

Iran and the Role of Social Networks

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Abstract

While social media tools, such as Facebook are redefining our everyday communications and networking habits and are competing with other activities, both at the workplace and at home, they have also greatly impacted governments in the relations with their citizens, especially in the area of accountability and on the issue of human rights. The consequences are sometimes unexpected and at this stage often staggering. The Iranian government was not spared by this new social phenomena, but it has managed to control its unexpected aspect, so far. Our analysis takes us into the mechanics of social networks and the development of the Iranian protest network triggered by the hotly disputed 2009 presidential election results.

Biography

Rossi Qajar is a technology consultant and developer. A Cornell university Engineering graduate, he founded the Houston based United Media Corporation, catering engineering, publishing and graphics solutions, mostly to the oil and gas and space industries. United Media Corporation kept a close relationship with Enron Corporation through a Facilities Management contract. Mr. Qajar also developed virtual schooling and cooperative sales management software for education institutions, as well as patient management software for the medical field. His more recent projects involve social media marketing applications in e-commerce. Mr. Qajar is the grandson of Ehtesham Saltaneh, one of the leaders of the 1906 Persian Constitutional revolution and elected President of the first Persian parliament (Majles). He has a strong interest in Iranian Islamic theosophy and in Iran's contemporary history.

Iran and the Role of Social Networks

On the 12th of June 2009, in Tehran, millions of people poured into the streets, 30 years after a seemingly similar massive outpouring that sent many Iranians into exile where they adopted new lives and adapted to new cultures without ever forgetting that they were part of the land of Iran. Young and old, in traditional dress or with western outfits, they revived the hopes of a people, inside and outside, washing away feelings of remorse and fears or crimes of a nation who would look to the future as a remedy to the suffering, wash away the anger which fuels the desire for retribution and feelings of shame over outliving innocent victims of our recent history. What is different 30 years later in Iran, is the potential role of social media and cyber technologies. After reviewing and understanding these tools, we must analyse the factors that have driven their effectiveness. More importantly, we need to distil lessons learned that may be effective as we go forward to achieve the intended outcome in the future. New social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter, united the emotions of successive waves of émigrés with those of the sea of protestors in Iran, into a common Green Wave defying further suffering from oppression, corruption or humiliation. As the hope persisted through the sustained bravery of women, children and men of our multiethnic society, international news organisations were swiftly barred from witnessing this popular miracle and forced to rely on Twitter and YouTube to follow these still incredible mass protests. The NYT and the Guardian filtered the feeds in a special 'Live' section that complied with our need for consistency and reliability, and soon enough, as

previously in Moldova, the uprising was dubbed 'The Twitter Revolution'. If anything, a revolution was also shaking the world of the press. The NYT, Reuters, Le Monde, and other press giants, all were already experiencing serious financial trouble, while news sources often shifted to the more comprehensive and certainly timelier social media world. Therefore, social media served at least two global purposes: 1. mobilising the protestors, and 2. Filling in for traditional news and information outlets.

This revolutionary uprising in Iran in 2009, and now those of Tunisia and Egypt, have prompted renewed serious debates on the role that social media tools, namely Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, have played and more importantly, will come to play in the sparking and leadership of these social movements. And in a larger context, the Internet in its present stage, commonly referred to as Web 2.0, is defining a new era in the balance of power among governments and in their relations with their populations. While the debates abound freely and often passionately on these same platforms, two published opposing views generate a more structured discussion framework: that of Evgeny Morozov²⁷ and that of Malcolm Gladwell²⁸ opposed to that of Clay Shirky.²⁹ The aim of this short study is to summarise the mechanics of social networks and attempt to evaluate their effects. Our interest mainly concerns social movements and civil rights mobilisation.

The Topology of Social Networks

Attempts to analyse social networks date from the early 20th century and have developed from anthropological and sociological case studies to formulate models with individuals, groups and relations. However, the recognition that these relations may be of different strength and nature prompted a need to conceptualise a more complex network or networks representing our social structure, including important concepts such as multidimensional scaling for translating relationships into social 'distances'. Granovetter produced a few crucial papers, namely "The Strength of Weak Ties" in 1973 and "Getting a Job" in 1974, in which he argued that 'weak ties', that is acquaintances as opposed to close friends for example, are more likely to provide opportunities, to aid their integration into communities and to be the source of new information, for close friends usually possess and share the same type of information. Identifying members of the network, existing relations and especially the quality or 'strength' of these relations, remains a challenge. In addition, determining the boundaries of sub-networks in a greater structure of intertwined networks is also very important for it may affect the qualitative role of presumed weak ties. Researchers managed this 'relational' data in the form of different sets of matrices and used mathematical graph theory to visualise and conceptualise the data and their relations into points and lines. These 'sociograms' can be as complex as the social structure they aim to represent and with relations themselves possessing attributes, such as strength, time, or density, connecting lines are attributed values and their graphical representations are valued graphs. The maximum number of lines that could be present in a graph can be easily calculated from the number of points that it contains. Each point may be connected to all others except itself, so $n(n-1)$ would give the total number of pairs of points in the graph, but the number of lines that could connect these points is half this total, as the line connecting A to B is the same as that connecting the B to A. Thus an undirected graph with n points can contain a maximum of $n(n-1)/2$ distinct lines. And the density of the network is therefore the actual number of relations l divided by the maximum, or $l/(n(n-1)/2)$

²⁷ Evgeny Morozov. *Net Delusion: How Not to Liberate the World*, New York: Public Affairs, 2011

²⁸ *Small Change: Why the revolution will not be tweeted* by Malcolm Gladwell in *The New Yorker*, October 4, 2010, available on-line at: http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa_fact_gladwell [Accessed 17 April 2011]

²⁹ See *The Political Power of Social Media*, published in *Foreign Affairs*, January 2011, available on-line at: <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67038/clay-shirky/the-political-power-of-social-media> [Accessed 17 April 2011]

In a valued graph, some lines may count more than others and may have to be multiplied by a denominator. Density calculations will be complicated by the weight of the attribute and by limiting factors such as how much attention and time can each point dedicate to new relations. These analyses and the right formulation of network densities, in the case of networks representing the power of social media in social movements, allows us to evaluate different social themes and the interest potential through member participation and their activity intensity.

In 1998 Duncan Watts a graduate student of Prof. Steven Strogatz at Cornell University (Ithaca, NY), published an important paper to become a book a year later and updated in 2003.³⁰ These studies were based on the research of his professor on the dynamics of synchronisation and inspired by the published work of Stanley Milgram's famous "Small World Experiment", and that of Granovetter. The models for larger, more 'real life' networks, described the modern cohesion of loosely connected social communities. His 'small-world' model showed that the network was composed of clusters with some of its strongly linked nodes, also randomly (weak) linked to nodes of other far away clusters, through which information from the initial cluster for example, may be rapidly transferred in very few steps. In other words, social communities that may seem distant while the network is forming, suddenly start to act cohesively with the addition of a small number of weak links.

His findings generated a lot of interest and a Notre Dame Professor, Albert-Laszlo Barabasi, extended his work with his own findings, most importantly that large networks' evolution is driven by only few leading "hubs", and that nodes with the most links, get the most new links by preferential attachment. He calls this method the fitness model of networks. When a node is "fit", it attracts links.³¹ This type of large network composed of leading hubs connected with a multitude of smaller hubs through weak links is called a "scale-free" network. Finally, for our purposes, we must also mention the work of Damon Centola, from MIT, who found that albeit scale-free networks allowed for faster information flow, those networks with "strong" links where the social distance between nodes is smaller, are more likely to be vectors for change in the nodes' behaviour.³² He argues that weak ties actually slow down and even prevent the diffusion of information in networks.

The scale-free networks are the most representative of the popular social networks such as Facebook, and with all the enthusiastic studies and opinions praising the potential of its new people power, information delivery and civil rights awareness, decision-makers, those in power and those still in-waiting, keep focused on the established order. For them, advances in technology and society remain just factors of modern governance challenges, as were the introduction of parliaments, voting rights, term limits and so on. For the masses, it is yet another more powerful weapon in their never ending quest for inclusive and immediate individual representation. In case of social movements leading to virtual and street demonstrations, both groups feel a certain degree of confidence, the first relying ultimately on the state security apparatus to uphold the established order, and the second on the power of a new found unity and the support of world opinion.

³⁰ See *Collective dynamics of small-world networks* - 1998, later published by Duncan J. Watts as *Six Degrees: The Science of a Connected Age*, New York: Saul Steinberg Foundation, 2003.

³¹ For further study see *Linked: How Everything Is Connected to Everything Else and What It Means*, New York: Penguin Group, 2002.

³² Damon Centola & Michael Macy, 2007. 'Complex Contagions and the Weakness of Long Ties'. University of Chicago.

But the real problem is whether anyone control this new phenomena. In Tunisia and Egypt, a dictator was brought down, within a month the new prime minister was brought down. Hopes of future stability following the slow re-building of a nation with a more representative government may not turn out the way we foresee. With the build-up of communities into more cohesive entities, the need for centralised governance will appear less necessary and constant power struggles fuelled by the "contagious" power of grass root dissatisfaction and uprisings, what Watts calls the madness of crowds, will certainly keep everyone on their toes. It is still early to understand, even less to assess what propagates an idea or a call-to-action more than another, what constitutes the threshold and what direction and with what intensity will the information cascade in our social network. Not for lack of debates and opinions, but because examples and counter-examples relating to events in the Middle East, Asia or Eastern Europe, have had varying outcomes. In most countries where oppression, corruption and dire living conditions prevail, we should be less concerned with how to maximise the circumstances for exposing popular cases of injustice among members of a social network supporting a change of conditions in such country. These cases follow the same Pareto principle that helped build their network in the first place. In Iran, a protestor's death or imprisonment, a hint of regime change slogan or in-fighting within the governing elite, will go viral and attract the most attention, generating comments, articles and emotions. The fact that after more than a year of protest with the support of one of the most visible if not most active, social network of anti-Iranian government members, Iran's government did not have the same fate as those of Tunisia or Egypt, has intensified Shirky-Gladwell type debates. During the Tunisian and Egyptian historical uprisings, a flurry of articles under the generalised headings of: "Why Iran is not Egypt", "The difference between Iran and Egypt", and finally just "Why not Iran", aimed to satisfy inquiring minds. These countries seem to be going through what Iran went through 30 years ago, they are mostly fighting for their independence. Democracy? Sure, they'll have some of that too. But first, give them justice and their restored dignity.

Well, why not Iran? Before we get back to Iran, let us hear from Shirky-Gladwell. In the January/February 2011 issue of Foreign Affairs, Shirky presented an essay "The Political Power of Social Media". It was mostly in support of the US' Internet Freedom proposal, describing the benefits for US interests and the dilemmas that it presented for the conservatives. He argues that the speed and scale of the spread of information empowers committed groups that alter the dynamics of the public sphere. Gladwell, on the other hand, answers that there is no convincing evidence that these new social media tools have had a decisive impact on the outcome of social movements, that is they did not solve a problem that may not have existed in the first place. Morozov goes further by arguing that these technologies may have benefited government forces more than their opposition. The debate rages and is captivating, but we don't see it as being essential at this stage of the Iranian case. The structure of a successful network is what we consider of essence, before any operating consideration or any potential consequence.

A State of Disunion

So is social networking fuelling protests and uprisings? During the street protests that started in 2009 in Iran, some young women and men were killed and with a last incredulous look, entrusted their escaping hope and innocence to their fellow protestors, while many others hanged or in jail, tortured and broken, found the courage not to shout "why me?". And from Twitter to YouTube, these strong images ignite online passions. But in Tehran, across town, people drive decent cars and live comfortably, while satellite TV displays the affluence of western lifestyle. And another part of the population surviving on menial jobs,

living in cramped quarters with little hope for a decent existence, shouts "why not me?" True, the educated, the middle and higher middle class youth, usually technology-savvy, yearning for more freedom and basic human rights, suffocate under the IRI's rigid Islamic society. The Internet, blogs and social media, gives them both a voice and a giant virtual meeting place. But should a larger portion of the population join the protest, the aspirations won't be the same. Justice? Justice starts at home.

Insightful explanations on why the uprising did not succeed, or was not to succeed, or will succeed, are often proposed. We read them with attention. In many ways, some of the enlightenments still leave question marks. The main one is that relating to the repression. Repression was there in '79, it was there in '99, it was there in Egypt, and it is there in Libya. At least six hundred people were killed in Egypt in a time frame of just a few weeks, and thousands of Libyans have died now too. There is no doubt that something unique and incredible happened in Iran in the last six months of 2009. It was not brought to completion. And expert explanations offered do not always satisfy.

We would like to clarify our views on what we consider to be the state of the Iranian social network scene, both inside the country and outside. Iran has been an early adopter of blogging and blogs are very popular, although they are of less consequence in our investigation of the power of social networks in the current protest movements. Video-based sites, such as YouTube, have their importance, but we see them more as feeding into a site such as Facebook, and not conducive to the build-up of a network. Twitter has a special place among these tools. The events of 2009 in Iran contributed greatly to Twitter's current recognition. At a time when events were happening faster than the traditional reporting could follow, Twitter satisfied the insatiable need for instant information in the exiled Iranian community and among the news professionals. The depth of the protests, their grassroots character and the worldwide interest, took almost everyone by surprise. Whether the information was verified or not, it was there in mass, available and exalting. A handful of sources were recognised as trustworthy, and the rest... well, the rest is history. But let's be clear, the majority if not all the utilised sources were tweeting from outside Iran (albeit the information may have been genuine, either phoned-in or sent through a computer).³³ Twitter was used as a news source, to the benefit of news professionals, pundits and exiled Iranians. If, unaware, I had read about a Twitter Revolution, I would have imagined the role of Twitter as that of a radio transmitter in the age of radio. A communications tool used to inform, warn and direct protestors in real-time. In that respect, Twitter did not accomplish its revolutionary promise, but for its real-time information distribution, it did accomplish its social networking role.

Finally, a word about Internet censorship and Iran. A lot is being said about Iran's Internet censorship and a few professional sites follow and report on the cat and mouse game between the government and the users. The second part of this concise study will provide a review of the state of the Internet usage in Iran, the hacking technologies and the state and direction of cyber warfare. Before that, however, since certain events have been followed with great interest by human rights and political organisations, and by the core members of our Iran network, we try to gather the essential from the use of the Internet mainly as a communications tool and within the limits, some realistic and some not, imposed by the government. From the Berkman Center at Harvard University and their collaboration on the OpenNet initiative, to the analyses of security hardware and software vendors, and to independent researchers, bloggers and academics, there are now many professional and reliable sources to draw on. In the case of countries such as Iran, speculations and

³³ The Alexa rankings of June 2009 confirm that Twitter's penetration in Iran is nearly 0%.

controversies abound. Reports on the technological possibilities, their material and the Internet traffic, are generally accepted. But the IRI's intentions, determination and abilities are often underestimated and misread. In general, the conception of time and space is different within an Iranian mindset, and patience and priorities are prime over short-term reactions and success. The IRI does not intend to, nor needs to, nor expects to either micro-control or keep all Internet traffic under tight surveillance, but it will to the extent that opportunities that present themselves. Their censorship operations show a certain discipline, flexibility and hierarchy in priorities. Until the unexpected burst in Internet usage through social media tools, the IRI's priority was mostly the strict control of "subversive" sites, considered pornographic or politically unsuitable. After the 2009 presidential elections, this strategy was expanded to recognise and thwart new threats. If we disregard cyberwar threats for now, that which probably worries the IRI most, is the diffusion of information - and especially images of - its repressive policies, followed by its economic concerns. According to the rare existing reports or researches, Iran's main and satisfactory censure policies, included bandwidth and access speed control, centralised smartfiltering of websites, and keyword filtering through their controlled proxy server gateways before accessing the Internet through the government Telecommunications Company of Iran's (TCI) only portal. The authorities also resort to very simple methods such as instructing the ISPs to repeatedly restart or shut down their servers all together for a very short timeframe, thus disrupting the uploading of larger files, such as mobile phone videos shot during demonstrations.

On the 22nd of June, 2009 while Iran stunned the world a second time 30 years after its Revolution by what looked to be another great popular revolution, the Wall Street Journal joined the chorus of those lovers of world history who would not be left behind, and published an investigative article to become a reference source on Iran's censors' use of packet analysis or DPI (Deep Packet Inspection) based on circumstantial network traffic analysis and on a handful of industry or technically knowledgeable interviewees. The affirmed speculation was denied by the purported vendors (Nokia, Siemens) and by other non-interviewed experts. Very recently, Iran's successful blocking of Tor's proxy based IP circumventing software (Tor - Update on Internet censorship in Iran, January 2011) has renewed the speculation. Without developing the DPI issue further in this section, we contend that Iran does not yet really need DPI to attain its goals, albeit obviously, the need to be on top of every advanced technology remains a high priorities, but these abilities and priorities are dynamic in essence, both technologically and politically. Basically, in the threat level hierarchy, satisfactory gateway filtering as opposed to access layer filtering, should make the DPI issue nearly irrelevant to Iran's censors, although not to activists and some analysts. In time, according to the IRI's perception of still unrecognised vital security threat, the need for IP address linking to Internet communications may prove more urgent, thus justifying a major shift in censorship strategy. We do not agree with many of the conclusions in the published reports on Internet usage, growth and influence and we still see Iranian authorities focusing on blocking access to a list of "immoral" or unacceptable socio-political sites, along with identifying and monitoring the main individuals or groups who may be assumed to represent a real threat to their security, in addition to occasional mediatic "coups" to counter the often organised onslaught of negative publicity and net attacks they are now facing. The authorities are aware that millions of individuals, mostly educated, Internet users, are actively criticising, even revolting against the regime. The West really became aware of this in 2009, but Iran has been dealing with it for years, What was surprising to the regime, was the extent to which some of its own people have been willing to join the protestors and go public in their political power struggle. More than any foreign assisted plotter, regional movement or the traditional exiled opponents, these IRI dissenters

and their associated organisations in Iran, or now also abroad, are the real perceived threats. As such, the foremost priority becomes the access to their communications, strategies and collaborations. The authorities need their passwords, emails, announcements and any other vital information. In the large array of hacking tools and methods, they tend to prefer password retrieval hacks. We consider that in this respect, the "anti-censorship" software or methods such as Tor, FreeGate, or proxy server methods, are still dangerous but largely ineffective for the targeted individuals and we defer this part of our discussion to the second part of our study. As sophisticated and advanced as any method may seem, we also know that countering these anti-censorship methods is not as difficult as it may seem in the case of targeted or targetable individuals. Possibilities for the authorities range from preventing physical access to computer equipment to inserting spying software, from keyloggers and network analysers for instance, to monitoring ISP servers, and even monitoring for recurrent unusual encrypted packets traffic from specific IP addresses.

The art of hacking is constantly changing and in some cases is much more difficult than in others. It is important to note that a majority of servers or server applications do not bother enough with security, because it is costly and more work-intensive, or just out of irresponsibility or inexperience. The use of older and simple hacking methods or tools is therefore still widespread. Beside methods that take advantage of flaws in the network or the servers' security for a fuller access to information, some popular hacking methods are SQL injections (in database-driven sites), Cross-site Scripting (XSS), or just taking advantage of weak authentication or cryptographic storage (major flaws were found in Facebook by Wargan, for instance). In the past year Iran, and their unacknowledged Iranian Cyber Army, made headlines by being credited for briefly hacking and defacing Twitter, Baidu, VOA and various IRI enemy sites, or more recently, an affiliate of Comodo, to be issued fraudulently nine SSL certificates. IRI hackers were mostly students, now collaborating with and training the intelligence ministry or the military into organised and funded outfits. In time, their activities may become more sophisticated and include development of malware to be used in cyberwar attacks. But presently, contrary to media reports, Iran is certainly no Russia nor China in that domain, and in the ring of a martial art like cyberwar competition, Iran would look more like a green belt in Yoga facing a black belt in Karate. Their defacement stunts were mostly DNS cache poisoning or redirection attacks, usually by breaking the 16 bit DNS server identifier or just by hacking the email of an administrator of these sites, allowing them to access the registrars of these targeted sites in order to redirect the DNS resolution of the URL to their own servers, where they were content with posting a victorious message. They could have done more by replicating the targeted site or at least their login page in order to "steal" usernames and passwords (or pharming), something they evidently intended to do in their latest Comodo attack, by replicating the user login page of major email providers such as Microsoft's Live, Gmail, Yahoo or the VoIP company, Skype. Their attacks, are not always very sophisticated or malicious, even if rather "sensational". They could have also modified the TTL (Time to live) to keep the resolution of DNS names for longer periods even after the targeted companies had discovered the attacks. These attacks will also be described in our second part, but they are considered easier to carry out compared to resorting to more advanced methods such as developing and inserting malware on a user's computer to get access to most of his or her data.

In general, we must consider that determined Iranians can still get access to the Internet and the major social media tools, even if not in a timely or linear manner, and even if the number of people who manage to do so limited. We also consider their extensive use of mobile phones, texting technology and word of mouth information transmission, to be full extensions of their social network. In other words, virtual or not, the youth in Iran has a

social network that follows a similar model as a fully digital network, with differences in the speed of transmission and amount of information.

During the early stages of the formation of the Iranian-based Facebook network, the enthusiasm was high, the issues noble and the network grew exponentially. Iran didn't miss the boat. As with Tunisia or Egypt, social media initially provided the necessary boost and support for large participation in a civil movement that culminated in the most significant street protests in decades. But as the protests dragged on, by trying to capitalise on the support of the émigrés, the leaders of the Green movement in Iran made a largely unrecoverable mistake. The deceit went both ways, for the Green leadership had no lost love for the long-time, now professional opposition, and the many rival opposition groups outside the country never had any respect for, nor accepted the leadership of the protest movement. Over time, factions revealed themselves and their discourses hardened. Émigrés are after a regime change and behind various teary outrages over human rights violations, joyous passions make a quick come back over protest slogans and unflattering actions directed towards the Velayat-e Faqih. But the Green leadership is resigned, however discreetly, to accept the virtual support that keeps their movement alive when all else seems uncertain. The problem with this strategy is that from a large national movement, they are bound to become just an opposition movement. We were going to say just another opposition movement, but this one operates in Iran. And now having a foreign-based council giving the movement's directives is not going to help it grow or keep the cohesion of their base in Iran.

As mentioned previously, if we consider that the graph representing Iran's protest-related events (x) against the number of people reacting to each event (y) in our network, follows the Pareto principle, then in time both because "hit" events may be rarer in occurrence or in emotional power, the Long Tail to the right of the curve gets longer and the area to the left becomes gradually smaller than the area to the right. In between events, members who may have dedicated part of their available time to be spent on social networks, may be forced to spend that time scanning through less consequential events, or participating or reading comments from other members. Again, in the case of social movements, time is favourable to a cohesive network. Rivalries and dissensions surface, insulting comments, exaggerations and redundancies start to weigh. And all of a sudden the "weak" links in our Iran network feel really weak. The network is still very large but clusters become more self-sustained and the weak links, if still in existence, are inactive or exist only as a means of staying aware of potential news. In general, the hubs lose their driving force, even though the clusters may still grow through additional strong links.

Conclusion

A week after Mubarak's fall, while cleric Yusuf al-Qaradawi gave the victory sermon to a crowd of hundreds of thousands, Wael Ghonim, the new mediatised hero of Egypt's uprising was barred from the stage at Tahrir Square and left in tears. It may not be easy for the youth who inspire, mobilise and struggle for their future, to capitalise on their success when faced with opponents who have 'paid their dues' and can implement political and economic programs, with experience, connections and organisation. We may still debate the media's announcement that the revolution will be tweeted, meanwhile the evolution will not be twisted, Egypt will allow Iranian ships to cross the Suez Canal and it will normalise diplomatic relations with Iran. For, notwithstanding all the re-assuring talk from the West on how the new Internet freedom is good for Western democracies and bad for tyrants, especially for Iran, Arabs realise that military bases in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf and elsewhere in

the region, are not Iranian but US Bases. This will remain in memories, while Iran will only remain a difficult neighbour, no matter what regime is in place. Some may not like it, but nothing comes easy. You may believe in the power of social networks, that it has proven itself, but once a change is initiated, there is no assurance that things will turn out the way you dreamed. Change takes time, effort and courage. Three components that social networks cut short on.

To re-build a social network that can reach a threshold of such proportion that the adversary may finally see the wisdom of your demands, members' trust has to be earned, one member at a time. If not, in the end our social network may take the shape and operate much as Iranians do without the help of digital tools: a community of highly divided egocentric factions, loosely aware of each other. There will be more of them integrating the network. The members will be more informed, more entertained, perhaps they will keep up with the newly displayed passions and involvement, including in human rights issues. And these are all positive outcomes, if that is the aim. To reach any other stated aim, the network will require confidence building, with more coordination between the leaders of larger hubs in their role as influencers, with greater efforts in recognising the essential and defining both behaviours and targets. From organisations as the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, it will require unpretentious focus and integrity.