

not an Indonesia expert before writing this book. The analysis is incisive, insightful, and engaging. Given the technical details of the reforms and the complexity of the political context, weaving a lucid and sometimes gripping narrative is not an easy task. *Constitutional Change and Democracy in Indonesia* should be required reading for students of Indonesian politics and scholars of constitutional and political reform.

Democracy's Fourth Wave? Digital Media and the Arab Spring. By Philip N. Howard and Muzammil M. Hussain. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. 160p. \$105.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

Revolution Stalled: The Political Limits of the Internet in the Post-Soviet Sphere. By Sarah Oates. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. 240p. \$58.00.
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— Michael J. Jensen, *University of Canberra*

Theoretical developments in the study of online politics have been predominantly centered on the investigation of political life in the United States and United Kingdom and concerned with this question: Does the Internet mobilize persons to participate in democratic political life or does it reinforce prevailing patterns of participation and power structure? While theories of political mobilization and democratization are at the forefront of each of the books under review, both investigate the applicability of these theories within nondemocratic regimes outside the West. These books do not approach the topic solely through an Internet-effects perspective centered on the consequences of the Internet for democratization or political mobilization in their respective cases. Instead, these authors consider the Internet as both an independent and a dependent variable, asking: If particular configurations of political contexts supervene on the conduct of online political life, what are the effects of online politics for offline political life under varied conditions?

The conclusion of both books is that the consequences of digital networked communications for political life amount to “evolution, not revolution” (*Democracy's Fourth Wave*, p. 36; cf. *Revolution Stalled*, p. 25), eschewing technologically reductionist accounts of political transformation. Both books move beyond the limited theoretical ground of the mobilization-reinforcement debate by situating the involvement of digital networked communications within specific cases and tracing out their implications.

These books are case centered in their approaches, drawing upon the unique attributes of the countries under investigation to draw conclusions regarding the implications of online political life for offline politics. The attributes receiving most attention in both books are institutional features, particularly those concerning the regulation of political speech and the organization of the media system. The global reach of the Internet and technical capacities to

circumvent national restrictions bely attempts to limit capacities for autonomous political deliberation by publics, short of directly interfering with Internet access, a step that is not without significant economic and political costs. Philip Howard and Muzammil Hussain base their analysis on the study of 23 regimes that experienced the Arab Spring in varying degrees. These cases are segmented by the size and consequences of the political mobilizations. Sarah Oates outlines recent experiences with the Internet and its role in political mobilization in Russia. Her book covers Internet use and political attitudes, the use of the Internet by political parties, its role in mobilizing demonstrations against vote fixing during the 2011 election, and the online mobilization regarding health policy and its implementation. Across both sets of cases, even when there are nominal speech protections, these are little more than “the recognition of values without the strength of law” (*Revolution Stalled*, p. 93).

While all of the cases covered in these books have generally limited speech protections, they are differentiated with respect to their media systems and their efforts to regulate online political communications. Although international satellite television is easily accessible across the Middle East and North Africa as well as Russia, these channels were instrumental in the construction of a pan-Arab public sphere in the former case, whereas in Russia, these stations remain marginal, with traditional state broadcasters persisting in setting the terms of political debate and domestic outlets practice self-censorship (*ibid.*, p. 14). In Russia, Internet use is increasing rapidly, and the percentage of the Russian public online surpasses all of the states in Howard and Hussain's analysis by a wide margin. Nevertheless, despite their marginal numbers, the digitally networked participants of the Arab Spring tend to be younger, well educated, and urban members of the middle class (*ibid.*, p. 86), a segment which has historically given rise to democratic revolutions (Barrington Moore, Jr., *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, 1966). Finally, while Middle Eastern and North African countries have, to a large extent, imposed regulations on accessibility to Internet content, Russia has focused on surveillance targeting individuals, and the overall level of freedom is not unlike that in Egypt in the time leading up to the Arab Spring (*ibid.*, p. 89).

The relationship between technology and political liberalization is therefore not monocausal in either account, depending heavily on the emergence of apertures within the political opportunity structure. At a mass level, a critical issue raised by both books concerns whether online communications participated in the creation of something akin to a Habermasian notion of a public sphere. Although Jürgen Habermas himself was skeptical that online communications would produce anything more than fragmented and isolated spaces of communication, he conceded that the Internet opens spaces of political

speech where it is otherwise restricted (cf. Habermas, “Political Communication in Media Society: Does Democracy Still Enjoy an Epistemic Dimension? The Impact of Normative Theory on Empirical Research,” *Communication Theory* 16 [no. 4, 2006]: 411–26). Given the loose coupling between the technology and the particular political contexts within which political actors were operating in both Russia and Middle Eastern and North African countries, the answer is highly qualified and circumscribed.

Howard and Hussain likewise see the expansion of access to information as involved in creating “what Habermas might recognize as the shared text of a digital public sphere” (*Fourth Wave*, p. 36). Furthermore, the rise of Al Jazeera as not only a satellite broadcaster but an alternative information source combining both its reporting with viewer-produced text and video content in its broadcasts and on its Websites aided in the production and amplification of a public sphere transcending national boundaries (*ibid.*, Chap. 5). For Oates, despite the favorable value orientation of Russian Internet users toward the conditions that would underpin such a public sphere (*Revolution Stalled*, p. 74), she concludes that on the whole, the public sphere formed by Russian party Websites produces fragmentation (*ibid.*, p. 128).

Perhaps the greatest weakness across these books is that the richness of the case studies suggests that digital media are involved in transformations that transcend their otherwise tepid theoretical conclusions. First, one common theme in Howard and Hussain’s account of the Arab Spring and Oates’s account of health movements in Russia is that the most successful forms of technologically enabled crowds were formed not on the basis of identities forged from common origins but of those created on the basis of common destinies. The Arab Spring drew persons otherwise alienated from the prevailing system of cleavages who were insisting that things needed to change to provide a better future. Rather than seeking to take a side in the secularism–theocracy divide, Howard and Hussain write that “these mostly cosmopolitan and younger generations of mobilizers felt disenfranchised by their political systems, saw vast losses and poor management of national economies and development” (*Fourth Wave*, p. 118). Likewise, the health politics in Russia concerned not which constituency won or lost but the performance of whichever party in government was providing health care, “basing [its] arguments on the state’s obligation to provide care under a ‘moral’ framework” (*Revolution Stalled*, p. 163), rather than the rights and interests of a specific group. Although these conclusions were termed “small victories” involving “relatively limited health issues” (*ibid.*, p. 161), they perhaps point to a significant transformation in the organization of politics. Under both the contemporary Russian regime and authoritarian regimes involved in the Arab Spring, there was limited capacity for organizing on the

input side of interest and identity politics. However, these cases point to political organization around the provision of public policy outputs demanded by the public.

This raises a second, broader theme concerning the involvement of technology in political organization. Both books recognize the indivisibility of offline and online politics, but this relationship is not theoretically elaborated in either place, though there are traces in each book with which to work in building such an account. Unlike the shifting between the Internet as a dependent and independent variable, on this account, networked digital communications like social media, Web forums, and satellite television innervate the spaces of political communication (Jannis Kallinikos, *The Consequences of Information*, 2006), serving as a conduit for contagion across countries, trespassing the national borders of local media systems in the context of the Arab Spring, and creating a political community across much of the Arab world, which is irreducible to the singular intervention of the Internet or sets of actors using it. Likewise, the health politics and vote fraud mobilizations cannot be reduced to agency and intentionality reflected in the values and goals of Internet users. Russian users may support the operation of a relatively open public sphere, but as Oates observes, they participate in a space where they are often but not always frustrated; they are simultaneously acted upon, as well as contribute to, the communication and information context in which they operate.

If politics takes place through interactions and if online communications are playing an increasingly important role in those interactions, then the consequences of the Internet for those politics are likely to play out in the transformation of political structures more broadly.

Qatar: Politics and the Challenges of Development. By Matthew Gray. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2013. 271p. \$59.95.

Qatar: Small State, Big Politics. By Mehran Kamrava. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013. 232p. \$35.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592715000912

— Michael Herb, *Georgia State University*

When Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani overthrew his father in 1995, Qatar was a sleepy, mostly unknown emirate in the Gulf. During his reign, Hamad turned Qatar into a prominent player in regional power politics, a major exporter of natural gas, and the future site of the 2022 World Cup. The two books under review, by Matthew Gray and Mehran Kamrava, tell the story of that transformation, up to, but not including, Hamad’s improbable and unexpected abdication in 2013. Book-length treatments of Qatari politics are scarce, and these two books provide much-needed and very useful help for understanding the rise of Qatar to international prominence.