The misunderstanding of internet freedom

Sociology, Human Rights

The Misunderstanding of Internet Freedom The public governance has been a significant part of every system. People as citizens always discuss their opinions with each other. In accordance with the system which they are ruled, their discussions have an effect on the rules and regulations of the government. In modern societies which embrace democracy as management system, the influence of public determination is predominant. As it is mentioned above sharing and declaring public decision is the milestone of governance in such societies. Therefore, the more advanced ways people have to communicate, the more they can contribute to the improvement of democracy. If it is compared with the past, people have faster, cheaper and much more effective communication tools in order to exchange and spread their ideas. The Internet and new communication technologies enhance democracy by making any kind of information accessible and by providing people with rapid and cheap communication. The Internet enables the improvement of democracy because it gives people the opportunity to be aware of current issues. It offers a wide range of information to everyone regardless of their status. People who are interested in a topic can access plenty of data about what they are looking for. It is not anymore the case that people have to delve into books in libraries in order to find a useful resource which contains relevant information. People already have a well-organized library which searches and introduces them to the most appropriate information on their subjects — The Internet. In addition to individuals, many non-governmental organizations and any other social groups that share common ideas can publish their arguments and spread them across the world. For example, human rights organizations use the

Internet to advocate their arguments. L. Pal reveals that the international human rights movement has grown hugely since the 1950s when approximately 38 non-go0vernmental organizations were identifiable, to around 14, 500 by 1994 (qtd. Brophy and Halpin 353). The new ICTs (information and communication technologies) and the Ä°nternet provide people with advanced opportunity to declare their opinions and to contribute to democracy. To illustrate, (International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development) ICHRDD started to use electronic publications and participated in the PeaceNet Human Rights gopher service that retrieve important data published by other organizations (354). The information becomes accessible to all concerned workers and volunteers so that they will be more sophisticated in their fights and they are able to defend their arguments. (Brophy and Halpin 356). The new information communication technologies (ICTs) and the Internet contribute to development of democracy because they facilitate communication with rapid and cheap tools such as e-mails. It is stated by Brophy and Halpin that " Electronic communications and networking cut through the barriers of time and distance, facilitating the finding of information in a way previously impossible. " (353). Likewise to the authors statement, instead of costly phone calls or even more incommodious face to face meetings, electronic communications enable people to communicate or exchange their ideas in a rapid way whether they are at the opposite sides of the world. ICTs help citizens to contribute to democracy because they make mobilization of people more effective and cheaply. They also provide circulation of information through networks, and they strengthen NGOs so that capacity of governmental agencies is limited

(Brophy and Halpin 354). As it is mentioned above, ICTs enhance contributions of citizens to democracy because they transform people into aware, active and investigative elements of democracy. They enable people to discuss and question conviction, and come up with new perspectives and creative resolutions. Inherently, there are people who deny the contribution of the Internet freedom to democracy. It is also argued that the Internet makes things worse in terms of liberalization. Evgeny Morozov who is an expert on interaction of digital technologies and democracy believes that authoritarian governments hinder democracy from developing by censoring the Internet or attacking web-sites (1). Besides, there are some governments that censor web-sites which advocate child abuse, cyber-crimes, and terrorism (Ash 8). They also legally or illegally gain access to e-mail account, spy on searches and so on (Ash 7). These examples might seem to be assaults on privacy or obstacles to the improvement of democracy. But your privacy is not more important than the welfare of your country and children. You cannot jeopardize your country and children while some terrorists threaten benefits, security, and economy of your country or pedophiles abuse your children physically or psychologically. It should be preferred to protect your country and your children to your privacy. As a result, it is legitimate and reasonable to block websites like this. Besides, the reliability of governments is controversial. Everybody might not be satisfied about government's implementations. However, the ones who elect the government are the majority of society. People are given the right to choose the people who will govern them. Of course, they can question the practices and submit their thoughts through NGOs and so on. But they should also be

respectful to the will of the public. In conclusion, the role of public in governance is significant in all modern democracies. The more people declare their thoughts the more they can contribute to democracy. With the developing technologies and the Internet, people are more likely to communicate, exchange ideas and search for what they need. New ICTs such as e-mails and electronic documents enable people to enhance democracy. On the other hand, in order to prevent illegitimate censoring and regulations by governments, we should implement all laws in the online world as well. Finally, we should use our right to elect cleverly and declare our views through NGOs in an appropriate way. References Ash, Timothy Garton. " Internet Freedom". freespeechdebate. com. N. D. Web. October 2012. Brophy, Peter, and Edward Halpin. " Through the Net to freedom: information, the Internet and human rights". jis. sagepub. com. Journal of Information Science. 24 March 1999. Web. October 2012. Morozov, Evgeny, and Joanne J. Myers. " The Net Delusion : The dark side of Internet freedom". Carnegiecouncil. org. Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs. 25 January 2011. Web. October 2012.