Crisis and the Rise of Nationalism", *Europe's Journal of Psychology* 12 No. 2 (2016), 204, <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v12i2.1191>.

⁸⁸ Manuela Achilles, Kyrill Kunakhovich and Nichole Shea, "Nationalism, Nativism, and the Revolt Against Globalization," *Council for European Studies: Special Feature* (January 31, 2018), <https://www.europenowjournal.org/2018/01/31/nationalism-nativism-and-the-revolt-against-globalization/>.

A decade ago, members of the EU were in the process of closer integration, to surrender aspects of sovereignty for the political and economic benefits of integration. Now in the world there is a move away from this, to some degree, and an attempt to reassert and reclaim the perceived loss of sovereignty of nation-states. Brexit, headed by figureheads like Nigel Farage, campaigned to leave the EU with a strong anti-immigrant rhetoric in a strong push for nationalism, in the hopes of allowing Britain to maintain its “Britishness.” United Kingdom (UK) foreign secretary Boris Johnson and Brexit secretary David Davis both resigned in July 2018 over May’s “soft” Brexit plans.⁸⁹ Similarly, many of the “Trumpians” feel as though “Americanness” was threatened by immigrants and globalisation.⁹⁰

The refugee crisis and the EU’s varying reactions to it reveal the EU’s current underlying fragility, as the rise of nativism threatens the very essence of the EU. Populists like Farage found common dissatisfaction against the integrated commonwealth of the European Union, with its shared currency and open borders. Italy’s refusal to take in a migrant rescue boat led to German chancellor Angela Merkel pleading for the EU to unify to deal with the issue at hand, “Europe must stick together, and the interests of every country must be considered” in order to “have a really unified European approach.”⁹¹ Merkel’s open-door migrant policy was also not met with unified agreement throughout the EU member countries. Beyond these instances in regards to the refugee crisis, the fragility of the EU may be seen as the richer Northern European countries having to carry more of the burden of the

⁸⁹ Heather Stewart, Pippa Crerar and Dan Sabbagh, “May’s Plan ‘Sticks in the Throat,’ says Boris Johnson as he Resigns over Brexit,” *The Guardian*, July 9, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jul/09/boris-johnson-resigns-as-foreign-secretary-brexit>.

⁹⁰ Brenda Major, Alison Blodorn and Gregory Major Blascovich, “The Threat of Increasing Diversity” Why Many White Americans Support Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election,” *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 21 No. 6, 931-940 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430216677304>.

⁹¹ Tom Parfitt, “‘We MUST Stick Together’ Desperate Merkel urges ‘fragile’ EU to Unite Over Migrant Crisis”, *Express*, June 13, 2018, <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/973902/Angela-Merkel-Germany-migrant-crisis-EU-news-immigration-Italy-Belgium-Charles-Michel>.

euro zone sovereign debt crisis is deepening the north-south divide. Therefore, the disintegrating EU, Trump's America, and Brexit portray a trend of rising nationalism, particularly of the nativist type, in the West today, which supports Castells' prediction.

Rising Nationalism and Jihadi Terrorist Sentiment

The question, then, becomes whether or not this rise in nationalism itself benefits jihadi terrorists as Islamists or not. The following section will discuss the relationship between nationalism and Islamism throughout the globe, by examining the relationship between Arab nationalism and Islamism, and examining possible practical difficulties rising nationalist sentiment in the West may provide for jihadi terrorists. Here the term "Islamism" also refers to Islamic militancy or fundamentalism.⁹²

As Sayyid Qutb wrote, the *Shari'a* will abolish the rule of man over men and instead ensure sovereignty will be given to God.⁹³ The ideology of global jihad relies on the destruction of nationalism, of the rule of man over men, with its goal of establishing a global, Islamic, caliphate with all men under the rule of God. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the "nation-state" as a "form of political organisation" under which a peoples share history, traditions, or language, in – and this is the point of focus here – "in a particular area under one government".⁹⁴ Therefore, many see Islamic fundamentalism simply as contradictory to the nation-state, Castells being one, arguing it is "the deepest manifestation of the demise of the nation-state" as the *umma* (community of believers) "is, by definition, transnational."⁹⁵

⁹² *Oxford Dictionaries*, s.v. "Islamism," accessed July 16, 2018, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/islamism>.

⁹³ Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1964), 56.

⁹⁴ *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. "Nation-State," accessed July 16, 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nation-state>.

⁹⁵ Castells, *Power of Identity*, 339.

Castells argues that when the identity of the nation-state is no longer strong, there will be replacement identities, such as various forms of fundamentalism.⁹⁶ This belief denotes a simplified relationship between legitimising identities and resistant or project identities as in a constant battle. He defines legitimising identities as those of the dominant institutions such as the nation-state, resistant identities as those that are marginalised in society and that then use these identities as a way to survive, while project identities refer to those of social actors who construct new identities and seek to change the current power structure of society.⁹⁷ Although Castells clarifies these three categories are not mutually exclusive (a resistant identity may become a project identity), he argues there is an inherent conflict between the legitimising identities of states and the defensive identities of resistant or project identities like Islamic fundamentalism, as: “when the nation-state does not represent a powerful identity [...] a social/political force defined by a particular identity (ethnic, territorial, religious) may take over the state.”⁹⁸

I will now attempt to show how this is an oversimplification, as this neglects the nuance of nation-states and nationalism throughout the globe, which is ultimately dependent on the historical, cultural, ethnic, and political processes of a particular region. Despite the ideological contradictions, nationalism and resistant or project identities are not simply mutually exclusive nor are they entirely separate entities that can be understood as having a negative relationship.

Arab nationalism and Islamism

While the concepts of the “nation” and the “state” have long been present, the “nation-state”, is broadly agreed upon within International Relations community to have been “codified” by

⁹⁶ Castells, *Power of Identity*, 339.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 339.

the 1648 Peace of Westphalia.⁹⁹ Regardless of whether non-Western polities would have adapted the nation-state concept themselves in time, colonial powers crudely instilled the concept in the Middle East, with much of the Middle Eastern map drawn by Great Britain and France as part of the Sykes-Picot agreement after Ottoman rule of the Middle East.¹⁰⁰

Therefore, Arab nationalism has been a force of unity for the Arab people, from opposition to the Ottoman Empire, then to the colonial powers of Europe, and then to US hegemony. As “nationalism” is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as the “loyalty or devotion to a nation,”¹⁰¹ “Arab nationalism”, then, is not quite the same as the nationalism one might think of in the West. The nation Arab nationalists are devoting to has historical, political, cultural, and socio-economic differences than the nation of Western nationalists, and therefore, will be, according to Anderson, imagined in different ways.

The school of thought that sees Arab nationalism and Islamism as separate, mutually exclusive identities and phenomena identifies the perceived failure of Arab nationalism with the devastating Arab defeat by Israel in the June 1967 war. In this case, the nationalist projects that were rampant in Egypt, Yemen, Syria, Iraq and across the Arab world in the early 1950s, were overtaken by a surge in Islamic sentiment.¹⁰² The collapse of the United Arab Republic in 1961 that caused Egyptian President Gamel Abdel Nasser to suffer, as the

⁹⁹ Benno Teschke, “Theorizing the Westphalian System of States: International Relations from Absolutism to Capitalism”, *European Journal of International Relations* 8 No. 1 (2002), 6, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066102008001001>.

¹⁰⁰ Tarek Osman, “Why Border Lines Drawn with a Ruler in WWI Still Rock the Middle East,” *BBC*, December 14, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25299553>.

¹⁰¹ *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. “Nationality,” accessed July 23, 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nationalism>.

¹⁰² Dorothy Zirkle, “Arab Nationalism Versus Islamic Fundamentalism as a Unifying Factor in the Middle East,” (Dissertation, Boston College, 2007).

leader of the “Arab nationalist march,”¹⁰³ is seen as another turning point from a nationalist era to an Islamist era in the Arab world.

Here it is viewed that the dwindling of Arab nationalism with its strong rhetoric in anti-imperialist sentiment is believed to be due to Britain’s departure from Egypt and Iraq, the Arab states who had “espoused the ideas of Arab nationalism” suffering the humiliation of ’67, and the gradual shift in power to the more conservative states, which has resulted in an era where “Islam became a way for people to address their grievances from an authentic, respected viewpoint.”¹⁰⁴ The “sun set on nationalism” and “rose on Islamic militancy”, as radical Islamists challenged governments throughout the region, such as the Baathist Iraqi government in the 1970s, the Baathists in Syria in the 1980s and the secular Algerian leaderships in the 1990s.¹⁰⁵

Yet the idea that Arab nationalism died and was replaced by Islamism relies on the assumption that Arab nationalism and Islamism are merely contradictory, and is a fallacy that suffers from oversimplification. It neglects the history of Islam, the Islamic movements that helped shape the political discourse and Arab society much before the 1960s, the decline of Ottoman and Persian power and how this affected the role of Islam in the Arab world, and so on. Instead, understanding Islamism as a part of the wider “Islamic phenomenon” allows one to acknowledge the deeply complex nature of it, with expressions such as *al-ba’th al-islami* (Islamic resurrection), *al-ittijah al-islami* (Islamic tendency) and *al-sahwah al-islamiyyah* (Islamic awakening); commonly used to refer to the Islamic phenomenon and portraying the

¹⁰³ Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 167.

¹⁰⁴ Zirkle, “Arab Nationalism Versus Islamic Fundamentalism,” 88, 98.

¹⁰⁵ Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, 296.

cyclical nature of it.¹⁰⁶ The Islamic phenomenon is an intrinsic part of Arab society, thereby inevitably intertwined with each part of Arab society, including Arab nationalism.

Chouraqui uses Descartes' *Discourse on the Method* to argue understanding Arab nationalism and Islamism as separate and opposing ideologies confuses the concept of *origin* with *foundation*.¹⁰⁷ In this sense, the *origin* of both these movements have similarities: an anti-West dynamic against the colonial European powers and then US hegemony, while the *foundation* of these movements, in other words, what these movements consists of, differs – as, while Arab nationalism embraces Western ideas, Islamism fundamentally rejects Western ideas and values.¹⁰⁸ Historically, the two have co-existed, overlapping, and been used by the other for their own aims. Islamism has been used to strengthen nationalist sentiment, such as through Al-Azhar as a unifying ideological tool.¹⁰⁹ Another instance of the two overlapping are the Iraqi Baathists, a nationalist force who held a deeply complex relationship with Islamic forces – in 1993 beginning to embark on a Return to Faith Campaign (which ultimately aimed to emphasis Islamic identity) and in 2003 collaborating with Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), which would later on become Islamic State, and thus, “by 2014, the Baathists and the jihadists were back to being allies.”¹¹⁰

The Egyptian Arab Spring witnessed Islamists, liberals, conservatives, all united in overthrowing the Mubarak regime. Tahrir Square was not split by sectarianism nor by ideology, as “inside the field no one asked about religion, no one cared. All Egyptians...all

¹⁰⁶ R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 4.

¹⁰⁷ Nathanael Chouraqui, “Are Arab Nationalism & Islamism Two Sides of the Same Coin?” *E-international Relations Students* (2016). Received from: <http://www.e-ir.info/2016/09/02/are-arab-nationalism-and-islamism-two-sides-of-the-same-coin/>

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Isabel Coles and Ned Parker, “The Baathists: How Saddam’s Men Helped Islamic State Rule,” *Reuters*, December 11, 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/mideast-crisis-iraq-islamicstate/>.

protesting, all united.”¹¹¹ Despite this unity disintegrating after the overthrow of the Mubarak regime, the unity during the revolutions and uprisings prove the two may work together in ways nationalism in the West and Islamism have not. The widespread suspicion that Nasser had approached the Muslim Brotherhood at some point in his life for a national cause further shows a larger phenomenon whereby Islamist and nationalist groups in the Arab world hold the potential to aid each other.

As Arab nationalism and Islamism are not mutually exclusive, then the argument that rising nationalism has a purely fundamentally contradictory relationship with jihadi terrorists as Islamist forces is faulty and proves oversimplified. The relationship between rising nationalism and Islamist fundamentalism is not *necessarily* purely fundamentally contradictory. While ideologically Arab nationalism and Islamism seem to be contradictory, with one rooted in transnational goals and the other in national, in practice this has not been the case. Therefore, the relationship between the two entities are deeply complex in the Arab world.

Practical difficulties for jihadi terrorists in the West

As we have now established the relationship is not mutually exclusive nor fundamentally contradictory, let us examine nationalism in the present West and its effect on Islamist forces. The nationalism in the West today is largely of the nativist type, as seen through the previously discussed events from today. The Schengen Agreement that allows open borders between EU member states for free movement of people and of trade today faces an increasing opposition. Rising nationalist sentiment calls for the abolishment of aspects of the EU like the Schengen Agreement. Right-wing politicians, including Farage, demanded the

¹¹¹ Nermeen Edrees, “Egypt: Inside Tahrir Square,” *Global Voices* February 4, 2011, Accessed July 23, 2018, <https://globalvoices.org/2011/02/04/egypt-inside-tahrir-square/>.

end to the Schengen Agreement after the 2016 Berlin attack, whereby the claimed perpetrator of the attack, Anis Amri, had travelled 1,000 miles across Europe.¹¹² Current temporarily reintroduced border controls have been instituted in the context of foreseeable events in France, Austria, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway in 2018.¹¹³ This will undoubtedly provide practical difficulties for jihadi terrorists trying to cross Europe by land from Syria to the UK.

Furthermore, rising nationalism in the West, will substitute, for some, as an identity instead of radical Islam, thereby being a disadvantage to jihadi terror networks. The jihadi terrorists in the West, such as in the case of Britain, with Khuram Butt, Salman Abedi, and so on, were examples of individuals whose British identity, for them, were unreliable, causing them to lean more on their Muslim identity.¹¹⁴ However, it could also have the opposite effect, as increasing nativism, strongly rooted in an “us” versus “them” rhetoric, may, at the same time, strengthen the rhetoric of the “them” – of jihadi terror networks. This contradicts Castells’ notion that Islamic fundamentalism would simply serve as a replacement identity to nationalist sentiment. For example, the rise in nationalism in Britain may cause more marginalised Muslim and Arab individuals to engage in the so-called “Muslim mobilisation” jihadi terror networks feed upon. Here it is the amount of xenophobia and Islamophobia that is present with the rising nationalist sentiment of the West that will largely determine how this may affect the possibility of the “Muslim mobilisation”.

¹¹² Wolfgang Lehmacher, “Why Border Controls Won’t Protect Europe Against Terrorism”, *World Economic Forum*, January 2, 2017, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/border-controls-schengen-europe-terrorism/>.

¹¹³ Migration and Home Affairs, *Temporary Reintroduction of Border Control*. (European Commission, 2018), https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/reintroduction-border-control_en.

¹¹⁴ Andrew Blick, Tufyal Choudhury and Stuart Weir, “The Muslim Communities”, in *The Rules of the Game: Terrorism, Community and Human Rights* (York: Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, 2007), <http://www.statewatch.org/news/2006/nov/uk-rules-of-the-game.pdf>.

This brings the discussion to the differences between nativism and civic nationalism. Civic nationalism, as a liberal ideology, places each individual with equal access to nationhood, and therefore is not rooted in the xenophobia of marginalised populations such as the Muslim populations. In contrast, nativism places native inhabitants above immigrants. Nationalism seen through Brexit and Trump's America, for example, are in line with the ideologies of nativism – rooted in anti-Islamophobic, anti-immigrant rhetoric, and therefore may act as a radicalising tool for jihadi terror networks. The rise of nativism here helps Salafi jihadist movements by unintentionally reinforcing their propaganda, which emphasises that the “Muslim world is suffering a prolonged, aggressive assault from the West.”¹¹⁵

Network integration, Castells argued, benefits non-states more so than states due to the paradox of horizontal corporation that comes from network integration to the sovereignty of the nation-state, and has caused the defensive reactions of citizens around the world. Regardless of whether states have been suffering a true loss of sovereignty, the perceived loss of sovereignty has manifested in a rise of nationalism throughout the West. This nationalism is largely of the nativism type, and has created unforeseen consequences – practical difficulties for jihadi terror networks in terms of mobilisation of attacks – but may have aided jihadi terror networks in their radicalisation process. Furthermore, Arab nationalism and Islamism share, to a degree, certain commonalities that nationalism present in the West does not, and therefore rising nationalism will have a different effect on jihadi terror networks throughout the world – depending on which region the nationalism occurs in and also what the nature of it is.

¹¹⁵ Sarah E. Zabel, *The Military Strategy of Global Jihad* (US: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 2.

Chapter II: Are ICTs more Beneficial to Non-state or State actors?

In order to further analyse who benefits more in an information age – jihadi terrorists or nation-states – this chapter will examine the effects of ICTs by examining the phenomenon of Jihad 3.0 as a non-state use of ICTs, and then will use China as a case study to examine how the Internet is utilised in one of the most powerful states today.

Castells' Argument: ICTs Have become More Open

The evolution of ICTs, according to Castells, has allowed for “decentralization of operations and focusing of control”, aiding the effectiveness of networks, and thus experiencing a general shift from vertical forms to horizontal corporation.¹¹⁶ To him, the evolution of ICTs brought about the end of mass audience and the rise of interactive networks. He divides the evolutionary stages into three: The Gutenberg Galaxy era of the one-way communication system, to the 1980’s “new media” era, to the 1990’s “multimedia system”, the interactive, two-way system of communications with the combination of audio, visual, and textual forms, in which the advent of the Internet, the network of the networks, has allowed this interactive system to be more accessible, easier to navigate, and to use.¹¹⁷

The first stage he discusses consists of largely homogenous audiences, with the process controlled by governments and corporate oligopolies, as “a similar message was simultaneously emitted from a few centralized senders to an audience of millions of receivers.”¹¹⁸ This television-medium dominated system of mass media transformed in the 1980s with the emergence of diversification of “new media”. This second stage, the 1980’s “new media”, was able to have the possibility of targeting audiences with the multiplication

¹¹⁶ Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*, 176.

¹¹⁷ Achyut S. Godbole, *Data Communications and Networks* (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited, 2002), 40.

¹¹⁸ Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*, 359.

of television channels which ultimately led to a more segmented audience, witnessing a shift from a mass society to a segmented society.¹¹⁹ The third stage, the “multimedia system”, in the 1990s is characterised by its interactive potential and the advent of the Internet. The point of focus here is that he argues for a shift from a one-way communication system of homogenous audiences with a few in control of the message, to a two-way communication system with diverse, segmented audiences, interactive in its essence and with many more forms of communication.

His argument for the shift to more open, two-way communications is also used as a counterargument to the fear of an Orwellian “Big Brother” prophecy becoming reality, where the totalitarian state has full surveillance and control over its people. Although new technologies may be used by states for censorship and repression, he argues it can also be used by citizens for more control over the state by increased access to information, more ways and possibilities to participate in the public sphere, ultimately, “holding governments in tighter accordance to their promises.”¹²⁰ Essentially, a two-way big brother surveillance. The Snowden leaks and Guantanamo Bay are some of the many examples in which the people have held their government to their values due to knowledge attained through new technologies. Therefore, Castells emphasises the open-ness of ICTs as benefiting the aims of non-state actors more so than previously.

However, evolved technologies like the smartphone have instilled newfound fear of the Orwellian state in comparison to the idea of the Internet as a democratic digital-commons where state power would be limited. The Telescreen from Orwell’s *1984* that tracks and monitors “thought crimes” is essentially a mass-surveillance system that permeates each part

¹¹⁹ Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*, 368.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 341.

of everyday life, and today, in reality, “people carry around Telescreen in their pockets in the form of smartphones.”¹²¹ New ICTs like smartphones being able to track individuals’ movements, credit card record histories, and speech and facial recognition technologies, go against Castells’ emphasis of the “open-ness” potential of ICTs.

Examining Castells’ Theory

In order to examine Castells’ theory of the evolution of ICTs and the interactive potential of the third stage, this section will analyse the phenomenon of Jihad 3.0 to see how non-state actors may be harnessing the Internet to their benefit today.

Jihad 3.0

“Jihad 3.0” and “media mujahideen” are terms commonly used to refer to Islamic State’s use of the multimedia system, referring to a more “popularized and available jihad”, moving from obscure web forums in official Arabic to Twitter and other social media platforms.¹²² Jihad 1.0 is used to refer to Islamic State of Iraq and Syria’s (ISIS) split from Al Qaeda in 2014, while Jihad 2.0 refers to the current movements of ISIS, and Jihad 3.0 is used to refer to what we should be arguably anticipating – the possible shift from the physical realm to a virtual caliphate; the modern jihadist propaganda.¹²³ The term “jihad 3.0” is used here to refer to the still changing form of jihad that allows jihadi terrorists to “fight” also through the virtual

¹²¹ John Broich, “2017 isn’t ‘1984’ – It’s Stranger than Orwell Imagined,” *Independent*, February 01, 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/2017-isn-t-1984-it-s-stranger-than-orwell-imagined-a7555341.html>.

¹²² Laurence Bindner, “Wilayat Internet: ISIS’ Resilience Across the Internet and Social Media”, *Bellingcat*, September 01, 2017, <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2017/09/01/wilayat-internet-isis-resilience-across-internet-social-media/>.

¹²³ Tracy Moran, “Jihad 3.0: A Virtual Caliphate”, *Ozy*, December 01, 2016, <https://www.ozy.com/fast-forward/jihad-30-a-virtual-caliphate/74163>.

realm, with an emphasis on the sophisticated aspect of jihad terror networks' use of social media.¹²⁴

One characteristic of Jihad 3.0 is Islamic State's ability to tailor their messages according to multiple audiences.¹²⁵ English speaking recruiters and foreign fighter disseminators in Syria like Australian convert Musa Cerantonio and US based preacher with fluent English, Ahmad Musa Jibril,¹²⁶ are thought to have allowed "terrorist movements to control the entire communications process", essentially making "jihadi terrorists more global in scope, reducing the need for physical contact and making possible the formation of a decentralized structure of autonomous groups that share the same ideology."¹²⁷

Furthermore, the sophistication of jihadist modern propaganda on social media websites is another dynamic of Jihad 3.0. This may be seen through the phenomenon of Twitter handle "Shami Witness", one of the top disseminators for the Syrian cause on Twitter, who is thought to have been "profoundly influential" in "spreading support for foreign fighters alongside recruiting them."¹²⁸ Although he turned out to be a troll (an office worker far from Syria, in reality, in Bangalore, India) he played "a role linking wannabes with foreign fighters."¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Scott Shane and Hubbard Ben, "ISIS Displaying a Deft Command of Varied Media," *New York Times: Middle East*, August 30, 2014, <http://www.garyvollbracht.com/wp-content/uploads/14.08.31NYT-ISIS-Displaying-a-Deft-Command-of-Varied-Media.pdf>.

¹²⁵ Tobias Feakin and Benedict Wilkinson, "The Future of Jihad: What Next for ISIL and al-Qaeda?" *Australian Strategic Policy Institute* (2015): 6, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/30671940.pdf>.

¹²⁶ Joseph Carter, Shiraz Maher and Peter Neumann, "#Greenbirds: Measuring Importance and Influence in Syrian Foreign Fighter Networks," *The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence* (2014), <http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ICSR-Report-Greenbirds-Measuring-Importance-and-Influence-in-Syrian-Foreign-Fighter-Networks.pdf>.

¹²⁷ George Michael, "Adam Gadahn and Al-Qaeda's Internet Strategy", *Middle East Policy* 16 No. 3 (2009), 144.

¹²⁸ Mark Townsend and Toby Helm, "Jihad in a Social Media Age: How can the West Win the Online War?" *The Guardian*, August 23, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/23/jihad-social-media-age-west-win-online-war>.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

This creates previously unavailable difficulties for counter-terrorism proponents. Jihad 3.0 sees Islamic State's "well-oiled media machine", for example Al Hayat Media Center, as having "outrun any government's ability to keep up," with members like Al-Awlaki, a prominent Al Qaeda recruiter who used YouTube extensively.¹³⁰ As Betz and Phillips argue, terrorists are winning the "war of ideas" because they have "a strategy in their strategic communications, whereas in those of the West there is not."¹³¹ Furthermore, jihadi terrorists are utilising the Internet more and more swiftly to spread their "master narratives."¹³² The fast-changing aspect of the Internet with continuous fluctuations in moral codes and changes in regards to which actors have responsibilities creates additional difficulties for counter-terrorism actors, such as policy challenges due to dissent over the responsibilities of tech companies and platforms to the content available on their websites or trust issues in intelligence-sharing between countries' intelligence agencies.

Islamic State influences the communication processes through various forms that were not previously available during Castells' Gutenberg Galaxy of one-way communication systems or the 1980s' "new media" system. This includes trolling, video games like "Salil al-Sawarem" (the Clanging of the Swords), adapted from the game *Grand Theft Auto*, and high-resolution videos on YouTube, as Islamic State continuously and swiftly adapt to new forms of communication systems, targeting multiple audiences to spread their messages and gain attraction and support.¹³³ This seems to support Castells' theorised shift from the Gutenberg Galaxy era, where information processes were largely controlled by those in control, to a two-way, multimedia system. However, while terrorists today have more agency in the

¹³⁰ Feakin and Wilkinson, "Future of Jihad."

¹³¹ Betz and Phillips, "Putting the Strategy back," 43.

¹³² Ibid., 53.

¹³³ Ahmed Al-Rawi, "Video Games, Terrorism, and ISIS's Jihad 3.0," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 30 no. 4 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2016.1207633>.

communication processes than before, others argue the Internet should not be thought of as a tool merely for non-state actors but more so as a double-edged sword, also aiding government and counter-terrorism proponents in their interests through means like mass twitter account suspensions, tracking and stopping money flows of jihadi terror networks, and long-term monitoring.¹³⁴

Therefore, although non-state actors are not able to control the *entire* communication process, it is undeniable that the developments of ICTs have allowed for an era where anyone is a potential citizen journalist, able to join in and sway information processes – *in countries of stable democracies*. It should be noted democracies – and here I refer to stable democracies that hold free and fair elections without the imminent threat of military intervention and not insecure or partial democracies, like the one instilled violently in Egypt from the Arab Spring¹³⁵ – have certain limitations in their ability to counter terrorism through the Net due to their responsibility to uphold claimed civil liberties. This is because “developed democratic states wish to preserve democratic values,” like freedom of expression and speech, and therefore security measures like mass-monitoring and certain extents to intelligence gathering are considerably constrained.¹³⁶ However, as China is a case in point of a state not bound so strongly by these limitations, China acts as a good case study to examine how states may benefit from evolving ICTs.

¹³⁴ J.M. Berger and J. Morgan, “the ISIS Twitter Census: Defining and Describing the Population of ISIS Supporters on Twitter.” *The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World: Analysis Paper*, no. 20 (2015), 58, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/isis_twitter_census_berger_morgan.pdf.

¹³⁵ W. Eubank and L. Weinberg, “Terrorism and Democracy: Perpetrators and Victims,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13 No. 1 (2010): 157, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550109609674>.

¹³⁶ Albertus Schoeman. “Will Limits on Free Expression Prevent Terrorism?” *Institute for Security Studies: Africa in the World Report* (2017): 9, <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/aitwr-2.pdf>.

China

Castells discusses China as a developmental state in his third book of the trilogy, *End of Millenium*, and its importance as the “only country in the world which is having some success in controlling web sites and hook ups.”¹³⁷ He goes on to argue the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is aware of the benefits of developing information technologies but is also aware of the paradox of doing so in an information-controlled society due to the multitude of possible political costs of doing so.¹³⁸ He predicted there will be identity-based mobilisations like Fa LunGong, a Chinese spiritual movement with ties to Taoism that has been banned in China and is seen as a great threat by the CCP, that will arise again with the goal of seizing the state, but also goes on to note the possibility of the Chinese state reasserting themselves in “uncompromising nationalism” if they do bow into increasing global pressure combined with restless domestic politics.¹³⁹ In other words, the regime may well rely more so on its nationalistic identity in the face of social instability.¹⁴⁰

Today Fa LunGong still suffers under heavy repression. Nationalism in China is not simple – it is not simply stimulated from above, by the CCP (as many Western scholars believe), nor is it a popular movement from below.¹⁴¹ Instead, there is a large bottom-up nationalist feeling and surge, which is not independent from the influence of the CCP, such as the patriotic education permeated throughout the country and the promotion of nationalisation through consumer culture.¹⁴² This stronghold of nationalism prevalent in China today may be the “uncompromising nationalism” Castells referred to, as a response to “increasing global

¹³⁷ Castells, *End of Millenium*, 329.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 355.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 337.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 337.

¹⁴¹ Perry Link, “A Short Anatomy of Chinese Nationalism Today”, *US-China Economic and Security Review Commission*, June 18, 2008: 7, <https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/6.18.08Link.pdf>.

¹⁴² Shameer Mandagal, “Development of Nationalism in China”, *Cogent Social Sciences* No. 2 (2016), 6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2016.1235749>.

pressure” conflicted with “restless domestic politics.” As one of the oldest civilisations in the world, the Chinese are known for their pride of the five thousand years of civilization, often viewing China as a victim of Western imperialism through instances like the British acquisition of Hong Kong, the First Opium War, the Sino-Japanese War, and the Japanese invasion and occupation from 1931-45.¹⁴³ This “Make China Great Again” narrative, intertwined strongly with a rhetoric of victimisation, is essentially the “end of century humiliation idea.”¹⁴⁴

Due to the available open-ness of ICTs, Castells argues the fear should not be of “Big Brother” but of the “little sisters” – the gathering of individuals’ information by business forms, “in the creation of a market for this information.”¹⁴⁵ The credit card is giving away privacy, just like social media and private third-party companies, which are all banding together to create the “little sisters”. This is the decentralisation and diffusion of surveillance that Castells theorised. The 2018 Cambridge Analytica scandal that was revealed to have collected the information of 87 million Facebook users to influence political elections¹⁴⁶ supports Castells’ theory. Castells predicted for this decentralisation and diffusion of surveillance to be due to the growing financial and legal independence of the media, the rise in third-party companies in control of information, and the increasing transnationalisation of crime, which would cause states to have to work increasingly with each other (his theory of the network state as discussed in Chapter 1) – ultimately concluding that because of this decentralisation, states no longer hold the monopoly over surveillance.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Jayshree Bajoria, “Nationalism in China,” *Council on Foreign Relations* (2008), <https://www.cfr.org/background/nationalism-china>.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Castells, *Power of Identity*, 342.

¹⁴⁶ Olivia Solon, “Facebook says Cambridge Analytica may have Gained 37m More Users’ Data”, *The Guardian*, April 04, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/apr/04/facebook-cambridge-analytica-user-data-latest-more-than-thought>.

¹⁴⁷ Castells, *Power of Identity*, 344.

However, China, as a non-democratic country that is not held as tightly to claimed civil liberties, leans more towards a “Big Brother” society than a “little sisters” society. The CCP has a stronghold over their surveillance, which they attain through China’s “tech giants” such as Alibaba and Tencent, due to the heavy investment into the tech sector after the 1995 State Council development strategy.¹⁴⁸ Tencent’s social media app, “WeChat” has monopolised the market – now offering capabilities ranging including but not limited to writing restaurant reviews, transferring money, paying bills, topping-up mobile phone, ordering taxis and food delivery, buying movie tickets, renting bikes, reserving hotels, flights and trains, buying used goods, and so on – in an all-encompassing system that is readily available for the government as a surveillance tool. The Chinese *hukou* system (National ID card system) and China Central Television (more commonly known as CCTV), one of the official mouthpieces of the CCP, further allow the CCP’s monopolisation over surveillance.

China’s censorship today is probably the biggest case against Castells’ claim that the “architecture of the network is, and will remain, technologically open, enabling widespread public access and seriously limiting governmental or commercial restrictions.”¹⁴⁹ It is well known that China’s censorship is deep and extensive, and the CCP has implemented measures to exert far greater control over its people through the use of ICTs, the outcome of which produces new projects like the Social Credit System (SCS). The national reputation system will be put in place by 2020, and is “basically a big data gamified version of the Communist Party’s surveillance methods,” assigning a social rating to each citizen which can

¹⁴⁸ Daniel Rechtschaffen, “How China’s Tech Empire is Being Used to Gather Data on Its Citizens,” *Forbes*, January 09, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danielrechtschaffen/2018/01/09/how-beijing-built-a-tech-empire-and-then-turned-it-against-its-citizens/#1a28ae734424>.

¹⁴⁹ Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*, 384.

affect acceptability to private schools, access to jobs, being banned from flights, and other things.¹⁵⁰ The Chinese government has already begun monitoring credit rating systems.

China's censorship of the newspaper, television, radio, video games, print media, text messaging, and more, is invasive and also deeply political, as issues pertaining to Falun Gong, the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, police brutality, Tibet, XinJiang and Taiwan are all either not allowed to be discussed or the discussion is tightly controlled and monitored. The "great firewall of China" successfully blocks many of the biggest used websites in the world, allowing Chinese copy-cats like Baidu, Weibo, Youku and Taobao, mimicking Western websites (in order: Google, Twitter, YouTube, e-Bay) and allowing them to be successful. The Great Firewall is also used for purposes of national security, to control information and to control communication flows. Other instances such as the *South China Morning Post* reporting in 2017 a Chinese man who changed his profile picture in WeChat to a picture of bin Laden, then joked in a private WeChat group for people to join Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) with him, was arrested the following month for "spreading terrorist and extremist propaganda" with a nine-month prison sentence and a one thousand yuan (£113) fine,¹⁵¹ further shows this. In March 2018 authorities made new regulations to aid the Great Firewall, including banning the use of internet circumvention tools.

As an oppressed separatist group, the Uyghurs provide a good case study to examine how non-state actors may utilise the Internet against a powerful state not bound by civil liberties in the same way countries of stable democratic are. The Uyghur population in East

¹⁵⁰ Rachel Botsman, "Big Data Meets Big Brother as China moves to Rate its Citizens," *Wired*, October 21, 2017, <https://www.wired.co.uk/article/chinese-government-social-credit-score-privacy-invasion>.

¹⁵¹ Sarah Zheng, "Comment about Islamic State on Social Media lands Chinese Man in Prison", *South China Morning Post*, September 24, 2017, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2112605/comment-about-islamic-state-social-media-lands-chinese-man-prison/>.

Turkistan live under strictly controlled oppression under the CCP since 1949, when Mao Zedong captured East Turkistan (known in China as “xinjiang”) with the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). The Uyghur population are a Turkic ethnicity that practice Islam. In 2018 thousands of Uyghurs have been detained in camps for assimilation and surveillance, reportedly being required to “...praise the ruling Communist Party, sing revolutionary songs, learn to speak Mandarin, study the thought of Chinese leader Xi Jinping, and confess perceived transgressions such as praying at a mosque or traveling abroad.”¹⁵² Uyghur students who had gone to study abroad were ordered to return back to Xinjiang, and in July, residents in the capital of Xinjiang, Urumqi, were forced to “install surveillance apps on their phones.”¹⁵³ Claiming to be for the sake of counter-terrorism and counter-extremism, the CCP’s “Strike Hard” campaign, authorised in 2014, includes forced assimilation, imprisoning Uyghurs with foreign connections, having tens of thousands kept in so-called “political education” centers, and having “home stays” imposed on Uyghur families in Xinjiang.¹⁵⁴

A study by Clothy, Koku, Erkin and Emat show that the Uyghurs largely use what is coined the method of “hidden transcript”, used to engage in political activism online in an indirect way. This “hidden transcript” method includes the use of subtlety by employing linguistic codes that will only be understood by Uyghurs as “a substitute for direct subversion against authorities”, and therefore escaping the watchful eye of the CCP.¹⁵⁵ This is a prime

¹⁵² Steven Jiang, “Thousands of Uyghur Muslims detained in Chinese ‘political education camps,” *CNN*, February 02, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/02/asia/china-xinjiang-detention-camps-intl/index.html>.

¹⁵³ Human Rights Watch, *China: Events of 2017* (New York: HRW, 2018), <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/china-and-tibet>.

¹⁵⁴ Human Rights Watch, *China: Visiting Officials Occupy Muslim Region: ‘Becoming Family’ Campaign Intensifies Repression in Xinjiang* (New York: HRW, 2018), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/13/china-visiting-officials-occupy-homes-muslim-region>.

¹⁵⁵ Rebecca A. Clothey, Emmanuel F. Koku, Erfan Erkin and Husenjan Emat, “A voice for the Voiceless: Online Social Activism in Uyghur Language Blogs and State Control of the Internet in China,” *Information, Communication & Society* 19 No. 6 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2015.1061577>.

example of how computer-mediated communication (CMC) may be utilised by non-state actors against a state, no less against one of the most powerful states of today. While this form of what Castells called “counter-power” in his 2007 “Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society”¹⁵⁶ may be specific to its contexts (the way in which the CCP employs control, the way of the Uyghur people, and so on), it shows that counter-power may be utilised through the Internet by non-state actors today – even in a country that heavily represses Internet freedom and has many violations of fundamental human rights.

While these possibilities are provided by CMC, there is still a massive disparity between the communication of power of the state and non-state actors. The advantage provide by ICTs in China is firmly with the state. China’s deep and extensive surveillance system shows, contradictory to what Castells predicted, that perhaps the Orwellian prophecy may still come true, as China showcases the opposite of a decentralisation and diffusion of surveillance, and indeed, the CCP holds a firm grasp over its surveillance systems.

Chinese Internet censorship shows how states are potentially shifting the balance to states in today’s network society. Jihadi terrorists are able to exploit the Internet in countries with higher levels of Internet-freedom, namely those of stable democracies, where the state is constricted in their ability to assert control over ICTs. Castells’ theorised shift to the 1990’s multimedia of a two-way multi-media, open communication systems can still be seen today, through Jihad 3.0 and the social activism of socially repressed groups like the Uyghurs. However, contrary to the mainstream school of thought arguing the Internet aids non-state actors more so than states, China is a sound counter-argument.

¹⁵⁶ Manuel Castells, “Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society,” *International Journal of Communication* 1 (2007), 238-266, <http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/viewFile/46/35>.

VI. Discussion

The first chapter of the Analysis section came to the conclusion that rising trends of nationalism today seen in the West may lead to many, including Castells, perceiving this as having a mutually exclusive relationship with defensive identities such as Islamism. Careful examination of current events shows that it is not so simple. Using Anderson's definition of nations as imagined communities, then, nation states are also imagined as sovereign. Manifested in trends of nationalism, the perceived loss of sovereignty, can be seen through events today in the West, largely as what Castells accurately predicted to be the defensive reactions of citizens. Current events in the West such as Brexit, the disintegrating European Union and Trump's America shows a rise not simply in nationalist sentiment, but in nativism, which may both hinder and aid jihadi terror networks. The EU's closed borders provides practical difficulties for jihadi terrorists in terms of mobilisation. But the rise in nativism in the West may also have a latent effect in strengthening the propaganda and narrative of Islamic State, acting as a reinforcing 'Muslim mobilisation' tool, while may also simultaneously act as a substitute for some instead of radical Islam.

Upon further understanding, Castells' understanding of a rise in nationalism being a threat to defensive identities like Islamic fundamentalism fails to note how nationalism is nuanced globally. Arab nationalism and Islamism may have certain overlaps that are not present between the nationalism present in the West and Islamism; historically, the two have coexisted alongside the other and been exploited by the other – as seen through Al-Azhar, the Iraqi Baathists and the Egyptian Arab Spring. Furthermore, Arab nationalism has an element for the Arab people as a force against colonialism and imperialism that the nationalism present in the West does not have. Therefore, the notion that the 1950s was overtaken by an Islamic sentiment, catalysed further by the humiliating Arab defeat in the 1967 war, is

reductionist as it ultimately sees the two as exclusive, neglecting to see the complexity and intertwining between the two.

The second chapter found the phenomenon Jihad 3.0 supports Castells' theory of a shift to more open, two-way communication systems. While jihadi terrorists are not able to control the entire communication process, developments of ICTs have aided their ability and control in the communication process as non-state actors. It must be noted Jihad 3.0 is more effective and may be perpetuated more widely in countries with higher Internet-freedom. However, through examination of the monopolisation of WeChat, the new Social Credit System, the Great Firewall, the "tech giants", and the additional censorship and repression implemented in 2018 against the Islamic Uyghur population, it becomes clear the CCP is maintaining control over its surveillance and over the Internet- contrary to what Castells' and other theorists who see the information society as a turning point for non-state actors by aiding their social mobilisation argue. The repressed Uyghur population may engage in social activism through use of the hidden transcript methods, yet despite the possibilities provided by CMC for non-state actors like the Uyghur population, the communication of power is still largely in the hands of the state in the case of China.

The society "Oceania" Orwell depicted in *1984*, whereby a single-party system that had a small inner party used technologies for mass-monitoring, worryingly reflects China today. With the rise of China as a new global power, and with new phenomena like CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) and Xi Jinping's "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) initiative,¹⁵⁷ China is already a contesting force to the US as a global power with the ability to shape agendas around the globe. Therefore, examining China as an important and powerful

¹⁵⁷ Joshua P. Meltzer, "China's One Belt One Road Initiative: A View from the United States," *Brookings Institute*, June 19, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/chinas-one-belt-one-road-initiative-a-view-from-the-united-states/>.

player in global politics today can show us how the Internet may be used almost unilaterally by certain states to exert control over non-state actors.

VII. Conclusion

In conclusion, states are not necessarily at a critical disadvantage in the theorised information age. The war on terror is one of the most urgent and relevant topics in the current political climate, and using events from today to examine Manuel Castells' network society framework adds a more holistic perspective to the orthodox literature on terrorism studies as well as making it current and relevant. China's harsh control over its Internet and monopoly over its surveillance, as well as the rise in nativism of the West in response to the perceived loss of sovereignty in the information age (which was found to both hinder and aid jihadi terror networks), revealed a complex outcome to the research question of who benefits more in an information age, jihadi terrorists or states. The findings go beyond the idea that the theorised information age has simply ushered in an era whereby networks are needed to fight networks so that governments are at a fundamental disadvantage, with the orthodox literature being populated by a fear of the "new" modern jihadi terrorist.

By examining larger societal structures such as the dynamics of the information age, the perceived sovereignty of nation-states, can be seen to affect state power in the war on terror and should therefore be vigorously further examined. Further deeper analysis of other theories put forth by Castells in *The Information Age* trilogy would be useful in contributing to the body of literature within TTS, going beyond the trends set by Hoffman, Crenshaw, Schmid – the first wave of terrorism scholars – and also beyond the domination within TTS of military generals, Central Intelligence Agency analysts and the like.

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