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TURKEY'S FOREIGN POLICY AND THE ARAB SPRING

Setback or catalyst for a power on the rise?

Julia Dalhoff

Abstract In the last decade, Turkey's foreign policy has become more diversified, proactive and ambitious. When Turkey was forging links with autocratic regimes in the MENA region, the Arab Spring took it by surprise and profoundly changed its strategic options, leading to a policy turn. This article argues that although the uprisings have created challenges, including loss of strategic partners and trade and conflict in Syria with the issue of Kurdish separatism, Turkey can still expand its influence further after the revolutions. This is due to the new regional power vacuum, Turkey's power of attraction in Arab countries, and the possibility of economic engagement in the new states.

1 Introduction

The 2011-12 uprisings in Arab countries and the resulting regime changes and conflicts have had major repercussions in the arena of international relations as

they upset the balance of power in what is called the Middle East/North Africa region. The revolts have stunned the West, alarmed remaining dictators and received vivid attention from the surrounding countries. Turkey is a key player in this turbulent region. Positioned at the cross-roads of continents and cultures, prosperous amid countries that are poor, a stable state in an unstable region, an energy transit country, a Muslim democracy, a NATO member and a frustrated EU candidate - Turkey and its foreign policy decisions are relevant to many actors. The country's strategic outlook has been strongly affected by the uprisings and its response is of vital interest to the whole area, as well as to its traditional Western partners.

During the last decade, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has given Turkey's foreign policy a new, proactive outlook based on a more confident, nationalist conception of his country as a regional power that ought to recognize its own potential and assert a stronger influence. The question to be asked in this article is how the Arab Spring has come to bear upon Turkey's aspirations to expand its influence as a regional power. The analysis offered in the following sections points out that in the wake of the Arab Spring, Turkey faces a number of significant challenges in its foreign policy, yet the events have also opened up new opportunities for the country, which will probably enable it to widen its sphere of influence and become a transformative power in the region. On the one hand, Turkey has suffered trade losses and is facing more problems with neighbours now than it did before 2011. This is especially the case with its with former ally Syria where civil war is still raging, leaving the Turkish government faced with waves of refugees while at the same time standing paralyzed by the threat of Kurdish separatism, as will be explained. Relations with Iran have suffered from Turkey's siding against the Assad regime, which jeopardizes Turkey's ambition to become a crucial mediator on the Iranian nuclear issue. On the other hand, opportunities to assert and expand its influence might arise for three reasons; a) the new power vacuum in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), b) Turkey's increased popularity and perceived role as a model for post-revolutionary states with Muslim majorities and c) the opportunity for closer economic cooperation with the new regimes that are engaged in rebuilding their economies. Besides, Israel may have a greater incentive to restore its bilateral relations with Turkey after the regime in Egypt collapsed. Moreover, if and when the Assad regime collapses, its supporter and Turkey's regional rival, Iran, will be weakened.

2 Turkey under Erdogan: the vision of a proactive foreign policy

To assess the impact of the Arab Spring on Turkey's Foreign Policy, a brief overview needs to be given about Erdogan's new doctrine of 'neo-Ottomanism' and associated methods in the years preceding the uprisings and how it diverged from Turkey's traditional dogma of foreign relations, namely Kemalism. Neither neo-Ottomanism nor Kemalism are theories explaining the nature and structure of international relations. They are rather overarching political doctrines based on certain interpretations of Turkish national identity in a regional context. Nevertheless, elements of various schools of International Relations theory can be detected in these doctrines. Obviously the very aim of gaining relative influence as a regional power reflects elements of Realist IR theory, seeing international relations as a struggle of states to survive in the absence of a fixed hierarchical global order (Lebow, 2010; Mearsheimer, 2010). However, at the same time the current government's belief in diplomacy, interdependence and reciprocal relationships as keys to problem-solving reflects (neo)liberal IR thinking as it has been summarised by Russet (2010) and Sterling-Folker (2010). Competing elements of IR schools are illustrated further in the following analysis of the origins and policy implications of Kemalism and Ottomanism.

After the decline of its historical predecessor, the Ottoman empire, whose rule had once stretched from what is today Libya to Azerbaijan, and from modern Hungary to the South of the Arabian Peninsula, the newly-founded Republic of Turkey largely pursued a policy of non-involvement towards the Middle East for many decades. Omer Taspinar (2008) defines the long-dominating Kemalist ideology as pro-Western, status-quo-oriented, and focused on westernizing and modernizing Turkish society. He points out that this is the foreign policy that guided Turkey through decades of NATO membership and non-involvement with its actual neighbours (Malley et al., 2012).

While occasional diversions from Kemalism could be detected since the end of the Cold War, it was Erdogan's election as Prime Minister that marked the turning point towards a more assertive foreign policy. Erdogan's Justice and Development Party, which officially identifies itself as 'conservative', not 'Islamic', aimed to diversify Turkey's foreign policy in order to achieve 'strategic autonomy', i.e. greater independence from US and EU interests, a foreign policy centred around the interests and identity of Turkey itself, rather than just acting as a marginal outpost of NATO. A new type of nationalism emerged, which endorsed the legacy of the far-reaching multinational Ottoman Empire rather than rejecting it as Kemalism does. Neo-Ottomanist thinking has been the basis of the Erdogan government's rhetoric and its policy attempts to develop deeper relations with its neighbours (Malley et al.,

2012). These attempts have been pursued as a complementary element to Western ties, not as a replacement (Davutoglu, 2012). Neo-Ottomanism is not, as the name might suggest, a neo-imperial approach, but it requires that Turkey should recognize and benefit from its historic, multicultural and Islamic legacy, as well as its unique identity and geostrategic position. The Erdogan approach, in fact, has an internationalist outlook and is strongly committed to multilateralism (Taspınar, 2012).

Based on this self-understanding, the Erdogan government wanted Turkey to become a prominent leader in the region, a "wise country", even a "global actor", as Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu (2012) writes in one of his 'vision' papers (p. 5). Put in Realist terms, Turkey has revisionist ambitions, i.e. it wants to change the status quo by pursuing a "vision [of] a regional order that is built on representative political systems reflecting the legitimate demands of the people where regional states are fully integrated … around the core values of democracy and true economic interdependence" (Davutoglu, 2012, p. 7). Using what Viotti and Kauppi (1998) call a dynamic definition of power, Turkey indeed expanded its power under the Erdogan administration before the Arab Spring, since its economic and diplomatic capabilities increased relative to those of other MENA states, and it also showed its willingness to assert its power.

The favoured means of the new policy paradigm was soft power. Turkey pursued active diplomacy, opened a large number of new embassies, granted visa exemptions to encourage migration, and aimed to have "zero problems with neighbours" (Davutoglu, 2012, p. 8). All of these policies reflect liberal IR concepts like reciprocity and interdependence. The aspect of cultural influence, e.g. in the form of tourism and successful exporting of TV entertainment programmes to Arab countries, must also be mentioned (Aras & Akarcesme, 2012). All in all, its proactive policy between 2002 and 2010 put Turkey in a position to have functioning diplomatic relations simultaneously with Israel, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Jordan, Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, (Malley, Sadjadpour, & Taspinar, 2012).

Turkey has asserted its growing claim to power in the region on various occasions. Examples of this policy of deepening and engagement include efforts to act as a broker, for instance in internal conflicts in Iraq and between Israel and Syria (although the latter came to a frustrating end for Turkey as Israel launched its Gaza offensive in 2008 just when Erdogan considered the negotiations on the brink of breakthrough) (Zafar, 2012). Turkey formed relations with, and tried to mediate between, the Palestinian Hamas and Fatah groups, though with little success. Moreover, Turkey positioned itself as a broker between the West and Iran with regards to the nuclear issue in order to retain diplomatic relations (Malley, Sadjadpour, & Taspinar, 2012), and led negotiations in several smaller hostage crises related to the tensions ("The great mediator", 2010).

The vision of the Turkish government was ambitious, yet between 2002 and 2011 it seemed to work well, with the exception, perhaps, of relations to Israel. The 2010 incident of a Turkish aid flotilla being attacked by Israel while it was delivering humanitarian aid to the Gaza strip destroyed diplomatic relations with the Israeli state, thus marking a setback concerning the 'zero problems with neighbours' strategy. However, the two states still maintained trade, low-level diplomatic relations and intelligence cooperation, and pursue similar interests with regard to Syria. Scholars who saw the possibility of rapprochement emerging after the Arab Spring (e.g. Arbell, 2012), seem to have been proven right: In March 2013, the two states resumed diplomatic ties and compromised on thorny issues, driven by resource interests and the dramatic conflict situation in Syria (Koplow, 2013).

While the cooling down of Turkey's relations with Israel was value-driven, mainly as a reaction to its Gaza policy, Erdogan's policy mostly put interests before values in the region, as it prioritized beneficial relations with existing regimes, e.g. in Libya and Egypt, over pushing for democratic change (Onis, 2012). As mentioned above, the recent rapprochement with Israel was likewise driven by interests. With regard to the Arab countries, Turkey thus practiced a double standard similar to Western countries, showing little concern for democratic values or solidarity with the populations. After the Arab uprisings, the 'zero problems with neighbours' doctrine no longer worked, because the regimes with which Erdogan had built up close relations were either collapsing or had started to go to war against their own people. And yet, many observers consider that Turkey, unlike European countries, seems to have emerged as a 'big winner' from the Arab Spring (e.g. Malley, Sadjadpour, & Taspinar, 2012). The following sections point out how the Arab Spring opened up new opportunities for Turkey to expand its sphere of influence.

3 Turkey's opportunities

The Arab Spring has opened up new space for Turkish influence in various ways. Generally speaking, an opportunity for Turkey lies in the current power vacuum in the MENA region, which has been left by collapsed regimes and states preoccupied with their internal post-revolutionary struggles (Aras & Akarcesme, 2012). This, in addition to the declining power of the US in the region, especially after the Iraq war, has opened up the possibility for a newly confident Turkey to transform the region.

The means by which Turkey can fill this vacuum is by exercising soft power, as defined by Smith, Hadfield and Dunne (2012) as "indirect influence over

political bodies though personal relationship building and through cultural and ideological means" (p. 493). The fact that Turkey is increasingly referred to as a model society for the post-revolutionary Arab states, not only by voices from the US and EU, but from Arab countries themselves, provides Turkey with a great opportunity to disseminate its values and build friendly relations with the new governments. Turkey is seen as a 'centre of attraction' in the wider region (Aras & Akarcesme, 2012). This represents a form of regional activism that is very much in line with Erdogan's neo-Ottoman foreign policy approach, as explained in the first section of this article.

Turkey's great trump card after the Arab Spring is the fact that the country in general and its leader in particular enjoy an extremely high level of popularity among Arabs citizens and leaders. A recent poll among citizens from 18 Arab countries, conducted by the Qatar Foundation and the BBC, showed that 72 per cent of Arabs believe Turkey to be a good model for the new Arab states, notably for Tunisia and Egypt (YouGov, 2012). Turkey was seen as a far more attractive model than Saudi Arabia and the US. Moreover, the 2011 Arab Public Opinion Poll conducted by Maryland University for the Brookings Institute found that "Turkey is seen to have played the "most constructive" role in the Arab events. Its Prime Minister, Recep Erdogan, is the most admired among world leaders, and those who envision a new president for Egypt want the new president to look most like Erdogan" (Telhami, 2011, The Arab Spring, para. 1). The poll moreover revealed that "Egyptians want their country to look more like Turkey than any of the other Muslim, Arab and other choices provided" (Telhami, 2011, The Arab Spring, para. 1).

This result can be attributed to the Turkish government's remarkably quick reaction in the cases of Tunisia and Egypt. The Turkish Prime Minister was the first head of government to call for Mubarak's resignation in early 2011 ("Turkish PM proud of stance", 2011). Egypt, it should be pointed out, arguably has a certain symbolic importance as the largest Muslim country in the region.

Testing the actual applicability of the Turkish political model to Egypt goes beyond the scope of this article, but it should be mentioned that the specifics of Turkey's history make the model difficult to export. Two examples are the traditionally close relations with the West, and the moderate, pragmatic and democratic path of political Islam which brought the AKP to power as described by Cavdar (2006). This may be contrasted to the Egyptian Islamist movement which has, if anything, radicalised during the years of suppression and is currently not endorsing secularism, as is documented by the newly adopted constitution (Black, 2012).

Another aspect from which Turkey benefits is that it is perceived not only as credible but as more credible than Western countries in the Arab world, as

pointed out by social sciences scholar and EU advisor Bichara Khader (2013) in a recent lecture at Maastricht University . According to Khader, it is a common sentiment among Arab populations that the countries of the EU in particular have displayed a lack of empathy and respect for their southern neighbours by supporting authoritarian regimes that allowed European countries to pursue their interests in the MENA region, and suppressed civil society and democratic forces. He criticizes that the EU's neighbourhood policies failed to help the Arab countries to develop and diversify their economies. As a historical contrast, Japan's economic success once served as an engine of growth for its neighbouring countries. Although traditionally relations between Arabs and Turks have been troubled due to Ottoman colonialism and enmity in World War I, Arabs today perceive Turkey as more credible and treating them without orientalist condescension.

Another point counting in favour of Turkey's future chances of asserting greater influence is the fact that, during Erdogan's time in power, Turkey has learned to master a more proactive foreign policy style, developing new tools, especially in the realm of diplomacy. In negotiations with Hamas, Iran, Syria, and Israel Turkey tested its new role as a broker. Although a number of those attempts did not succeed, the foreign policy apparatus has gained considerable experience in handling soft power policy tools through those failures and has, according to Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu (2012), received additional training in the process.

Moreover, if and when the Assad regime finally collapses, its supporter and Turkey's regional rival Iran will be weakened, which will make Turkey relatively better off in the shifting regional balance of power. Turkey will also have the opportunity to influence and integrate the new regime emerging in Syria in that case.

Besides, some scholars, such as the above-mentioned Taspinar, see a restoration of Turkish-Israeli relations as a step that would help Turkey in its quest for leadership: "The fact that Turkey's relations with Israel are now at a low point takes away from the leverage that Turkey once had on the question of Middle East peace" (Malley et al., 2012, p. 15). Indeed, on the side of Israel, pressure to reach out to its former ally Turkey has increased as it can no longer fully rely on the Egyptian government to continue to follow the terms of the peace treaty. However, since many attribute Turkey's precious popularity in the Arab world to its harsh criticism of Israel (e.g. Malley et al., 2012), it seems doubtful that a reconciliation will happen soon.

4 Challenges of the Arab Spring aftermath

In a literal sense, Davutoglu's (2012) 'zero problems with neighbours' policy has evidently failed, as the Arab uprisings have led to problems or interrupted relations with almost all countries in the wider neighbourhood. Moreover, it has suffered from trade losses in Libya and Syria (Nasr, 2011).

The biggest challenge by far is the Syrian crisis, which as a result of Assad's uncompromising attitude has turned from instances of anti-government riots into a full-scale civil war along sectarian lines. Relations with Syria are of special geostrategic importance for Turkey, as the country forms the passageway to the other Arab states.

Firstly this affects Turkey as it would affect any neighbouring country. The severe conflict and humanitarian crisis on its doorstep pose a threat to Turkey's security, especially since many thousands of refugees have so far fled onto Turkish ground (the UN Refugee Agency has counted 142,670, but the actual number is much higher as tens of thousands of refugees have found refuge in Turkish private households and are not registered) ("Krisen-Management", 2013). Moreover, the fact that Syria's Assad regime is backed by Iran (partly due to its geographic location on the route to Lebanon, where Iran supports Hezbollah) has led to a deterioration of Turkish-Iranian relations. The decision to "position [itself] on the right side of the history" (Davutoglu, 2012, p. 8) and break ties with Syria thus also came at the cost of Turkey's position as a potential mediator between the West and Iran on the pending nuclear issue, after years of careful balancing to maintain relations with both the US and Iran, e.g. by hosting NATO defence systems yet voting against sanctions on Iran in the UN (Malley et al., 2012). However, Iran, itself almost isolated in the international community, has not severed its diplomatic ties with Turkey.

The most intricate aspect of the Syrian crisis from a Turkish perspective is the involvement of the Kurdish issue, which has been used by Assad and Iran as a silent threat against Turkey to prevent it from intervening in Syria (Aras & Akarcesme, 2012). One remainder of Kemalism in the ideology of the Turkish government is the "assimilationist" view that Turkey's Kurds must not have an independent nation state, but ought to identify themselves as Turkish citizens (Taşpınar, 2008, p. 5). This caused a protracted conflict between the state and the separatist Kurdish party PKK which is particularly influential in the south-east of Turkey, near the Syrian border. During Saddam Hussein's purges of Iraqi Kurds in 1988 and 1991, when many Kurdish refugees came to Turkey, the PKK tried to take advantage of the unstable situation to reinforce its battle for independence. Turkey now seems to fear that history may be about to repeat itself and therefore

does not dare to take unilateral military or humanitarian action against Syria. At the same time, the trading slump with Syria affects the troubled Kurdish south-east of Turkey most, adding to the tenseness of the situation there (Nasr, 2011).

In order to determine how the Syrian crisis affects Ankara's claim to greater power, it has to be assessed how assertively and effectively Turkey has responded to it. In his updated strategic vision of 2012, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu defended Turkey's policy on Syria. He described how Erdogan first went to great lengths with unilateral diplomacy to convince his strategic partner to accommodate the protesters' demands by introducing reforms (as had been done successfully by the King of Morocco), how he then sought a regional multilateral solution together with the Arab League, and how finally, in September 2012, he urged but failed to convince the UN Security Council to agree to set up a safe zone at the Turkish-Syrian border (Bowen, 2012). At the time of writing, the Turkish government is confined to strongly siding with the Syrian opposition in its official rhetoric, and providing humanitarian assistance on its own side of the border. US Middle East analyst and foreign policy practitioner Aaron David Miller (2012) suggests that creating safe zones will inevitably lead to full-scale military involvement and that Western countries, especially the US, are unwilling to forge a coalition to oust the Assad regime, because it is not in their immediate national self-interest. Turkish public opinion is also disinclined to intervene. Twice in 2012, Turkey called upon NATO to hold emergency meetings (Croft, 2012), which shows that while Turkey still benefits from its Western alliance, it does not have any influence on the events in its neighbouring country on its own.

The last, long-term challenge to Turkish leadership could be Egypt. If the nation recovers and the Egyptian government is effective, Egypt, too, may claim an active role in regional politics. In their 2012 symposium debate, Malley, Sadjadpour, and Taspinar discussed the geopolitical future of the MENA region. They deemed it likely that after decades, during which US-backed Mubarak had sustained the status quo after the Camp Davis Accords, Egypt will now be interested in making more extensive use of its leverage. The fact that Egypt under President Morsi hosted the Hamas-Israeli negotiations for a cease-fire in late 2012 may be a first indicator of such ambitions; however the new regime also has many internal problems, so the challenge of Egypt on the rise can be assumed be rather more of a long-term perspective.

The challenges described above are indeed significant, but are they sufficient evidence to conclude that Turkey is trying to punch above its weight by aspiring to become a more proactive and influential regional power? They have certainly forced the Turkish leadership to reorient its policy and restricted Turkey's foreign policy options, and have demonstrated that Turkey does not have control

over its neighbours. In addition, Turkey faces a series of thorny issues where it has to weigh values against interests, such as in the Kurdish issue and in its relations with Israel (the latter are now improving) (Onis, 2012). One might claim, however, that the latter is, in fact, a typical dilemma faced by strong regional and great powers.

Its failure to control events in Syria has shown that Turkey is perhaps not yet a great power, but it is accompanied by a failure of the UN, US and Europe, all of whom have made similarly futile attempts to resolve the crisis peacefully, and are not prepared to take military or more extensive humanitarian action. Therefore the outcome cannot be blamed fully on Turkey's hubris.

5 Key factors for Turkey's future capabilities

From the large variety of factors discussed above, a few components can be singled out as determining factors for Turkey's prospects of increasing its influence in the aftermath of the uprisings. Firstly, Turkey has to succeed in actually shaping the new emerging order in the MENA region. Secondly, Turkey can hope for significant economic benefits once its post-revolutionary Arab trading partners have restored political stability and can turn their attention to their economic development. Turkey must be actively involved in the process of rebuilding and advancing the new Arab economies if it wants to be an important partner and leader. The fact that, in August 2012, Prime Minister Erdo signed a contract with President Morsi to provide a one-billion dollar loan to help relieve Egypt's deficit, as well as promising an additional billion dollars of investments, especially in infrastructure projects, can be seen as an indication that Turkey is both willing and able to seize the opportunity to push for its foreign policy goal of economic integration and interdependence (Morsy, Erdogan sign US$1 bn loan to offset Egypt's deficit, 2012). It can therefore be assumed that a positive economic development in the region would boost Turkey's influence. Should the recovery of the Arab economies turn out to be sluggish or should their development fail to materialize altogether in the next few years, Turkey would still have the trading partners in its north-eastern and European neighbourhood.

It should be pointed out that Turkey's ability to practice leadership also depends on its own economic performance in the coming years. Especially the internal market of the (currently troubled) EU is important for Turkey, and Turkey itself, though still growing, has been affected by the European debt crisis. Moreover Turkey also faces a considerable budget deficit of its own, which has led some economists to question whether it can maintain its growth rate.

The most difficult and long-term issue may be the challenge of resolving the Kurdish issue. The Turkish government's continuing fight against the separatist PKK lies at the heart of its lingering political deadlock with regard to the Syrian crisis. It is Turkey's most vulnerable spot in strategic terms, and also offers grounds for criticism of its ambition to act as a democratic role model that respects human rights.

6 Conclusion

Before the Arab uprisings, Turkey was on the rise as a regional power. This article has pointed out that the government has had to adapt its foreign policy strategy and tools as a result of the uprisings, performing a policy U-turn that redirected the emphasis on values. Turkey's rise has been slowed down by the vast challenge of managing the protracted conflict in neighbouring Syria.

Yet, opportunities for exercising soft power have opened up in the North African countries, which support Turkey's potential to act as a transformative power and shape the new emerging power structure of the MENA region with greater political presence and economic engagement. For the future of Turkey and the region, much depends on the outcome of the protracted Syrian conflict.

Therefore, to return to the question of how the Arab Spring has come to bear upon Turkey's aspirations to expand its influence as a regional power, it can be said that Turkey has definitely not abandoned its aspirations to increase its influence and that, depending on the factors identified in the last part of this article, it could seize the opportunity of this historic moment of confusion to take the lead in reshaping the Middle East and North Africa.

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BEYOND THE IVORY TOWER

Negotiating Photography's Discursive Meaning within the Museum

Patrizia Koenig

Abstract This qualitative research explores the relationship between photography's materiality and the museum in today's global art world with a case study on the Foam museum in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Based on Foucault's theorization of pouvoir/savoir, it is analyzed how photography's discursive meaning is complexly negotiated between the poles of 'opening up' and 'filtering' within Foam's various activities – thereby challenging the notion of the museum as an elite ivory tower of knowledge. The role of Foam as a photography museum is then situated against the theoretical debate on 'New Institutionalism' and the political context of Dutch Cultural Policy.

1 Introduction

"Museums used to be established institutions. And they were ivory towers, and they told the people how they should look at the world - for a museum as Foam that's not the way to go."

– Marcel Feil, Deputy Director of Artistic Affairs, Foam

What's Next? In 2011, the photography museum Foam (Amsterdam, Netherlands) launched a year-long initiative that was centered on this question. What's next for the future of photography, what's next for the photography museum? Asking such questions is particularly relevant in times in which traditional museum practices are being constantly challenged in today's globalized art world. Museums have historically played a central role for the cultural legitimization and recognition of photography. As loci of the art world in which meaning is complexly negotiated (Wells, 2003), their strategies of collecting, presenting and contextualizing determined photography's identity and status. As Foam's Deputy Director of Artistic Affairs Marcel Feil is critically aware, museums did so as elitist and authoritative institutions – spreading their knowledge from remote ivory towers. Such self-reflexivity and strong opposition to the traditional ideological art museum as embodied in Feil's statement hints at the considerable changes within contemporary museum practices. In the light of this, the question of how a photograph – indefinitely reproducible and stripped of any 'aura' – gains value and meaning within the institutional space of the museum, requires reconsideration. This qualitative research sheds light on the relationship between photography's materiality and the museum in today's globalized art world by asking in particular: How does the museum negotiate photography's discursive meaning? What does that tell us about the role of the museum as a whole? In the course of five months, these questions were explored in a case study on the photography museum Foam on the basis of in-depth semi-structured interviews.

Before presenting the findings of the research, the paper first introduces the larger theoretical framework and makes the relevance and significance of a qualitative study on a photography museum such as Foam clear. A brief description of the research study's methodology then paves the way for an examination of how photography's discursive meaning is complexly negotiated in the contemporary museum, and how the notion of the museum as 'ivory tower' no longer holds up. Thereby, it is firstly considered how Foam perceives its role as a museum and suggested that its emphasis on 'opening up' reflects the considerations of New Institutionalism – a field of curatorial practice and critical debate that promotes a dynamic, socially inclusive and self-critical art institution (Doherty, 2004). Secondly, the discussion centers on how Foam's simultaneous embrace of the role as 'acting as a filter' plays itself out within the aspects of collecting, presenting, and mediating. This will serve a point of departure to contextualize the findings against the theoretical backdrop of New Institutionalism and the larger political context of Dutch Cultural Policy.

2 Contextualization & Significance

One can approach the question of how photography gains meaning and value from a number of theoretical perspectives – while ontological, philosophical or iconographic approaches dominated the larger part of the 20th century, the materialist approach gained increasing momentum for the study of photography in the past decades. Following this approach, photography's identity and status "varies with the power relation which invest in it" (Tag, 1988, p. 118). Hereby, photography gains social meaning and value as an object within its conditions of production and framing context(s) (Edwards & Hart, 2004).

Michel Foucault's theorization of institutions is foundational for cultural studies and widely applied in postmodern theories on photography (Edwards & Hart, 2004; Wells, 2003). Although the process in which knowledge and power come together is historically specific and may vary in different domains, Foucault's basic insight is that discourse – produced, but also constrained, by power – constitutes and generates knowledge (Gutting, 2005). The inextricable relationship between knowledge and power, in turn, shapes and creates meaning. In the museum, the exhibition functions as the site in which discourses intersect to produce the work of art as text; catalogs and other more permanent forms of reproduction reinforce its status and significance as an art object (Kelly, 1981; Wells, 2003).

The analysis of conditions out of which photography's discursive meaning arises has only seen sporadic realization despite it being able to offer insights where traditional art history might prove insufficient (Nickel, 2001). The case studies that do analyze museum's meaning-making ability with regard to photography's status, tend to base themselves on content analysis of curatorial strategies and programming and focus on the first half of the 20th century (e.g. Phillips, 1989; Bolton, 1989; Willumson, 2004). Considering that a disproportionate share of information and insights regarding photographic history has risen from the art institution through discursive practices rather than from the academic sphere (Nickel, 2001), this is without a doubt an important undertaking.

Yet in the light of the many changes within contemporary museum practices and photography, this topic requires further critical examination (Willumson, 2004). Particularly the current tendency in museums of internalizing institutional critique, of embracing socially engaged practices and experimental modes of presentation within the notion of 'New Institutionalism', makes a qualitative study on the role of the contemporary museum in creating photography's discursive meaning highly relevant. This research not only fills the methodological gap in the study of the history of photography, it also contributes with a case study to

the current debate of New Institutionalism. In this context, Foam – a young photography-specific museum in Amsterdam – is a particular interesting case study. As a new form of cultural entrepreneurship that shares its knowledge with as many people as possible, it turns the traditional image of a museum on its head (Vandejong, 2012).

3 Methodology

3.1 Data Collection & Analysis

I identified Foam as a potential museum for a case study via an online search on photography-specific museums in the Netherlands. Through their website, I got into contact with four museum employees: Deputy Director of Artistic Affairs Marcel Feil, Assistant Curator Karin Bareman, Head of Education Lisa Kleeven and Foam Editions Florentine Haverkamp. In the course of 6 weeks, I conducted a total of four semi-structured interviews (20 – 60 minutes) on site and via telephone.

This case study aims at uncovering concrete activities that may be transferable to similar contexts. Despite the small sample size, the validity and transferability of my findings is supported through data triangulation. This methodological triangulation (interviews, field based observations, content analysis of publications and the website) guided me in identifying relevant questions and clarifying meaning within the research process. In consideration of the many changes in the art world, this research is based on a grounded theory perspective: within an iterative process, the dynamic interaction between data collection, data analysis and hypothesis formulation allowed me to test the applicability and relevance of existing postmodern theoretical frameworks relating to art institutions and photography (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Thereby, I categorized the data – i.e. interview transcripts – into inductive categories according to the following overarching themes: Foam's function as a museum, its discursive practices, and views on photography's status.

3.2 Subjectivity & Ethics

The participants received an explanatory statement prior to the interview, which provided full disclosure of the research objectives. Although the possibility of remaining anonymous was offered, all participants provided written and/or verbal consent, disclosing their identities within the research paper. In spite of my academic background in the History of Art, Art Sociology and Museum Studies, I attempt to avoid potential misinterpretations through transparent data analysis; the sharing of final results with the participants and including feedback was aimed at strengthening the validity of my findings.

4 Data Analysis

4.1 Foam's Role as a Museum Caught in the Dilemma of New Institutionalism?

Despite the relatively small sample size, the coding of the interviews quickly made clear that all participants had similar views regarding Foam's function as a museum, and how its diverse activities and platforms relate to its overall institutional identity. The mentality of 'opening up' is integral to Foam's self-understanding as a museum. Indeed, Foam's institutional identity is largely defined through its interaction with the public. Being critically aware of museums' traditional role, Deputy Director Marcel Feil rejected the museum as an authoritative institution. He put forward that,

> "We need to be part of society that is today. We need to be in a constant communication with the world of photography, with the artists, but also with our audience."

This value of openness and the notion that museums should be democratic and inclusive institutions similarly came up in the other interviews in terms of such phrases as 'going outward', 'accessibility', 'exchange', or 'lowering the threshold'. The focus on public outreach is deeply engrained within Foam. As Feil explained, the ambition to develop a new concept of a museum with Foam emerged "because we felt it was something wished for by large parts of our potential audience". It is notable that all interviewees agreed on the importance of public outreach in terms of maximizing the number and diversity of visitors. As the previous quotation underlines, the mentality of going outward also refers to involving photographers and the world of photography.

Foam reflects the considerations of New Institutionalism – a "field of curatorial practice, institutional reform and critical debate concerned with the transformation of art institutions from within" that emerged in the mid/late 1990s (Doherty, 2006, p. 1). The emergent concept of 'opening-up' reflects New Institutionalism's emphasis on the rhetoric of the temporary – that is to say "transient encounters, states of flux and open-endedness"' (ibid.). As Feil similarly put forward, a museum like Foam "needs to be a very open, transparent and dynamic place" in times where "things are always in flux, changing". In the new institutionalist museum, this is brought to bear in socially inclusive, dynamic and responsive practices (Doherty, 2004).

In emphasizing Foam's democratic and socially inclusive function, the traditional notion of the museum as authoritative producer of knowledge is challenged. At the same time, the interviewees all demonstrated critical awareness towards Foam's role as a museum. As Bareman noted with regard to the notion of

'opening up': "making it accessible to as many people as possible, is also in a way a financial necessity". Although the interviewees stressed that Foam's emphasis on public outreach was driven by a social obligation, such statements shed light on Foam's critical self-reflexivity. The internalization of institutional critique, whereby the museum itself critically questions the institutional structures and functions of the art institution, is characteristic of New Institutionalism.

This reflects a certain tension between the goals of maximizing cultural quality and maximizing attendance/market success that can be found in many contemporary museums (Uusitalo, 2008). Doherty (2006) recognized this tension as the dilemma of New Institutionalism – which hinges on the question of how the museum should create a diverse program without "privileging the social over the visual" (2006, p. 3). Feil was acutely aware of the necessity of a museum's autonomy and critical distance when explaining:

> "(…) Because there are so many things happening at the same time, and it's hard to tell the good from the bad. So you need… that's, that's the function of the museum: to filter, what is important, what is not important; what is important to collect, what to preserve, what is important to present."

The term 'to filter'[1] by definition means to pass through a device to remove unwanted material (Oxford University Press, 2011). This hints at a different approach towards distributing knowledge. Rather than 'producing' knowledge in the institution and disseminating it to a passive audience, it implies that the museum has much more of an intermediary role in attaching significance to images with its discursive practices. Indeed, Feil emphasized the importance of acting as a filter in relation to Foam's more populist orientation as "otherwise the things become too shallow, too superficial".

4.2 Making Meaning
Discursive Practices In and Beyond the Museum

It is clear that although Foam challenges the traditional notion of the museum as elitist authority of high culture, the museum's function of creating discursive meaning is acknowledged in terms of its function of 'acting as a filter'. Foam's employees are critically aware of how its discursive practices impact the art world at large. This becomes clear when Bareman stated with regard to Foam's position in relation to the art market,

> "But sometimes I think art galleries might think that it's easy for us to sell prints, you know, we have a big institution backing us up (…)"

[1] This term not only occurs in the interview with Marcel Feil, but is used within the museum's publication What's Next.

Referring to Foam as a 'big institution' that has the ability to influence other art world actors, she was critically aware that museums continue to possess an influential meaning-making role for photography the art world. Nonetheless – Foam's simultaneous emphasis on 'opening up' gives rise to a different approach in creating photography's discursive meaning. In the following, I will zoom into three aspects in of this approach: collecting, presenting, and mediating.

Collecting is an important process of constructing meaning (Belk, 1995), which provides a mechanism for 'filtering'. As Bareman explained, Foam established its own collection about five years ago with the larger aim of establishing "a body of work from some photographer that is representative". The interviewees recognized the importance of their public collection as a long-term investment for the purpose of supporting young emerging artists throughout their careers. *Foam Editions* – the museum-run photography gallery that sells special edition prints from both established and emerging photographers – encourages photography collecting outside of the museum's institutional space. Foam Editions Manager Florentine Haverkamp pointed out that Foam, in the process of acting as a filter, manages to function as a sort of certification for quality:

> " (…) You have this kind of Foam… 'certification', kind of; this quality-thing. Everyone who's visiting Foam Editions knows that the curators of Foam had a look, and have an opinion about the work; like it, or think its special, or worthwhile to show."

Foam Editions is considered to provide some critical distance and a higher degree of objectivity to art collecting, which many commercial galleries may not be able to provide. Foam's emphasis on both 'opening up' and 'acting as filter' reflects itself in *Foam Edition's* dual function of supporting young photographers, as well as making photograph collecting more accessible.

Presenting and curating photography is recognized as a further central discursive practice. The idea of experimentation is central to Foam, and thereby embodies New Institutionalism's emphasis on experimental modes of presentation. As Feil explained, although the context in which a work is made, presented, and talked about is crucial – he liked "to be part of the group that tears down the walls between the different genres" rather than "labeling them in an undesirable way". It is noticeable that despite the many changes in the photography world that may undermine the significance of the institutional space of the museum for exhibiting photographs, the interviewees stressed the photography's material quality. For example, as Bareman stated,

> "you know, nothing beats the real thing I think. (…) actually seeing these prints up front and in person in original (…), that does not compare with seeing the same image online."

This emphasis on photography's materiality reflects New Institutionalism's belief in the museum as a necessary locus of art (Doherty, 2004). While the exhibition space of the museum is thus still of very high symbolic importance, Bareman was aware that, "(…) with Foam you're stuck with this one place, we have beautiful exhibitions here, but not everyone can visit".

Indeed, the idea of experimentation does not only reflect itself within the museum's exhibitions. An important alternative – and independent – platform for presenting photography is the quarterly publication *Foam Magazine*. This "transportable museum", as Feil termed it, not only provides different, but just as justifiable, ways of presenting photography in a permanent form; it can also be sent out to the world and reach a broader international audience. With *Foam Magazine* as an affordable type of publication that is distributed in many venues and at a higher frequency than regular exhibition catalogs, the museum has a large scope of potential influence. As artist and critic Mary Kelly put forward in 1981, such permanent forms of reproduction ultimately characterize the status and significance of an art object (as discussed in Wells, 2003). Thus while the range and number of alternative discursive platforms results in the exhibition's loss of hegemony as producer of discursive meaning, they at same time can be considered to extent Foam's scope of influence.

Mediating photography to the broader population through education is a crucial discursive practice that influences the way photography is experienced, understood and given meaning to in different contexts. There is consensus that 'educating' is not about passive information distribution, but rather about teaching "people to form their own opinion, their own ways of looking – as opposed to we telling them what it is" (Lisa Kleeven). The tension inherent in Foam's 'opening up' – 'filtering' orientation gives rise to an expanded understanding of 'education', which Bareman articulated when stating:

> "I wouldn't even call it educational…actually – as such. I don't know, for me that just sounds like you find yourself as a teacher- classroom kind of thing".

The emphasis on participation rather than passive consumption, a defining feature of New Institutionalism, challenges the role of the museum as sole producer of knowledge. Foam's 2011 What's Next project, without a doubt, embodies the internalization of institutional critique in that it critically questioned, amongst others, the role of the museum in contemporary society. It is notable that Foam also engaged the public in this theoretical discourse via their website. As Feil stressed in relation to the *What's Next* project: "it was far more about asking questions, and facilitating the debate than to reach some sort of common ground".

Teaching people how to critically 'look' at photographic images is not confined to the museum's exhibition space, but relates to photography in its widest

sense within visual culture. As Feil pointed out, the profusion of images within today's society – in social media, in the news or advertising – makes visual literacy extremely important. Upon being asked what the role of the museum should be in today's society, Head of Education, Lisa Kleeven, elaborated on this:

> "I think it's really important to spread the knowledge you have and make it accessible for a large group of people, and actively try to be a part of the city, or the larger community that you're in – and also try to involve people that might not be interested in the first instance, (…) if you're a social institution, you should also focus on…not only on your collection, your own building, but go out and involve people at different levels"

The social role of the museum to 'open up' consequently means that it must go beyond its traditional internally-focused activities museum of collecting or presenting.

This strong emphasis on social relevance and involvement reflects itself in such educational long-term projects such as *West Side Stories* in Amsterdam Nieuw-West, which is – as Kleeven explains – focused on bringing about social cohesion in the neighborhood through photography. Feil described that this project is a 'gain-gain-gain' situation – for Foam, the politicians and the housing cooperation within this neighborhood. This recognition that cultural experience produces positive externalities – thereby forming a strong component of urban regeneration – is a key factor that distinguishes New Institutionalist museums from traditional museums (Doherty, 2004).

5 Discussion

Foam questions the hierarchical structures and practices of the traditional museum and regards itself an "international operating organization for photography" (Marcel Feil), in which the museum as such forms one branch of many. The strong consensus regarding Foam's role in contextualizing photography within the interviews was striking; this feeling of unity, as Kleeven suggests, "that's also part of a brand". Foam's institutional identity reflects itself in its credo of being 'a brand for everyone' – it is described as a 'new form of cultural entrepreneurship' aimed at strengthening its relevance both locally and globally in the photography world and the larger audience (Vandejong, 2012).

Foam thereby embodies many of the characteristics and challenges of New Institutionalism. Indeed, it is being increasingly questioned in how far criticality can survive under the pressure of a corporate globalization, in which the public is increasingly regarded as potential consumers under a managerial profit-max-

imizing mentality (Möntmann, 2007; Doherty, 2004). While this tension did emerge from the different interviews, it appears as though the traditionally strict division between the market and the museum sector is increasingly difficult to preserve in today's art world and society.

Foam's creation as a 'new form of cultural entrepreneurship' in 2001 coincided almost simultaneously with a change in Dutch cultural policy: as presented by State Secretary Rick van der Ploeg in 2000. This cultural policy memorandum identified cultural diversity, audience reach and cultural entrepreneurship as the Dutch government's priorities (Klamer, 2006). While the term 'cultural entrepreneur' has no straightforward definition, Van der Ploeg referred to it most generally as the embrace of a more market-oriented approach in the cultural sector. As the Dutch cultural sector is experiencing harsh budget cuts and Foam receives minimal government funding, it necessarily needs to find alternative forms of fundraising. As Bareman pointed out:

> *"we're ahead of the curve ... and all the other institutions that now have their budget cuts, think, if we want to keep on existing as an organization we're gonna have to do alternative forms of fundraising. And they're not equipped for it."*

As a cultural entrepreneur that takes risks and 'capitalizes opportunities' (Marcel Feil), Foam's self-sustainable independent projects provide a degree of independence that other institutions may not have. The dual function of 'opening up' and 'filtering' enables Foam to handle the dilemma of New Institutionalism.

6 Conclusion

The case study has given insights into the multiplicity of meanings that photography possesses. In fact, the interviews made it evident that my initial research question of how Foam contextualizes *photography as art* was too narrow in the light of Foam's emphasis on diversity in programming. The specific materiality of photography provides Foam with a democratic medium to reach out to very diverse target groups; it is not only a work (of art) to be looked at in the museum, but also a skill to be learned in educational projects.

Foam gives new content to the definition of what a photography museum means in contemporary society. It has become clear that Foam's democratic orientation, self-reflexivity and experimental forms of presentation challenges the ideological museum as 'ivory tower' of power and knowledge, which was at the center of the first wave of institutional critique in the 1970s. The emphasis on the museum as a social, democratic and inclusive space targeting a large and diverse

audience is characteristic for New Institutionalism; this also reflected itself in the interviewees' critical self-reflexivity of Foam's role as a museum.

Foam is aware of the dilemma of New Institutionalism – that is, how should the museum remain socially relevant without 'succumbing' to popular taste? How can a balance be found between photography's intrinsic and instrumental value? Although the notion of a branded museum as is often considered as a negative development towards the 'corporatized museum' – in which the ideology of the traditional patriarchal bourgeois museum is simply replaced by the power structures of capitalism – it is evident that the harsh reality of the increasingly dismantled welfare state necessitates a rethinking of the museum's role as an art institution. Although Foam as a 'big institution' remains an authority in the art world, its diverse practices demonstrate that the museum no longer solely controls photography's meaning and status. Rather, photography's discursive meaning is complexly negotiated within Foam's local and global network between the poles of 'opening up' and 'filtering'.

7 Limitations & Recommendations for Further Research

The research was based on a grounded-theory approach. Incorporating content analysis and field-based observations to a larger extent would provide an added dimension of analysis where the knowledge sought is beyond the range of language, e.g. regarding curatorial strategies (c. Banks, 2007). While the aspect of 'cultural entrepreneurship' could only be touched upon, a closer examination of this notion in relation to the case study and its implications would be worthwhile – especially considering the specific context of Dutch cultural policy and the increasing corporatization of the art world. Furthermore, as the case study was centered on a young medium-specific museum, the findings may not be transferable to art museums with a longer history and in which photography is only one medium next to many. Such a comparative case study would be able to provide a higher degree of complexity. Yet considering the increasing number of new photography museums that are similar to Foam – e.g. The Photographer's Gallery in London – and at the same time the widespread popularity and recognition of photography, widening the research to similar medium-specific museums would be a highly relevant undertaking in the field of Museum Studies.

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CARIBBEAN SEX TOURISM AND THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY

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Abstract This paper examines the position of the Caribbean sex tourism market within a global economic system of dependency and inequality. It employs Andre Gunder Frank's dependency theory to analyze the exploitation of informal sexual labour by Western tourists and argues that this industry emerges from and perpetuates a broader core-periphery relationship wherein Caribbean economic dependence on Western states is reinforced. Both the demand and supply side to the sex tourism industry are explored, with consideration given to the racialized, gendered, and geographic dynamics of power and submission that are at play in sexual-economic exchanges.

1 Introduction

Since the emergence of the Caribbean as an affordable and attractive tourist destination, traveller motivations have generally centred on embodied pleasures: tanned skin, mental relaxation, bodily rejuvenation and, increasingly, sex. Sex has become entrenched in the broader tourism industry as one of many 'services' offered by developing countries for consumption by Western tourists (Kempadoo,

2004). This paper will argue that the market for sex tourism in the Caribbean both emerges from and perpetuates the dependency relationship between core and periphery states and the global capitalist system of exploitation and subjugation. A nuanced analysis of the sex tourism industry's position requires several components, upon which the body of this essay elaborates. With respect to the need to "anchor or ground transnational processes in particular places and histories" (Brennan, 2004, p. 15), it first considers the demand and supply for the Caribbean sex tourism market in the international political economy as being jointly prompted by colonialism's historical constructions of the exotic and the economic features associated with globalization. It then examines the ways in which sex tourism exacerbates global economic inequality by referencing the racialized elements of this interaction and the shift to informal exchange markets.

For both of these efforts, this paper uses the principles of dependency theory as articulated by Andre Gunder Frank. Frank (as cited in Ruccio & Simon, 1992) holds that even the most geographically remote areas were incorporated within the network of capitalist relations during the era of European capitalist expansion. This counters the neoclassical assumption that distinctly categorized developed and underdeveloped economies can be equated with capitalist and pre-capitalist markets. According to Frank, all parts of the economies of underdeveloped countries are within the web of capitalism as 'satellites,' or peripheries, which are positioned in an asymmetrical power relationship with the core (Ruccio & Simon, 1992). Such conditions of uneven power are often structural and embedded, but disadvantage the dependent state economically, politically, and socially and remove its ability to control its own development. In sum, dependency fosters a relationship wherein the core exploits the periphery. This paper's analysis of dependency in the context of Caribbean sex tourism centres mostly on the exchange of sexual services between local women and foreign men, while recognizing that recent research has increasingly pointed to the occurrence of sexual transactions between foreign women and local men (Sanchez Taylor, 2006; Weichselbaumer, 2012; Jeffreys, 2003). It begins by considering the evolution of the West's fascination with Caribbean sexuality.

2 The Origins of Sex Tourism

2.1 The Demand Side

Western demand for sex tourism in the Caribbean is historically contingent on three factors: residual attitudes of racial superiority, the incorporation of such

attitudes into marketing strategies, and the greater physical and financial mobility globalization allowed. In order to justify their colonial missions, Europeans relied on an understanding of the people it exploited -- both slaves and indigenous populations -- as savage and immoral. The positioning of colonized peoples in this way allowed for the comparative contextualization of European men and women as both morally and economically superior in the international order (Enloe, 1989). It evoked similar discourses to those described in Edward Said's Orientalism, wherein the process of homogenizing and exoticizing the 'Other' acts as a strategy of marginalization (Said, 1979). Because slavery implied "slave owners' right to total sexual access to slaves" (Kempadoo, 1999, p. 5), slave women were often forced into prostitution as a means for masters to earn a second flow of income. In this way, prostitution emerged as an extension of women's sexual and labour relations with European men. According to Kempadoo (2004), the enslavement of Africans in the New World enabled the casting of slave women in colonial imaginations as promiscuous, immoral, and sensuous in an animalistic way that was juxtaposed with the decency of white women. Such racialized and sexualized imagery was then manipulated by the plantocracy for its own purposes of continuing slavery, while instilling in European men a fascination, delight, and pleasure with black female bodies. The region "often stood in European imaginations 'as a land of sexual opportunity for young European males' and black women -- enslaved or free -- were defined as the sexual property of white men" (Kempadoo, 2004, p. 31). The intimate association of tourism and sex can therefore be seen to stem from such historically racialized curiosities about these commodified bodies.

A second and closely related foundation for the interrelation between sex work and tourism is the way Caribbean vacations are advertised and packaged. Rather than the location itself, the marketing of Caribbean vacations stresses the experience: the exercise of fantasies, the sensuous abandonment of self, and the bodily pleasures the region allows (Hall, 1994; Cabezas, 2009; Ryan and Hall, 2001). Central to this package experience are the smiling and servile natives whose primary goal is to please and serve the visitor in every way possible (Cabezas, 2009). Sexual-economic exchanges in the tourism sector are functionally inseparable from other tourist-oriented pleasure services: exotic, sexually available men and women are marketed in conjunction with the warmth, relaxation, and other corporeal pleasures the Caribbean has to offer (Kempadoo, 2004; Padilla, 2007). The imagined hyper-sexuality and fascinating beauty of the locals fit nicely with the perception of the Caribbean itself as "seductive in its paradise-like, unblemished 'virgin' state" (Kempadoo, 2004, p. 35). According to Amalia Cabezas (2009), the post-colonial nature of these countries and their historical associa-

tions with savagery makes such images especially pronounced: travellers must be reassured of the nonthreatening, subservient, and welcoming nature of the local population. Further, in interviews with several men who frequent sex tourism locales in the Caribbean, the underlying longing for gendered and racialized power was expressed as a motivating factor. By being perceived as more submissive, Caribbean women complement sex tourists' equation of true masculinity with unbridled control over the sexuality of themselves and sex workers (Kempadoo, 1999). Such discourses should not be interpreted as innocuous; rather, they constitute a basis for a marketing strategy that commodifies bodies and experiences to implicitly position Caribbean people suitable for consumption (Kempadoo, 2004).

Processes of economic globalization act as a third key impetus for sexual-economic traffic to the Caribbean in two ways: first, by enabling the travel and communication required to develop such transactional relationships, and second, by demanding the continuous development of new means of consumption and commodity forms. The rise of Caribbean sex tourism depends on the accumulation of capital and democratization of travel that enable the 'demand' side of the equation. Further, Padilla (2007) notes the role of globalized technologies such as the internet and electronic commerce in permitting "more flexible approaches to the production of sexual services, a more rapid response to consumer demand, and much more segmented, specialized marketing strategy" (p. 4). The second change spurred by globalization, as argued by Wonders and Michalowski (2001), involves the commodification and marketization of social elements that once were outside of economic exchange in order to create new markets for capitalist expansion. Caribbean bodies present such an opportunity. These individuals become a new "unspoilt resource" for unscrupulous consumption as already unequal power dynamics become internationalized and provide rationalization for what otherwise would be blatant human exploitation (Opperman, 1999, p. 253). By simultaneously compressing distance and driving an incessant thirst for expansion, globalization acts as a final factor contributing to the demand side of sex tourism.

This section has articulated that the globalization of existing racialized power dynamics creates a significant demand for sex tourism within the international capitalist economy. To the extent that systemic power relationships exist in the contemporary international political and economic order, then, the emergence of sex tourism from the economic privileging of certain races over others is hugely relevant to the conservation of that global order.

2.2 The Supply Side

Since its origins, the Caribbean economy has undergone very little structural change, and remains dependant on the West for its survival. The region's historical relationship with the West as a resource-rich region for plunder dates from the sixteenth century arrival of European colonizers (Ward, 1985). Its small island composition and abundance of specific crops made the Caribbean an ideal site for European large-scale plantation production in the eighteenth century and contributed to its development into a haven for tourist service sectors in the present day.

The Caribbean's introduction to the global economy as a plantation established the region as the locus of production for a European organizing and decision-making metropole; the lack of independence implied by this structure – each plantation secured supplies and produced output through its metropole – entrenched a system of economic dependence (Payne & Sutton, 1984). When formal slave-driven plantation economies collapsed in the early nineteenth century and sugar prices fell drastically in the 1880s as a result of subsidized beet sugar exports from continental Europe, many countries in the region were unable to maintain the level of economic growth to which they had become accustomed (Ward, 1985). Generally, Caribbean economies were reorganized to specialize in other export commodities such as bananas, cocoa, and rice, but they retained their tendency to rely on a narrow range of domestic products to generate foreign exchange earnings (Hope, 1986). Further, much of the region's export activity is under the financial control of foreign corporations. In Cuba, for example, the United States was able to buy extensive tracts of sugar land at low prices, securing production monopolies that made it difficult for labourers to demand a fair wage or local cane growers to make a profit (Ward, 1985). When structural adjustment programs and neoliberal policies were implemented in many Caribbean countries in the late twentieth century, conditions of economic need were exacerbated and Western economies were able to secure further market control over resources (Cabezas, 2009). Combined, these factors and this history constitute the "institutional structures and constraints which the contemporary economy has inherited from the plantation legacy" (Payne & Sutton, 1984, p. 2).

The history of the Caribbean as a tapped resource and labour base for the West created a dependency relationship in which capital accumulation flowed inordinately to European and North American states at the expense of Caribbean countries. According to McKee and Tisdell (1990), the additions of modern service and manufacturing sectors have only reinforced such foreign reliance. Many Caribbean countries began promoting tourism in the 1950s and 60s as a diversification strategy to acquire foreign exchange and investment and overcome post-

colonial economic crises (Hope, 1986; Kempadoo, 2004). The substantial role of foreign economies and international institutions in encouraging this shift should be noted, since it indicates the degree to which they conflated development strategies with their own financial interests in the Caribbean tourism industry (Padilla, 2007; Kempadoo, 2004). Tourism today accounts for up to seventy percent of the national income in some Caribbean countries and approximately one quarter of all formal employment, prompting Kamala Kempadoo (2004) to observe that, "there is probably no other region in the world in which tourism as a source of income, employment, hard currency, earnings, and economic growth has greater importance than for the Caribbean" (p. 116). World Bank figures indicate that over half of the working population in the Bahamas are employed by the tourism industry, and that it constitutes the single most important economic activity in Antigua and Barbuda (McKee & Tisdell, 1990). Caribbean tourism, and sex tourism specifically, display many characteristics that mirror those of sugar and other plantation economies centuries ago. Notably, both exemplify "the construction of infrastructures designed to accommodate the needs of foreign interests" (McKee & Tisdell, 1990, p. 3). In countries that are unable to secure sufficient capital accumulation elsewhere, sex tourism becomes a significant market for acquiring foreign exchange and economic development, albeit one that continues to depend on foreign demand for its survival (Wonders & Michalowski, 2001). Therefore, despite having shifted from agricultural export-based economies to service-sector tourism economies, the Caribbean continues to find itself operating within a dependency framework created by the Western capitalist system.

This section has argued that the historical pattern of Western labour and resource consumption created a relationship that precipitated the popularization of sex tourism. Indeed, if sex tourism in the region is understood to emerge from and be shaped by the Caribbean's unique history of transnational economic exploitation, its position within the international political economy becomes much clearer.

3 Sex Tourism and Dependency in the International Political Economy

To represent sex tourism as 'low politics,' as unconnected from broader forces of globalization and international capitalism, is to distinguish between the sexual and the economic when, in this instance, the two cannot be disentangled. Sex tourism arises from international inequalities and historical experiences of eco-

nomic exploitation, and the industry itself perpetuates such conditions by being one among many services for pleasure produced by the global South for exploitation by the North.

Emerging from a history of resource extraction and labour exploitation, sex tourism replicates the trend of economic developments in the Caribbean being neither self-generating nor self-perpetuating. According to Gunder Frank's dependency theory, the relationship between the industrialized core and its various satellites is characterized by the former exerting monopolistic control over economic and trade relations in the latter (Ruccio & Simon, 1992). The formal aspects of sex tourism -- namely, the tourism industry itself -- embody this relationship. The profits from all-inclusive packages, which account for the vast majority of tourist travel to the Caribbean, remain in the developed world (Padilla, 2007). Large tourist facilities are generally owned and controlled by foreign elites and transnational corporations, meaning that locals and local governments do not profit from the majority of tourism's associated economic benefits (Kempadoo, 2004). Further, particularly in foreign-owned resorts, there is an overwhelming tendency to import tourist-related products and hire foreign personnel for the most skilled positions, disadvantaging the local economy (Padilla, 2007). McKee and Tisdell (1990) discuss the demonstration effect of such import: local residents may alter their tastes to those brought in by the tourist industry, creating a greater demand for imports. Even in cases where the tourism industry buys local products, they are frequently supplied by subsidiaries of foreign firms that import a large proportion of their raw materials (McKee & Tisdell, 1990). Such conditions prompt the assertion that, "Far from breaking out of the plantation legacy, the post-war development strategy of the region has only reinforced the constraints of Caribbean economic history" (Payne & Sutton, 1984, p. 3). Because only a small portion of formal tourism revenues actually enter the local economy, Caribbean countries have witnessed a natural shift toward the informal tourism service sector. This has led many scholars to conclude that the limitations of potential income generated by tourism activities and the reliance of developing economies on these activities reinforce dependency on core states (Leheny, 1995).

Although an economic power differential certainly arises within formal exchanges, a dynamic of dominance and subordination is further embedded by the systemic racialized power held by whites over blacks. Whiteness automatically places sex tourists in a position of power over locals because of its historical association with authority; the wealth and economic privilege of Western travelers further demands deference because locals rely on foreign exchange for their livelihood (Kempadoo, 2004). In this way, transactional sex in a Caribbean tourist context is a metaphor for a broader penetration: sex workers are penetrated for money

and forced into a position of servitude, while sex tourists penetrate the former in an expression of their economic control (Opperman, 1999). Kemala Kempadoo (2004) provides a concise description of this embedded dependency relation:

> *The tourist's privileged position vis-a-vis the local working person is premised upon long-standing economic, gender, and racial relations of power between tourist and local, between wealthy and poor nations, between the haves and the have-nots, between those who participate as 'white' and those defined as 'black,' which form the broader context within which Caribbean sex tourism takes place (p. 121).*

All transnational sexual exchanges, then, can be characterized as occurring within a site for Western men -- and occasionally women -- to reenact colonial dominance and indulge in the commodified bodies and experiences catered to their desires. In this way, they further embed systemic power along racialized and geographic lines and engrain a global system of inequality.

In many Caribbean tourist markets, there is estimated to be one person informally employed for every one that is formally (Kempadoo, 2004). Within this vast informal sector, female sex work is the largest source of economic exchange (Padilla, 2007). Often, men and women participate in the formal and informal sectors simultaneously; according to Padilla (2007), the nature of the Caribbean tourism industry as cyclical and uncertain encourages a shifting boundary between the formal and informal and fluid participation in each. The reliance on the informal sector for many Caribbean locals is largely a result of the historical economic climate described in this paper's discussion of the supply side of the equation, the insufficient wages provided by formal tourism employment (Padilla, 2007), and the ability for informal workers to negotiate transactions and be paid in foreign currencies (Padilla, 2007). Sex tourism's existence in the informal sector means its economic patterns follow a ripple effect and are difficult to measure accurately. However, the informal profits it produces undeniably constitute a major and perhaps primary source of income for many Caribbean citizens. This important role is aptly summarized by Ryan and Hall (2001):

> *The circulation of sex workers in the economy brings profits to many, from the transnational hotels and airlines to the small street vendors who sell hair ornaments to be worn at discos. Hotel managers, taxi drivers, business owners, and many other intermediaries traffic the women and usually procure a cut of their earnings. The police, the state, and the local and transnational enterprises are all aware that sex has a market value ... even while they are proclaiming that prostitution is illegal. (Preface)*

These economic effects are transnational and local, but the overwhelming reliance on the informal sector by many locals and even the countries themselves increases Caribbean vulnerability to and dependence on external economic cir-

cumstances. Local governments and people are put in a position where they must include sexual-economic exchanges in a vast list of informal services provided for the North in order to sustain the local economy in the face of global inequalities.

4 Conclusion: Complicating Notions of Dependency and Exploitation

This paper has articulated the role of sex tourism in the global political economy both as a cause and consequence of global systems of exploitation and dependency. It has argued that the market arose out of the combination of an economic imbalance that lingers from the Caribbean economy's colonial origins as well as the forces of globalization that enabled the movement of information, services, and bodies transnationally. It has identified the racialized and geographical nature of sex tourism's embedded economic power relations and argued that these dynamics further systematize Caribbean dependence on Western consumption. While such conclusions apply to a macroeconomic understanding of sex tourism's position in the international political economy, it is important to consider the microeconomic negotiations of dominance that occur within individual tourist sex exchanges. For example, the increasing preponderance of female sex tourism to the Caribbean has been documented and merits far greater attention than this paper's limited scope permits. Such relationships problematize generalized assumptions of male-female power relations, as the foreign woman wields the economic and racial authority to dictate sexual interactions with Caribbean men and adopts the socially determined 'masculine' role. Further, statements by many sex workers indicate a proud sense of agency in their work that complicates notions of exploited labour. Many individuals make use of the economic freedom sex tourism permits to pursue other entrepreneurial endeavours and become actors in their local and international economies. Again, this is a subject that warrants more sustained and nuanced exploration. Despite these contradictory experiences, dependency is a condition that appears systemic and ubiquitous in the sex tourism and broader tourism industries. A complete reorganization of the current international political economy would be required to bring about any significant change to the vast divide between the advantaged and the disadvantaged. Until then, individuals in the Caribbean and other Third World countries can continue to sustain themselves in the best way available to them: by selling their labour and their bodies at low cost for Western consumption.

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CITIZENSHIP AND THE VULNERABILITY OF TECHNOLOGICAL CULTURE

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Abstract This paper argues that technological culture is inherently vulnerable, and that living in it exposes citizens to a certain degree of risk on a daily basis. It is problematic that citizens are either unaware of this or feel unable to influence the development of technology, which leaves them powerless to defend civil interest if threatened by technological development. However, as technology and the concepts of vulnerability and risk are socially constructed, citizens actually (if unconsciously) possess the capacity to influence technological development. Moreover, this realization calls for a more engaged, active citizenship that incorporates the reality of technological culture and the necessity of civic involvement in it.

1 Introduction

> *"We live in a technological culture. That is my one-line summary of the opportunity and the problem of the world we live in."*
> *(Bijker, 2010, p. 121).*

We live in a world permeated by science and technology; a technological culture. Despite this being the case, it remains a relatively rare occasion to encounter

expressions related to the implications of this fact in daily life. This could be considered odd, as academic literature is rich on considerations of the implications of living in a technological culture, also pertaining to ordinary, everyday life. As Bijker (2010) points out in the above quote, there are opportunities and problems related to the technological nature of our culture. It is in this paper that I wish to focus on the problematic aspect, more specifically on the vulnerability, of technological culture. As a matter of necessity, I argue, this will also require us to think of the role that ordinary citizens play in today's technological culture, and the importance of actively involving citizens in thinking about technology and the vulnerability that it brings. Overall, the guiding research question will be: 'What are the implications of the social construction of technology, and the accompanying vulnerability and risk, for citizens living in a technological culture?'

This paper builds the answer to this research question in three parts. The first part is concerned with the social construction of technology, in order to understand the dynamic shaping process of which our technological culture is a result. Without this underlying understanding, any attempt to meaningfully address the shaping of technology outside the realm of scientists and experts – and with the inclusion of ordinary citizens – would be futile.

The second part of this paper presents a discussion of the vulnerability of technological culture. Here, I explain how the concepts 'vulnerability' and 'risk' are to be understood, and that our perception of vulnerability and risk is socially constructed.

The third part I present, deals with the so-called 'democratization' of technology, and the conception of technological citizenship. Drawing on the capacity for influence citizens inherently – although virtually unconsciously – have within a technological culture, and the inseparable right and duty of citizens to defend their interests, I argue not only that citizens can, and indeed even should, be incorporated much more in discussions pertaining to technology and vulnerability, but that such a incorporation will actually lead to 'better knowledge'.

2 The Social Construction of Technology

In discussing the social construction of technology, I believe it is particularly useful to start off briefly with the opposite understanding of technology more widely adhered to in popular culture: technological determinism. This view holds that technological development is a process animated by a logic of its own – an inherent force (Mackenzie & Wajcman, 1999). What is more, technological development is attributed an independent realm from which it impacts society; although

reverse impacts of society on the realm of technology are not allowed (Mackenzie & Wajcman, 1999). The resultant conception of technological advancement is that of it being the result of an intentional and linear process, whereby the 'best' technological device imposes itself by virtue of its efficiency (Bucchi, 2002).

However, accounts of technological determinism have come to be widely disputed by scholars of science and technology studies (STS) like Bijker (1995; 2001) and Pinch (1999). As a consequence, a variety of social constructivist theories of technology have been developed. Here, I will concentrate on aspects of the Social Construction of Technological Systems (SCOT) approach as developed by Wiebe Bijker and Trevor Pinch (Bijker & Pinch, 1984), in order to illustrate my point.[1]

From a social constructivist perspective, we can come to understand that – far from being the outcome of intentional and linear processes – technological innovation "… often arises from the coincidence of a variety of forces and social actors." (Bucchi, 2002, p.82). As such, we come to question whether successful technologies and devices truly are so because they have proven to be the 'best' due to their superior efficiency. Also, the notion of social actors implies that technology does not independently impact society, but is impacted by society as well, which constitutes a mutual relation of influence between technology and society.

But why is this the case? Why is the development of technology not linear? Efficiency – the supposed prime virtue of technology – is understood differently from the various points of view of all the different users of technological devices (Bucchi, 2002). What is more, the same device can be interpreted radically differently by different social groups, and can consequently be given diverse – even opposed or conflicting – meanings (Bijker, 2001). It is precisely this conflict that Bijker and Pinch refer to when applying the term of 'interpretative flexibility' (Pinch, 1999). This constitutes the underlying basis for the social shaping of technology.

The shaping of technology is done by 'relevant social groups', which refers to institutions and organizations, as well as both organized and unorganized groups of individuals, that (1) play a role in the development of a technological artifact,

[1] It should be briefly noted that while the SCOT approach is a sophisticated theory that is illuminating in understanding the social construction of technology, I personally find that – in it – the issue of power relations is perhaps not given the attention or consideration it deserves. Whereas the collective of social actors has a very real influence on the course of technology, not just any group of social actors does have so, and social actors and groups can always be excluded from the 'framework of meaning' (explained below), so disempowering them. However, as I am in this paper focusing on the power of citizens as a collective force, I will not further deal with this criticism here, though it should be acknowledged.

and (2) share a meaning of the artifact (Jaeger, 2001; Pinch, 1999). Through the interaction around a technological device or artifact, a technological frame – a 'framework of meaning' – is built up between several relevant social groups that further guides the interaction between them (Jaeger, 2001; Pinch, 1999). Such a framework could include various elements such as goals related to the artifact, key problems identified, problem solving strategies and current theories (Bijker, 1995).

Over time, the relevant social groups will – through interaction guided by the technological frame – gradually come to agree in a common interpretation of the artifact (Jaeger, 2001). This process takes place as the closing of controversies: "Every time a controversy is closed, and consensus among the different relevant groups is reached, the technology becomes a little more stable." (Jaeger, 2001, p. 11). And so, closure occurs: interpretative flexibility diminishes and consensus is reached (Bijker, 1995).

The illustration of the social shaping of technology I have presented here is important for two reasons. First, it reveals that technology is not independently imposed on society; society impacts technology just as much. Second, as a consequence of the first point, it implies that organizations and groups have a very real and decisive role to play in the shaping of technology, which constitutes power to determine the successfulness and direction of technologies and artifacts. These findings are to be kept in mind, as they yield important implications for citizens and citizenship in a technological culture.

3 Vulnerability of Technological Culture

"Living in a technological culture … inevitably implies living in a vulnerable world" (Bijker, 2006, p. 52). Indeed, technological culture is very much characterized by vulnerability; it is so in two ways.

The first way in which vulnerability is characteristic of technological culture is that, on the one hand, vulnerability often is caused by science and technology, or at least mediated by them (Bijker, 2010). With every new technology there also come with it new vulnerabilities for its users and society as a whole – e.g. vulnerability to accidents, to diseases, environmental degradation, or social disruption (Martin, 2006). On the other hand, science and technology are typically employed to defend against new vulnerabilities (Bijker, 2010).

The second way in which vulnerability characterizes technological culture, is that vulnerability is inevitable (Bijker, 2010). Vulnerability and risk are prerequisites for modern society; living in a developing society where we have innovation

and want to learn about and improve things, there inherently are mistakes, and thus vulnerabilities (Bijker, 2010; 2006). Without vulnerability and risk, learning and development stops and everything becomes static. What is important here is to reveal how vulnerability and the associated risks of technology can to be understood. To this end, the idea of the cultural constitution of vulnerability put forward by Bijker (2006) is of particular interest.

However, before we move toward Bijker, we must come to understand exactly what is meant by the term vulnerable system, so that we know the qualities and characteristics of such a vulnerable system as technological culture. The first quality is that large technical systems – the term applies to modern society as well – are more risky and are more likely to run into catastrophic accidents, because they typically are complex and tightly coupled systems (Perrow, 1984). Complexity, as opposed to linearity, here implies the presence of many interconnected subsystems with many feedback loops, and multiple and interacting controls (e.g. universities or nuclear plants) (Perrow, 1984). Further, the tightly coupled nature, as opposed to loosely coupled, means that systems do not allow for delays in processing, do not follow one invariant sequence of processing steps, and have few built-in buffers and redundancies (Perrow, 1984). As such, the vulnerability of tightly coupled complex systems is twofold: (1) they are more prone to failure due to internal component errors, and (2) such systems are less capable to anticipate, cope with, and recover from the impact of external disturbances (Bijker, 2006). Both vulnerabilities involve the possibility of reducing the capability of a system to maintain functional integration, without which systems stop working completely – this is the second important characteristic (Bijker, 2006).

The third characteristic is that vulnerabilities exist and play a role on multiple levels of analysis, including the individual, the group and system levels. That is why group and organization culture are to be added to the understanding of vulnerability, which extend the technical system to include both environment and organization that affect the risk assessment process and decision making (Bijker, 2006).

The fourth and final dimension of vulnerable technical systems goes back to the idea of interpretative flexibility mentioned in part one of this paper. "[A] society can be constructed by certain actors, with certain aims, and under certain conditions, into being vulnerable; while the same society can be argued to be relatively invulnerable in another context or from another perspective." (Bijker, 2006, p. 60). This reveals that the vulnerability of systems cannot be characterized in objective, context independent terms – it is open to different interpretations. Its interpretative flexibility of vulnerability, and its dependency on context reveals its social construction. This is displayed by the fact that multiple tests of

the same phenomenon can produce different results, or even that the findings of a single test are open to multiple interpretations (Bijker, 2006).

Now that we have ultimately concluded that vulnerability is socially constructed, we can go one step further and complement the analysis of technological society with the study of technological culture, because the latter includes cultural values, identities and practices that form the basis of the social institutions in such societies (Bijker, 2006). In this sense, vulnerability ultimately depends on cultural values (Bijker, 2010; 2006). We can see this dependence as cultural values vary widely over time and across space, and the concept as well as the experience of vulnerability vary accordingly (Bijker, 2006). The implication that arises from determining that vulnerability is socially constructed, then, is that risk – which conceptualizes the effects of a possible harmful event, and pertains to the condition of a system, expressed by its degree of vulnerability – is more than a number. Risk is value laden, and therefore more than only a quantitative analysis of effect and chance; risk depends on perception and definition of the problem situation (Bijker, 2010).

The breakdown of vulnerability I presented above brings us to two conclusions to be taken into the final part of the paper. First, is that we live in a technological culture which inevitably implies living in a vulnerable world, where accidents are thus to be considered logical consequences. Second – based on our understanding of the characteristics and qualities of large technical systems – is that vulnerability cannot be expressed in objective, context-independent terms, but is complicated by interpretative flexibility and ultimately rests on cultural values. Therefore, risk has proven to be based on cultural values, proving popular quantitative analysis of effect and chance to be inadequate.

4 Civic Agency and the Democratization of Technology

It is now time to draw on everything that I have considered above, and to use this in order to focus on the issue of citizenship in the context of technological culture. The problem with citizenship in a technological culture, I argue, lies with the absence of the conditions for civic agency – i.e. citizen's capacity to act. These conditions of agency are knowledge, power, and appropriate occasion (Feenberg, 2011). Before explaining how these conditions are currently not present, I will first elaborate on the problem of their absence.

As I have discussed above, we live in a technological culture, and this culture is inherently and inevitably vulnerable (Bijker, 2010). The development of new technologies exposes its users and society to new vulnerabilities, possibly of a

catastrophic scale (Martin, 2006). It is a right, even a duty, of citizens to promote and defend their interests and those of the wider society (Swift, 2006). As such, citizens have a right to influence the direction of the development of technology, as technologies have implications for society and its vulnerability, and could thus possibly conflict with civic or societal interests (Feenberg, 2011). The current problem is, however, that citizens do not have (conscious, collected or directed) power to exert an influence on the development of new technologies, nor possess the capacity to play their part in actively conceptualizing the subsequent vulnerability and related risks pertaining to society. This is significant since conceptualization determines official policy, and is now influenced by objective and context-independent conceptions of vulnerability and conceptions of risk in quantitative analytic terms – both of which do not represent the reality described by Bijker (2010; 2006).

The technological deterministic way of thinking, or 'technocratic ideology' as Feenberg (2011) terms it, in which technology independently and non-mutually impacts society, and science and technology are solely the business of 'experts', still influences most of the thinking about technology (Feenberg, 2011; Kleinman, 2005). It is for this reason that the conditions of civic agency are absent: as new technologies are perceived as the 'most efficient' (read the 'best'), and therefore imposed on society, there is no knowledge of the reality of the social construction of technology and the falsity of the perceived reality (Feenberg, 2011). Without this knowledge, there is no questioning of whether the new technology truly is as good as it is presented to be. Without knowledge, there is no power, and without power the appropriate occasions for influence are not recognized or not created.

It is exactly this (politically) debilitating effect of the technological deterministic way of thinking that Bijker (2010; 2001) and others (Du Plessis, 2003; Feenberg, 2011; Kleinman, 2005) find alarming. Therefore, Bijker (2001) calls for a politicization (putting science and technology on the agenda for political deliberation) and democratization (actively engaging citizens in such political deliberations) of science and technology (Bijker, 2010; 2001). This standpoint has been met with increasing support by academics and scholars of STS, and has resulted in numerous attempts and initiatives over the years (Du Plessis, 2003; Kleinman, 2005; Feenberg, 2011).

However, not all attempts or projects can be considered successful, and this leads us to acknowledge some problems with attempts to democratize technology. As Bijker (2010) points out, there have been experiences where debates and such have been used solely to function as lubricant to push already made decisions through society. Likewise, not all decisions made within the presence of a

handful of citizens and pertaining to technology can truly be considered a genuine attempt to achieve democratization. Other projects have failed for different reasons, but I do not believe that we should be discouraged by failures or the malpractices I have mentioned. Instead we should focus on what has worked, and how we can promote 'technical' civic agency and achieve the democratization of technology. I shall continue by briefly presenting a case study of a successful experiment towards democratization of technology – that also satisfies the conditions of civic agency – in order to illustrate what the characteristics and qualities of such a successful initiative are.

In 2009, the Dutch Health Council organized a committee[2] (of which Bijker was vice-chair) which was given the task of starting a societal dialogue on nanotechnology – a technology of which it was perceived the public generally had very little knowledge (Bijker, 2010). Beforehand, the committee decided on intentionally keeping the public debate as separate from government as possible as to avoid a conflict of interests (which had problematized public debate in the past) (Bijker, 2010). The outlined steps towards societal dialogue by the committee were: (1) to start off with a lot of information giving, followed by (2) awareness raising, so that people knew what nanotechnology was about and could recognize problems, promises, risks and benefits (CieMDN, 2011). As a final step, (3) a dialogue would follow; a conversation between actors (individual or group) on equal footing, i.e. with access to the same knowledge etc. (CieMDN, 2011).

On the basis of stakeholder consultation of action groups and industry scientists who already had knowledge about nanotechnology, the CieMDN made a preliminary list of issues that it thought would need to be discussed (CieMDN, 2011). From that point on, the CieMDN (2011) issued an open call for proposals where anyone – individuals, action groups, churches, institutions, labor unions etc. – could submit proposals to do a project of information, awareness building or dialogue. A wide variety of individuals and groups became involved, resulting in projects ranging from TV programs, books, exhibitions in libraries, hospitals and museums, to virtual projects, school projects, philosophical and ethical vignettes, and a bus traveling around the country wherein people could do little nanotechnology experiments themselves (CieMDN, 2011). Together, with the CieMDN functioning as orchestrator but not in control, these projects gave information, raised awareness and sparked dialogue while avoiding issues of influence

[2] The name of this committee was "Commissie Maatschappelijke Dialoog Nanotechnologie" (CieMDN) – "Committee Societal Dialogue Nanotechnology" in English. The findings of this committee can be found in its 2011 publication "Verantwoord Verder met Nanotechnologie" ("Continuing with Nanotechnology Responsibly").

and power. As such, a balance was created between a variety of 'knowledges' existent in society, ranging from scientific knowledge to users' and patients' knowledge (Bijker, 2010). The important thing is that these 'knowledges' complement each other, and together lead to a 'better knowledge' (Kleinman, 2005).

With this example, it becomes clear that the conditions for civic agency are satisfied: (1) the public is presented with clear, complete and relevant information, which leads to knowledge. As the public has knowledge, it gains awareness – recognizing problems, promises, risks and benefits – and can as such evaluate for itself whether the development of (in this case) nanotechnology conflicts with personal, communal or societal interests. In case such a conflict would exist, citizens are then (2) empowered by the combination of awareness and civil right to (3) create or take advantage of appropriate occasions for exerting influence (such as the societal debate initiated by CieMDN).[3]

The civic agency that these conditions constitute, ultimately contributes to the establishment of 'technological' or 'technical' citizenship, where citizens are involved with the development of technology, and the conceptualization of the vulnerability and risks of the society they live in. It will demolish the problematic technological deterministic philosophy.

5 Conclusion

We now return to the research question declared in the beginning of this paper: 'What are the implications of the social construction of technology, and the accompanying vulnerability and risk, for citizens living in a technological culture?'

As we have seen, the implication first of all involved a complete turnaround of the perception of technology. Having discussed the SCOT approach to technology, we saw how it combats the philosophy of technological determinism by replacing the idea of 'the best' technology as being independently imposed on society, with the idea of technology being subject to the influence of social actors

[3] While I believe the CieMDN's initiative to be a promising one which indeed does satisfy the conditions of civic agency and as contributing to a 'technological citizenship', I do believe that future initiatives should also consider the pre-design stage of technology. That is to say: post-design stage (i.e. the technology is already there) civil involvement is good, but (pre-)design stage (the technology is still being developed) civil involvement is perhaps even better – also because this gives citizens more direct power over technological decisions. Nonetheless, this initiative, I believe, is a promising one and sets a good example for future initiatives.

and processes. As such, social actors (i.e. citizens) are no longer passive receivers, but active constructors.

The inherent vulnerability of technological culture further implied that there is a serious interest to be had in the development of technology, and the subsequent conceptualization of vulnerability and risk. Since vulnerability and risk are subjective and context-dependent, and based on cultural values, it means that the concepts are not static. Therefore citizens are to be involved in thinking about these concepts in order to make sure these are complete and accurate (i.e. not only framed by the interest of scientists or companies), and incorporating civic and societal interest. This means that if the risks are unacceptable in light of these interests, changes are to be made.

The major and final implication of the social construction of technology and the accompanying vulnerability and risk for citizens, is a more active and informed role on their part. To be sure, projects must realize the conditions for civic agency, for the democratization of technology, and for the enduring involvement of citizens in the development of technology to be achieved. Finally, having demonstrated the importance of such 'technological citizenship' – as it is referred to – I here stress the continuing need for 'democratizing' projects such as those illustrated by the Commissie Maatschappelijke Dialoog Nanotechnologie.

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Profiles of Contributors

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The Maastricht Journal of Liberal Arts is a peer-reviewed journal which encourages and rewards excellence in bachelor research. The articles in this edition were carefully selected from a large number of submissions and represent the best research conducted by University College Maastricht students. The topics tackled in the published papers are wide ranging, as is to be expected of a multi disciplinary journal and their scope and methodologies reflect the different disciplines studied at the college.

Submitting an article to a peer reviewed academic journal is usually an intimidating undertaking for the most seasoned of researchers, for bachelor students it is an especially daunting prospect. Every researcher knows that criticism and praise from the academic community is both a challenge and a spur to greater achievements. The earlier a scholar can experience this vital element of academic endeavor, the better they will be prepared for a future career in research. The editors were convinced that UCM students would more than meet this challenge and we have pleasure in stating that our expectations have been met.

Students are fully represented on the editorial board and have carefully performed their tasks as editors in maintaining academic standards and selecting the very best papers for publication. Any journal needs to also be formatted and praise must be given to the members of the board who provided their expertise in this time consuming part of the process. Thus the journal both provides students with the invaluable experience of submitting papers to peer review and also allowed them to participate fully in the editing process.

The fifth edition of the Maastricht Journal of Liberal Arts sets out to demonstrate the academic prowess of both University College Maastricht and its students. Not only are the students of the college hard working scholars but they are also diligent and inspired researchers. Therefore the editorial board is proud to present the fifth edition and is sure that the academic community will recognize the added value that the published papers make to the subjects they discuss and analyze. It is the goal of every academic journal to promote the highest standards of research and to promote originality and excellence to the wider academic audience and the Maastricht Journal of Liberal Arts follows in this tradition.