McLibel to McSpotlight: the impact of information and communications technology upon radical pamphleteering

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Introduction: *McSpotlight*'s role as political actor

McMurder, McCancer and McCruelty: with its inflammatory (and allegedly defamatory) language, London Greenpeace's anti-McDonald's pamphlet became the locus of an international campaign against the corporation when two activists were sued for their role in its publication and distribution from 1985-1990. Ironically, the company's decision to serve a libel writ against Helen Steel and David Morris, the 'McLibel Two', transformed the series of local demonstrations into an international campaign, elevating the protest to the global stage befitting the issues it was addressing. These issues ranged from environmental damage arising from livestock ranching on ex-rainforest land to the corresponding removal of indigenous populations from this land, workers' rights, animal welfare and the health implications of a poor diet. In order to sustain a campaign on this scale, however, the activists had to seek other means of enabling a local campaign about global issues to be adequately articulated in the global context appropriate to the issues at stake.

It is against this backdrop that the role of new information and communications technologies (ICTs) emerged as a means of compiling and disseminating information about a specific campaign and enabling activists to mobilise behind this cause on an international scale. The *McSpotlight* website is significant in this respect, demonstrating both the value of the internet to radical pamphleteering campaigns, as well as indicating its potential shortcomings. With this focus, the paper will analyse the role of *McSpotlight* in the McLibel campaign to demonstrate how websites can become powerful actors in terms of shaping both activist campaigns and public response to them. However, it will also be argued that, despite this capacity, it is necessary for paper pamphleteering to co-exist with virtual campaigns, with the more directly inter-personal paper campaigns functioning as a form of communicative bridge between activist websites and the general public.

Ontological politics: constructing and disrupting social reality

Annemarie Mol's 'ontological politics' (1999, p.74) is a useful starting point for analysing the role of *McSpotlight* in the McLibel Support Campaign; Mol uses the concept to undermine the status of social reality as being ontologically stable:

> If the term "ontology" is combined with that of "politics" then this suggests that the conditions of possibility are not given. That reality does not precede the mundane

> practices in which we interact with it, but is rather shaped by these practices (1999, p.75).

This idea of reality being shaped through social interaction draws upon an understanding of Actor-Network Theory (ANT) in relation to a specific post-feminist use of performativity. The concept is underpinned by the basic principle of ANT that social reality is the product of interaction between various actors (including non-human actors). For example, if this concept is applied to the McDonald's corporation, the McDonald's actor-network would be understood as the network of entities that are drawn together through their relation to McDonald's and whose interaction produces (and reproduces) McDonald's in its existing form. These actors would therefore include everything from shop-floor workers, management and kitchen technology to animals farmed for McNuggets and Big Macs, ex-forest land maintained as cattle ranches, factory workers producing happy meal toys and – crucially – customers who frequent the restaurant.

This understanding of apparently objective entities (such as restaurant chains) having their status or practical realisation contingent upon the interactions of various actors is informed by a post-feminist understanding of performativity—that is, the specific understanding of performativity as used by Judith Butler (1991) of entities that are perceived as having a stable ontological status only having it because it is *repeatedly* performed as such. In the case of McDonald's, therefore, the reality of McDonald's as a 'family restaurant' is a specific performance that is enacted by all of the actors embroiled in the McDonald's actor-network, a performance that has to be continuously perpetuated in order for the restaurant to exist as such. The significance of this use of performativity is that, as Mol claims, 'the conditions of possibility are not given' (1999, p.75), in the sense that a performance could potentially be enacted in a different manner. Like Butler's account of gender as performative, however, an individual cannot simply opt-out of a particular performance, as it is determined by a broader social and cultural network of relations. For Butler, for example, the limitations of gender are:

> Always set within the terms of a hegemonic cultural discourse predicated on binary structures that appear as the language of universal rationality. Constraint is thus built into what that language constitutes as the imaginable domain of gender (1991, p.12).

In this sense, the means to alter social reality cannot be attained through individual attempts to resist or reject participating in a specific social performance; the broader cultural discourse that enables and legitimises this performance needs to be transformed.

If this difficulty is understood in ANT terms in relation to McDonald's, the task of the activists is therefore not to simply boycott McDonald's, as this will not alter (what they perceive to be) the network of socially problematic relations that support the corporation, but to transform the actor-network that determines, or in Butler's terms, imposes 'constraints' upon, how social ontology is realised. Mol's ontological politics, therefore, are useful in elucidating the necessary tactics for activist groups that are seeking to transform social reality, both in describing the contingency of this reality

upon a specific network of interactions and suggesting that through modifying these interactions social reality itself can be altered. In line with this argument, in the case of McDonald's, the useful course of action for activist groups is not just to reject participating in the McDonald's actor-network themselves, but to attempt to transform it by altering the relations that sustain it in its existing form. Indeed, this project of transformation epitomises the task undertaken by activists Helen Steel and David Morris during the so-called 'McLibel' trial. The issue at stake is thus to what extent *McSpotlight* aided the campaign in this transformative project.

Mediating the consumer's role in the McDonald's actor-network

This question can only be addressed through focusing on the website's impact upon the public, due to their crucial role in sustaining the ontological status of McDonald's as a 'family restaurant'. In the case of the McDonald's actor-network, the public is a crucial actor in sustaining and perpetuating the network that produces McDonald's in its existing form. The aforementioned list of potential actors in the McDonald's actor-network might interact in such a way that they are integral to McDonald's existence as a restaurant chain; however, almost all of these other relations are contingent upon the corporation having sufficient funds to sustain these interactions. In other words, only through generating sufficient revenue can the corporation seek to sustain the farms, factories, management structures, kitchens and shop-floors, which are essential in its processes of producing, advertising and selling fast food. This explains, as John Vidal foregrounds, McDonald's' '$1,800 million a year' advertising budget at the time of the trial (1997, p.17), which was designed to generate the revenue stream vital to perpetuating these other relations. The consumer's role within the McDonald's actor-network is, in this sense, integral in sustaining its existing form, through providing the capital that perpetuates vital interactions within the McDonald's network.

The crucial role of the consumer in sustaining this actor-network was the reason behind the activists' focus on altering public perception of McDonald's through their pamphleteering campaign, in order to modify their participation within its network. This is because if public behaviour in response to McDonald's could be modified, this would have a potentially transformational impact upon the actor-network and, in turn, the social reality it shapes. The process of foregrounding the relations lying behind the McDonald's network was, in this sense, essential to raising public awareness of the ethical problems allegedly perpetuated by it and how altering their role as consumers could help to attenuate these problems. It is in relation to this task that the political capacity of *McSpotlight* emerged: articulating both the structure of the McDonald's actor-network and encouraging the public to reject the role of 'consumer' posited by it.

This process of enabling a public understanding of the McDonald's actor-network occurred in

two key ways through *McSpotlight*. Firstly, it provided transcripts of the trial to allow the public to gain access to the activists' arguments in their entirety and, secondly, it made supplementary evidence accessible that went beyond the scope of the original 'fact sheet' and, indeed, the trial itself. This first attribute of the website was so important due to the nature of the trial sharing the same ideological aim and – importantly – tactic as *McSpotlight*: attempting to reveal and map out the McDonald's network in its entirety. This involved developing an understanding of what decisions were made within the McDonald's actor-network, which social relations these decisions enabled and whether these relations could be modified. This approach is also evident in the anti-McDonald's 'fact sheet' itself and subsequent pamphlets, as they link business and organisational decisions made by the corporation to the specific social contexts that emerged as a result of these interactions. Due to its expense, the original six-page 'fact sheet' was only distributed to the public on the 16th October 'Day of Action' against McDonald's in 1986, and subsequently replaced by an abbreviated double-sided A4 sheet entitled 'What's Wrong with McDonald's', but even this more concise pamphlet attempted to make these links explicit. For example, in 'What's Wrong...' rainforest deforestation was linked to cattle ranching and this, in turn, was linked to a drive by the McDonald's corporation to gain access to cheap sources of meat:

> McDonald's only interest is money, making profits from whoever and whatever they can, just like all multinationals [...] Forests throughout the world – vital for all life – are being destroyed at an appalling rate by multinational companies. McDonald's have at last been forced to admit to using beef reared on ex-rainforest land, preventing its regeneration. Also, the use of farmland by multinationals and their suppliers forces local people to move on to other areas and cut down further trees. (Anti McDonald's Campaign. 'What's Wrong with McDonald's' [pamphlet])

In relation to Mol's ontological politics, such arguments were essentially attempts to demonstrate how social reality was shaped by the McDonald's actor-network and the decision making processes that were bound up with it. The problem with this approach was that, particularly with this subsequent 'What's Wrong with McDonald's' pamphlet, while it was possible to highlight links between McDonald's and certain social problems, it was difficult to substantiate these links with evidence. This difficulty arose partly due to the nature of the claims and, in very basic terms, partly due to the spatial restrictions of an A5 pamphlet. For example, in order to appear credible, claims regarding cattle ranching on ex-rainforest land and its social and environmental impact would require evidence from sources—including environmental experts, witnesses to testify to the forced removal of indigenous people, and evidence to directly link McDonald's beef to the farms established on this land—to support its argument. Paradoxically, this problem was partially resolved when McDonald's attempted to sue Steel and Morris, as they provided the activists with the chance to compile and communicate the very evidence lacking on paper versions of the pamphlet.

When the McDonald's corporation served members of London Greenpeace with their libel

writ, they provided the activists with the chance to comprehensively articulate their understanding of the McDonald's actor-network and demonstrate how it directly mediated social reality. This afforded them the opportunity to engage in what Donna Haraway describes as 'a politics of articulation' (1992, p.20), essentially the process of articulating, or mapping out, the relations within an actor-network in order to open it up to critique. The value of *McSpotlight* became apparent during this process, through providing an easily accessible means for the public and other activists to directly access this process of mapping-out that was occurring during the trial. The website was designed by the McLibel Support Campaign as a means of garnering support for the 'McLibel Two', both in terms of generating monetary support for the activists and supporting them ideologically. The site was therefore a vital part of the campaign to raise the necessary money to support Steel and Morris, as people could use it to make direct donations to the campaign, and it also raised funds through selling merchandise such as 'McMurder' t-shirts on its 'for sale' page.

More significantly in ideological terms, the site enabled the activists to partake in politics of articulation by documenting, and therefore concretising and making publicly accessible, their account of the McDonald's actor-network that was mapped out during the trial in an attempt to expose the corporation to further public criticism. Eventually, a summary of the trial, its outcome and any articles relating to the trial from the mass media were also archived on the site. After the end of the court case the section of *McSpotlight* dedicated specifically to McLibel itself, broke down the proceedings into six sections: McDonald's case, the defendants' case, witnesses, defendants' analysis of the evidence, closing speeches and legal documents. This enabled the user to gain comprehensive and systematic access to the proceedings and swiftly access whichever aspect of the trial with which they were concerned. Alternatively, official court transcripts of the entire proceeding were made available to download, as *McSpotlight* terms it: 'all 313 days worth. That's 19,000 pages, or 80 Mb. As well as the testimony of witnesses it includes many controversial legal arguments over procedure, interpretation of the law, disclosure of documents etc'. The role of the website in relation to the trial, in this sense, was that while the trial itself played a vital role in revealing the underlying structure of the McDonald's actor-network, *McSpotlight* was essential in archiving the picture painted of this network and making it publicly, and internationally, available.

In addition to this focus on the trial, the site compiled further evidence regarding the issues at stake, expanding the critique from the evidence that the London-based activists could garner to criticisms that were made in local contexts around the globe. For instance, each issue focused on in the trial had a separate web-page, which listed the arguments made by both sides during the trial with a complete list of the witnesses. In addition to information directly used during the trial, there were also hyperlinks to a series of articles that appeared in the press pertaining to the issue, as well as

links to other books and reports that related to the key arguments and interviews with experts regarding the issue. The nutrition section, for example, provided an additional nineteen articles from the media regarding McDonald's food, seven books and reports that related to the nutritional issues at stake and interviews with experts from institutions including the World Cancer Research Fund and the Food Commission, alongside those from an ex-McDonald's cattle rancher. In addition to these archived bodies of information and evidence, users of the site could contribute their own experiences of the corporation in the *McSpotlight* debating room, web-forums split into categories that covered each area of the trial, as well as two dedicated to discussing issues relating to multinationals more generally and the political alternatives to capitalism.

It was this capacity to not only assert the links between McDonald's and specific social contexts (as with paper pamphleteering campaigns), but provide evidence to confirm these links, that enabled the activists to comprehensively map out the McDonald's actor-network. However, the purpose of this politics of articulation, or process of elucidating this actor-network, was to mediate the public in such a way that they altered their participation in it, which means the issue is really to what extent *McSpotlight* achieved this end. This question needs to be addressed by exploring *McSpotlight*'s role in the McDonald's 'issue network'.

McSpotlight: mediating the issue-network

The website became a multi-layered archive of evidence against McDonald's, which used the trial as a locus for constructing a body of evidence that built upon microscopic, local instances of problems, to develop a broader picture of the corporation's actions on a global scale. To use Noortje Marres' term, this demonstrates *McSpotlight's* capacity to function as a mediating actor within the McDonald's 'issue network', 'a relatively open network of antagonistic actors that configure around a controversial issue' (2006, p.8). Marres focuses on the concept of the issue network, as it foregrounds 'the framing of issues as a crucial dimension of civil society politics' (2006, p.8). Indeed, the role of *McSpotlight* seems to support her argument, its political value lying in its capacity to allow disparate actors within the McDonald's actor-network to collaborate and produce a body of knowledge that attempts to re-frame the corporation as unethical, with the end of mediating public behaviour in response to this re-framing of the issue.

The reason why this capacity to compile information was vital in the activists' attempts to mediate public behaviour can be elucidated in line with Castells' discussion of social identity 'types'. The tactics of the activists are akin to his definition of project identities as social movements that reject perpetuating existing social norms and seek to transform them in such a way that social reality is altered. 'Project identities build a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by so

doing, seeks the transformation of overall social structure' (Castells 1997, p.8). In contrast, McDonald's was a 'legitimising identity' that adhered to and perpetuated the version of 'reality' articulated by existing social practice, a definition that relates to Mol's ontological politics in the sense that through performing certain norms this type of actor perpetuates its hegemony. Therefore, even though hegemony is never guaranteed – as it has to be performed – it is easier for a legitimising identity to perpetuate social norms than for a project identity to intervene in them. In other words, in order to sustain the ontological status of McDonald's as a restaurant, the corporation simply had to perpetuate norms already being enacted; in contrast, the activists have to intervene in the performance of norms, effectively modifying the social, in order to enact their own definition of the fast food chain.

This foregrounds how, in addition to an imbalance of resources between the activists and McDonald's, there was also an imbalance between the tasks at stake for each group. Take McDonald's status as a fast-food restaurant: due to its function being to make profits through producing cheap food, it posits the means it uses to achieve this as acceptable and in line with the 'family restaurant' definition it constructs for itself through advertising. This definition can be performed successfully due to adhering to the norms of capitalism, whereupon certain practices are legitimised due to the laws of the free market being treated as an immutable force dictating that maximising profits must be a business's highest priority. This is reflected by McDonald's justifications after Steel questioned them about their multi-million advertising budget, in contrast with their low wages:

> Helen Steel: Why can't crew members be paid higher wages out of the $1 billion global profits McDonald's made last year?
> Paul Preston (president of McDonald's UK): People are paid a wage for the job they do.
> Steel: Why doesn't the company use its $1 billion advertising budget to pay higher wages?
> Preston: Without advertising the company would have no business. (Vidal 1997, p.217)

For the activists, this exemplified the drive for profit being used as the rationale behind a low paid workforce, with economics held up as a justification for the divorce of free-market laws from ethical considerations. Steel and Morris attempted to reiterate McDonald's use of economics to by-pass ethical issues throughout the trial, drawing upon witnesses such as ex-store manager Simon Gibney, who claimed that in his Colchester store on at least two occasions:

> Sewerage came flooding up from the floor vents in the kitchen. On one occasion the employees were forced to stand on bun trays to keep above the rising sewage. (Penman 1995)

Again it was suggested that this demonstrated profits taking precedence over ethical issues such as hygiene and worker safety, as:

> The flooding, said Mr Gibney, resulted from the management's refusal to replace special equipment which allowed them to clean and re-use the fat. As a result, they were forced to pour large quantities of fat down the drains, which solidified and blocked them. (Penman 1995)

In a similar manner to Butler's discussion of how realisations of gender are constrained by broader socio-cultural relations, in the context of the McDonald's actor-network the criteria used to denote 'success' are thus similarly 'set within the terms of a hegemonic cultural discourse predicated on binary structures that appear as the language of universal rationality' (1991, p.13). In the context of an actor-network that perpetuates capitalist social reality, success can only be realised in one form: that of profit. Despite the allegedly unethical relations that lay behind the self-imposed 'family restaurant', therefore, so long as McDonald's was profitable, it was 'successful' in accordance with capitalist social norms.

Why these norms were accepted and perpetuated by public participation in the McDonald's actor-network can again be understood in line with ontological politics. As Mol points out, certain perspectives 'shift the site of the decision elsewhere [...] they displace the decisive moment to places where, seen from here, it seems no decision but a fact' (1999, p.79). In this way, the practices criticised by Steel and Morris are not portrayed as a product of decisions, but an inevitable consequence of McDonald's obeying a certain set of social norms: the norms of the free market and the necessity of profit above all else. Public involvement in performing these norms (and the problems caused by them) is likewise not understood as a conscious decision to perpetuate them, as this performance is normalised as a fact of existence. To use Bruno Latour's term, an existing social performance is a form of sociological 'black box' (1987, p.2); whilst it is performed it is naturalised as 'social reality' and it becomes difficult to show how it has been constructed by relations that are the product of decision making processes.

From the activists' perspective, this process of naturalisation serves to justify economic progress being put before social values, and in seeking to discourage the public from 'performing' McDonald's' self-imposed identity, they are encouraging a rejection of the practices this performance vindicates. This is epitomised by a section on the 'What's Wrong...' pamphlet entitled 'what you can do':

> Together we can fight back against the institutions which currently control our lives and our planet, and we can create a better society without exploitation or oppression [...] Talk to friends, family and workmates about these issues. Please copy and circulate this leaflet as widely as you can. *For more information, visit* www.mcspotlight.org [Emphasis mine]

Thus the aim of their pamphleteering campaign was to transform the public conception of capitalist structures as natural or inevitable. The difficulty of such an approach was how to expose the connections between public behaviour and these practices that would be necessary to intervene in their performance and mobilise the public to perform the activist definition of the issue. Due to the aforementioned shortcomings of a paper pamphleteering campaign, the task of mapping out the McDonald's actor-network in order to de-naturalise it was constrained by the limitations of the paper pamphlets. Again, it is with regard to this process of explicating the mechanisms of the McDonald's actor-network, and attempting to demonstrate how the social reality produced by it could be

mediated, that the value of *McSpotlight* becomes apparent.

While *McSpotlight* served to consolidate the body of knowledge accumulated during the trial, due to the communicative scope of ICTs, it attempted to use this knowledge as a tool to encourage the public to dissent from the social norms posited by McDonald's corporate identity. In order to achieve this, the site attempted to enact a performance of McDonald's not as a 'family restaurant', but focus on the actor-network that this corporate identity masks – emphasising all of the social relations that constitute McDonald's existence – in an attempt to enact a performance of the corporation as an unethical corporation. The account of McDonald's as unethical produced by the site demonstrated the capacity of *McSpotlight* to function as a valuable tool to articulate arguments within an issue network, encouraging disparate actors to collaborate and produce a body of information that re-framed the issues in accordance with their ethical perspective. In this context, the site attempted to re-frame McDonald's as a company to be boycotted, as opposed to an acceptable family restaurant to frequent, encouraging people to join the protests through listing forthcoming days of action against McDonald's and clearly demarcating the role they encouraged the public to assume (as boycotters) in this performance of McDonald's as unethical.

By the end of the trial, Vidal claims that *McSpotlight* had received over 15 million hits (p.326), exemplifying the capacity of such websites to function not simply as tools to compile information but, as Nick Dyer-Witheford puts it, to enact a 'circulation of struggles' (1999, p.13) through communicating this information. In this sense, even though the 'McLibel Two' could not afford to fully perform their definition of McDonald's at the trial, lacking resources and witnesses to win on all of their points (although their claims regarding the exploitation of children through advertising, cruelty to animals and poor working conditions were substantiated), the communicative capacity of *McSpotlight* enabled new actors to enter the activist network through contributing to the information on the site, which allowed the performance of McDonald's as an unethical corporation to be enacted online. However, despite the comprehensive manner in which the website could re-frame the issue at stake, the question is: to what extent could this new understanding of McDonald's be communicated to the broader public?

New activist tactics: forging relations between 'interventional' and virtual networks

Despite ICTs having the capacity to frame an argument in such a way that McDonald's can be understood as an unethical corporation that should be performed as such, through members of the public rejecting the 'consumer' role posited for them, this process is often problematic to realise. Activist websites tend to be valuable to pre-existing members of activist groups, or those with an

existing awareness or interest in the issues. The key difference with a paper campaign is therefore that the latter is 'interventional'; pamphlets are directly handed to members of the public to inform them of an issue, usually outside of the restaurant in question in an attempt to deter them from entering. The anti-McDonald's protest 'days of action', for example, take place outside local branches of the chain. In contrast, a website has a decreased chance of fulfilling this 'interventional' role, as those who access it are likely to already be aware of the issues at stake. Despite this, there is not necessarily a dichotomy between paper and virtual pamphleteering. Indeed, the McLibel campaign is testament to the value of the two forms of pamphleteering interrelating in order to simultaneously expand and consolidate a campaign to tangible political effect.

Theorists such as Bach and Stark describe online politics as 'de-territorializing' (2004, p.103) in the sense of removing an issue from a specific territorial context governed by laws that are grounded in politics deriving their authority from the structure of nation states and their corresponding forms of sovereignty: 'the electronic space in which power and action are being reconstituted is literally not located in territorial space, and [...] the institutions that evolved to regulate life within territorial borders are ill-suited to the tasks of regulating trans-border flows' (2004, p.103). On the one hand, *McSpotlight* epitomises this process, both ideologically, encouraging critique on a global scale against a comprehensive range of issues, and practically, in terms being the product of a collaboration between activists from twenty-two different countries, making the site itself akin to a trans-border flow. For example, it has 'mirrors' (duplicate sites) set up from various other countries, meaning that the information has been literally 'de-territorialized' by not existing in a specific location: even in a virtual context it is run from numerous locations. This means that, while McDonald's took advantage of British libel law to repress Steel and Morris, even if they used the same law to shut down the UK version of the site, its 'mirrors' would continue to maintain the information and circulate the issues at stake.

However, in contrast to this 'de-territorializing' capacity, *McSpotlight* also demonstrated how ICTs could be used to re-territorialize an issue to maximise the local effectiveness of a campaign. The specificity of experience articulated in the personal stories submitted to the site's web-forums again functions to establish links between McDonald's and social reality, this time linking specific personal experiences to the actions of the company. More dramatically, the 'Adopt-a-Store' campaign that was encouraged through *McSpotlight* provided resources for activist groups – from contextual information to .pdf files of the 'What's Wrong with McDonald's' pamphlet in multiple languages – to conduct their own local campaigns. The advantage of this approach was that this mode of re-territorialization involved direct personal interaction, with this form of raising awareness resolving the problematic point of access between public and activists. The problem with online activism is that,

despite its capacity to develop a counter-hegemonic discourse, there needs to be a pre-existing public awareness of the website before it is accessed, due to individuals needing to actively search for this information (for example through voluntarily signing on to email lists or searching for relevant websites) in order to read it.

However, the type of re-territorialization enabled by *McSpotlight* provided means for local groups to 'adopt' their own McDonald's as a site of protest, which prevented the online knowledge community from only being accessed by those already interested. This is because the virtual activist network that enables local groups to coordinate their own campaigns facilitates a person-to-person mode of paper pamphleteering that can serve to generate interest in the issue. This occurs through the pamphlets being used to generate initial awareness of the link between McDonald's and issues of general public interest, through using punchy headings (such as 'robbing the poor' and 'exploiting workers') and concise arguments, then providing the web address to *McSpotlight* in order to explain the relation between the public and McDonald's more comprehensively, increasing understanding of how the individual is capable of responding to the problem. In this way, the two modes of pamphleteering can function together: interpersonal, interventional paper pamphleteering being used to generate interest in the more comprehensive online arguments.

Conclusion

While *McSpotlight* demonstrates how a website can be used to reinforce the claims made on paper pamphlets, paper pamphlets can be used to generate interest in the site's content. In other words, an 'interventional' network can work in conjunction with a knowledge facilitator, such as the website, to optimise the latter's impact on the public. In this sense, while the activist use of ICTs does not necessarily guarantee the success of a campaign, new technology does provide those who dissent from existing forms of social reality with a tactical tool to politically intervene in the actor-network sustaining this reality. If this is understood in relation to Castells, for a project identity seeking to transform existing relations, the process of understanding these relations in order to intervene in them is pivotal. As Mol suggests, understanding these relations in the context of their broader actor-network is the only means of determining 'what are the options' (1999, p.79) within it and how change can be enacted. The importance of activist websites is therefore that they enhance the project of radical pamphleteering campaigns, through enabling activists to engage in this essential tactic of articulating the actor-networks they seek to transform.

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