On WikiLeaks and Diplomacy:
Secrecy and Transparency in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

On 28 November 2010, the non-state organization WikiLeaks started to disseminate confidential diplomatic cables originating from various US diplomatic missions all over the world. This particular event raises questions about the possibility and limitations of 'secrecy' in the overall diplomatic process in the digital age, while it also challenges the meanings and boundaries of 'transparency' in relation to 'secrecy' on a more profound level.

In my thesis, I seek to illuminate exactly this disturbing puzzle, namely, what does the appearance of WikiLeaks tell us about the present constellation of the international order in terms of their relations towards diplomacy through the re-interpretation of such distinctions as transparency/secrecy or private/public. My argument rests on a two-fold theoretical analysis of the meanings of transparency/secrecy and that of the distinctions between private/public. On the one hand, it is exposed how the meaning of secrecy has changed in the diplomatic practice as a response for the process of democratization setting the principle of transparency in motion, and creating the promise for the expansion of the public sphere. On the other hand, it is argued how the Internet and mass media restructures social relations according to the operation of the 'spectacle', which rather points towards the shift to 'publicity' causing the disappearance of the public sphere theorized through the first approach. Thus, the appearance of WikiLeaks is analyzed through these two theoretical lenses and it is argued that it does not represent either ideal-types, but it rather embodies an in-between phenomenon with a particular shift towards the second notion about the 'public sphere' constituting the sphere of 'publicity' and resembling its special characteristics.

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"Nobody should have monopoly on the truth"

(Graffiti at CEU)

INTRODUCTION

Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, in her speech on 21 January 2009 made the claim that 'information has never been so free. There are more ways to spread more ideas to more people than at any moment in history. Even in authoritarian countries, information networks are helping people discover new facts and making governments more accountable.'[1] She went on saying, that 'the more freely information flows the stronger societies become.' Looking at the recent events around WikiLeaks, which has dominated the media discourse since 28 November 2010, when the non-profit, non-state company, started to release classified and confidential diplomatic cables, and the various reactions condemning its activity and demanding the 'head' of Julian Assange, the founder of the website, Clinton's speech and the Internet Freedom Initiative launched by the U.S. State Department, seems to be a 'satirical masterpiece'[2]. This is especially true considering the fact, that the WikiLeaks website promises the ultimate principle of transparency to its visitors, namely that they aim at 'publish[ing] original source material alongside news stories so readers and historians alike can see evidence of the truth,'[3] which in their view is inevitable for good governance and democracy. Apparently, diplomats and representatives of the U.S. Government did not share the same view – 'the leak has disrupted the diplomatic processes', announced Hillary Clinton her verdict about the documents. However, she also added that 'those particular leaks don't

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[1] Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, "Internet Freedom" Speech delivered at Newseum, Washington D.C. January 21, 2009. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/01/21/internet_freedom?page=full (accessed December 13, 2010)

[2] John Naughton, "Live with the WikiLeakable World or Shut Down the Net. It's your Choice" *Guardian*, December 6, 2010. http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/dec/06/western-democracies-must-live-with-leaks (accessed December 13, 2010)

[3] WikiLeaks. "About WikiLeaks." http://wikileaks.ch/about.html (accessed May 20, 2011)

represent anything unusual.'[4] It is already interesting, how the Secretary of State expressed controversial claims in one statement about seemingly the same phenomenon – the leaking of the documents. This, in itself poses a great number of questions about WikiLeaks and its rapport *vis-à-vis* diplomacy and world politics in the age of the Internet.

Whereas Hillary Clinton speaks about the disruption of the diplomatic process alongside the notion of the phenomenon of "business as usual", the controversy shows how complex the interpretation of its emergence as such has become, while the overloaded discourse also points towards its significance in touching upon questions and problems about the basic principles constituting the international order. How could the operation of WikiLeaks, a fairly unknown non-state actor, cause turbulences in the diplomatic practice of such powerful state actors such as the United States (if it actually does)? Does the activity of WikiLeaks resemble a certain résistance against prevailing state practices in its promise towards 'total transparency' or does it rather embody the attempt to resolve the existing paradox inside democratic states between 'secrecy' and' transparency'? Does WikiLeaks offer a brand-new solution for this particular paradox through the logic of the Internet, or does it rather constitute a challenge for modernity as such operating on the basis of such seemingly clear-cut distinctions as the one between private and public? As a consequence, does the Internet as a source and transmission device of huge amounts of information bring something fundamentally different into the political arena? How could the opposition among the drives inherent in democracy towards transparency and the characteristics of diplomacy as 'a discrete human practice constituted by the explicit construction, representation, negotiation, and manipulation of necessarily ambiguous identities'[5] be interpreted? Moreover, stretching

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[4] Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Quoted in: Stephanie Condon "Clinton on Wikileaks: Foreign Counterpart Said "You Should See What We Say About You"" *CBSNews*, November 29, 2010. http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-20024010-503544.html#ixzz1NSGWOIbA (accessed 26 May, 2011)

[5] Paul Sharp "For Diplomacy: Representation and the Study of International Relations". *International Studies Review* 1, no. 1 (1999), 33.

the problem of transparency/secrecy even further, the most basic distinction in world politics appears to be contested, namely the clear differentiation between the spheres of the private and the public, which poses fundamental questions about the building blocks of the recent political order.

As could be detected, the WikiLeaks phenomenon raises tremendous questions which are worth investigating in spite of its very recent character. Acknowledging the fact that even the medium-term effects of WikiLeaks are not yet researchable and the amount of the diplomatic cables already sets limits to the feasibility of the empirical research itself, with concentrating on what WikiLeaks' emergence as such could mean for the principles and structure of the present international order, my thesis seeks to contribute to the ongoing process of academic discussion about the effects of the Internet, and in a broader sense, technology on the constitution of international order, especially on diplomacy. Since the WikiLeaks phenomenon

For being able to navigate through the huge amount of uncertainty about WikiLeaks, it is necessary to outline the analyzed problem more clearly. From the above stated contemplations about the possible controversies, which seem to point towards one overtly significant problematique, the following question crystallizes in its entirety. While the crusade for publicizing secret and confidential documents rests on the ongoing process towards more transparency both inside the states and on the international arena, the question is whether WikiLeaks represents any fundamental changes in the international order through its seemingly disruptive effect on diplomacy for the constitution of inside and outside. Moreover, how can we distinguish between inside and outside in terms of the public and private sphere, what does this differentiation embrace and how could they be linked to the opposition between transparency/secrecy? Finally, in what sense could the activity of WikiLeaks be contrasted with the process of diplomacy?

The analysis of the present problem will be conducted through a two-fold theoretical journey through the works of various scholars such as Christian Reus-Smit, Sir Harold Nicolson, James Der Derian, Guy Debord or Jean Baudrillard, in order to build up the conceptual background for the limited empirical analysis. On the one hand, in the field of the theory of diplomacy it will be shown how the changes in the various international orders affected the operation of the process of diplomacy, and therefore, how the principles of transparency and secrecy constituted the terrain of inside/outside differently during the last two centuries. This topic will be assessed in the first chapter. While on the other hand, through the discussion of cultural theorists writing in the broad sense about the effects of technological reproducibility, it will be possible to look at the constitution of the international order, and more precisely, at the constitution of the divide between the private and the public from the perspective of technology restructuring the 'original' boundaries of inside/outside along different lines and therefore giving new meanings to the principles of secrecy and transparency.

Through this theoretical undertaking it will be argued at the end of the second chapter, that the main question for the empirical research is to find out whether the disclosure of the diplomatic cables in such quantities leads towards more 'transparency', and, therefore, the expansion of the public sphere, as the leader of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange claims, or whether it leads towards the collapse of the public sphere and therefore also to the collapse of diplomacy through the disappearance of 'secrecy'. While it is clear that the Janus-faced question contains two ideal-typical solutions for the phenomenon, it is assumed that WikiLeaks does not represent either of these clear-cut ideal-types, but could rather be located somewhere in-between. The 'task' of the third chapter is precisely the finding of the location of WikiLeaks between these two poles and through that to identify the possible changes in the

terrain of the present international order and in its principles. This will be achieved with the help of the method of discourse analysis.

The prerequisite for the empirical analysis of WikiLeaks is to delimit the frames and scope in which such investigation could be conducted. Since the whole phenomenon erupted on the Internet and the discourse around it evolved throughout the mass media with the dissemination of certain 'texts', the method of discourse analysis seems to be suitable to the present undertaking, since it offers the examination of prevailing and changing discourses in an open social system characterized by various power relations. Discourse analysis also paves the way towards capturing the changing meaning of social phenomena assuming that 'meaning, and hence social reality, arise out of interrelated bodies of texts – called discourses – that bring new ideas, objects and practices into the world'[6]. This, in this particular case, means showing, how WikiLeaks, through the use of the Internet, effectuates a re-interpretation of the meaning of the principle of 'transparency' as well as its binary opposite 'secrecy', creating a new power-constellation in the present order.

Discourse analysis embraces various meanings, but it is particularly concerned with the examination of social 'texts' which embrace linguistic, but in certain cases also extra-linguistic social practices.[7] However, in this case, the emphasis will be on linguistic practices, since WikiLeaks operated with diplomatic cables and the first responses from state and media channels were also articulated through written or oral statements, therefore I will use selected leaked cables and certain responses to those particular cables according to chosen factors which resettle or are on the way towards resettling prevailing power relations among WikiLeaks and certain actors, and also in the terrain of the present international order. However, since the leaking of the diplomatic documents is a still ongoing process and the

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[6] Cynthia Hardy, Bill Harley and Nelson Phillips "Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis: Two Solitudes?" In.: Yoshiko M. Herrera and Braumoeller, Bear F. "Symposium: Discourse and Content Analysis", *Newsletter of APSA*, 2 No. 1 (Spring 2004), 19.
[7] using the notion of 'text' based on its elaboration by Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau in: Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy*. (London: Verso, 1985)

already leaked documents embrace more than 12, 000 files from the promised 251, 287 documents, the present investigation does not attempt to deal with the enormous data set as such, it rather aims through the articulation of appropriate factors based on the theoretical considerations to limit the empirical research to certain cables and to certain media responses which could be representative for the phenomenon as such.

Therefore, the investigation of WikiLeaks, will proceed along the lines of the differentiation between secrecy/transparency and private/public building up certain factors for analysis, such as the distinction between sense/non-sense, materiality/simulation, state/non-state and participation/spectatorship, which, by the end of the third chapter, will result in the crystallization of a clearer picture concerning the nature of WikiLeaks and its relations towards diplomacy and international order. It will become possible to give an answer to the research question, namely, whether the present order should fear the collapse of the public sphere as we know it, and therefore also that of the disappearance of diplomacy, or whether the activity of WikiLeaks rather signifies the expansion of the public sphere for the 'greater good' of society? My main argument is that WikiLeaks represents an in-between phenomenon, in which case its appearance on the stage of world politics already signify that there is a move from the traditionally conceptualized 'public sphere' towards the operation of the sphere of 'publicity' in the terrain of politics. Thus the 'public sphere' will become saturated with the 'spectacle' restructuring relations among social actors, while the present international order seems to accommodate the WikiLeaks phenomenon into its 'practices'. This is important, since it shows that the power of 'traditional' players on the field of the 'public sphere' will be restructured and re-interpreted through new distinctions and new meanings of 'public' and 'private'. However, to arrive at these conclusions, it is necessary to understand the meanings of the principles of 'transparency' and 'secrecy', ultimately linked to the problems of the 'private' and 'public' in the operation of the diplomatic process.

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CHAPTER 1 - TRANSPARENCY, DIPLOMACY AND ORDER

In an interview on 1 December 2010, Julian Assange was asked by Time Magazine, whether he thinks that there are any instances in diplomacy or global affairs in which he sees secrecy as necessary and as an asset. Ti this question he answered that a more justified question to ask is who has the responsibility to keep certain things secret and who has the responsibility to bring matters to the public.[8] In the recent global arena, where state actors have to compete with non-state actors, such as transnational companies, non-governmental organizations or civil society for the political space, the question is of tremendous importance and as such, overtly complicated, involving many various actors and certainly questions one of the key problems in international relations theory – the delineation of the private and the public sphere. The chapter does not propose a holistic approach to the problem, it seeks to illuminate the connections between diplomacy and the building of the present international order through the presentation of the workings of the principles of 'secrecy' in opposition to 'transparency' on various levels of the international order, especially in the process of diplomacy. In this way, it becomes possible to locate the question itself and the non-profit media organization, WikiLeaks and Julian Assange on the 'landscape' of global politics.

1.1. The Nature of the International Order

Traditional international relations theorizing populates the arena of world politics almost exclusively with states, and creates clear-cut distinctions between the inside/outside problem through placing the principle of state sovereignty as the most important principle for differentiating between actors. At the same time, scholars in this tradition compare the operation of the system of states to an 'imperfect' world-state where the ordering principle is

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[8] Richard Stengel "TIME's Julian Assange Interview: Full Transcript/Audio." *Time Magazin* Dec. 01, 2010. http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2034040-1,00.html (accessed 29 April 2011)

anarchy instead of hierarchy (which prevails inside the state), and there is no overarching authority for monopolizing organized violence.[9] Here, these assumptions either result in the constant return of violent, anarchical disorder (realism), or in the progressive move towards greater interdependence and institutionalization (liberalism). In their understanding, states have the overarching goal for survival in the anarchical system, and they have two basic tools for reaching these imperatives: warfare and diplomacy, which seen as tools, 'are not phenomena constitutive of the international system'[10] and therefore, theoretical considerations tend to be directed towards entities in 'possession' of these tools, namely states.

However, through these lenses of theorizing, the phenomenon of WikiLeaks and the problem of transparency/secrecy becomes an object mainly outside the overall research scope. Thus for establishing a framework for the investigation of the case, the application of another approach is necessary, which is able to grasp the diplomatic process as a unique institution of the international order, while it also enables looking at historic change in the constitution of the given order. Therefore, the starting point is the notion of international society borrowed from scholars of the English School, namely from Hedley Bull and Adam Watson who defined it as

> a group of states (or, more generally, a group of independent political communities) which not merely form a system, in the sense that the behavior of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of the others, but also have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements.[11]

While from the concept it could be derived that these characteristics persist over a certain time period, due to the constant external and internal challenges, the nature of international society

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[9] See for example: Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*. (McGraw Hill. New York: 1979), 88.
[10] Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall, *Essence of Diplomacy*. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 13.
[11] Hedley Bull and Adam Watson "Introduction" In: Bull, Hedley and Watson, Adam (eds.). *The Expansion of Internaional Society*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 1.

does not rest on fixed characteristics and, as Martin Wight asserts, also its common rules and institutions 'are according to its nature.'[12] This notion also implies that for investigating the phenomenon of WikiLeaks, certain common rules and institutions shaping the nature of the prevailing international society should be elaborated. These fundamentals are captured by Christian Reus-Smit in general as 'elementary rules of practice that states formulate to solve the coordination and collaboration problems associated with existence under anarchy'[13] through rather evolution than explicit 'design'.[14] According to Bull, the recent international society rests on five basic institutions - diplomacy, international law, balance of power, conduct of war and role of great powers. In Bull's formulation, their role is determined as the following:

> These institutions do not deprive states of their central role in carrying out the political functions of international society, or serve as a surrogate central authority in the international system. They are rather an expression of the element of collaboration among states in discharging their political functions – and at the same time a means of sustaining this collaboration.[15]

In such a way, fundamental institutions constitute the most important building blocks of the operating order, but also their very existence reflect upon the nature of the given order, since these institutions evolve towards reaching certain common goals – which rather coincide with the goals of the states being security, the sanctity of agreements and territorial property rights.[16] Thus, when certain practices and rules determining the operation of these institutions change, such changes reflect also the alterations in the given international order. Therefore changes in the practice of diplomacy express that certain changes in the building of that given

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[12] Martin Wight, *Power Politics* (London: Penguin, 1979), 111.

[13] Christian Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 14.

[14] Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 167.

[15] Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: a Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia UP, 1977), 74.

[16] Iver B. Neumann "The English School on Diplomacy: Scholarly Promise Unfulfilled" *International Relations*. 17, no. 3 (2003), 350.

order are under way since it 'is a necessary ingredient of a world of many sovereigns' and it constitutes a practice which by preceding, succeeding and also accompanying war, emerges as a constant institution of international society.[17] Thus, looking at certain changes in the practice of diplomacy along the lines of the controversy between 'secrecy' and 'transparency' offered by the juxtaposition of 'old diplomatic' understanding and WikiLeaks leads towards the more profound understanding of the present order that enabled the operation of Julian Assange and his cyber-activists.

1.2. The 'Evolution' of Diplomacy

While the basic 'ingredients' constituting diplomacy – the idea that sovereigns could communicate and negotiate by means of surrogates, enter into binding written commitments regulating their relationships, and pass obligations down from one generation to the next – are there from the beginning of recorded history in the city states of the ancient Near East[18], the notion that it could be treated as an institution constituting the international order – at that time European order - coincides with a particular development in diplomatic theory around the end of the 17th century. It is also a reflection on the evolution of the European order with the move from the heteronomy of various political entities towards the differentiation of actors upon the principle of sovereignty creating the distinction of inside/outside with an 'international' level. While according to Reus-Smit, this move did not reflect the evolution of the modern state-system resting on the principle of sovereign equality[19], the decisive moment for articulating a clear distinction between the 'national' and 'international' spheres could be placed at around the time after the signing of the treaties of Westphalia.

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[17] Adam Watson, *Diplomacy: the Dialogue between States* (London: Methuen, 1984), 67.
[18] Raymond Cohen "The Great Tradition: The Spread of Dilomacy in the Ancient World" In: Christer Jönsson and Richard Langhorne, *Diplomacy*. (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 44.
[19] Christian Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 87-88.

While the system of resident embassies already marked the shift towards the articulation of diplomacy as an institutional feature for ordering relations among political entities, it was the French diplomatic practice in the 17th century, and especially the impact of Abraham de Wicquefort and François de Callières on the theory of diplomacy, which resembled a new approach towards diplomacy. As Maurice Keens-Soper sees it, before the writings of these two diplomatic envoys, diplomacy was treated mainly from the legal perspective concerning the immunities and rights of the ambassadors and from the perspective of defining the characteristics of the 'perfect diplomat'. On the one hand, Wicquefort basically shifted the focus from the 'diplomat' itself, towards the activity of diplomacy through describing the conduct of relations among resident embassies and the specific functions of an ambassador. On the other hand, Callières established the perspective to look at diplomacy as a 'common area' of the kings of Europe, therefore raising the diplomatic activity to the European 'international' sphere.[20] However, this particular 'common sphere' rested on a particular understanding of the role of 'secrecy' in diplomacy and also a unique differentiation between the spheres of 'private' and 'public'.

According to the analysis of Reus-Smit, the basic principles characterizing the time period from the late 17th century till the middle of 19th century 'absolutist' Europe was a pre-modern set of Christian and dynastic inter-subjective values defining legitimate state actions in terms of the preservation of a divinely ordained, rigidly hierarchical social order, where everyone's role, position and interest was inscribed into the order itself. This social order was 'commanded' by the absolutist monarchs, whose legitimacy derived from God and whose authority was unconditional, absolute and perpetual.[21] This understanding crystallized in two basic institutions, the first being diplomacy, later labeled 'old diplomacy' and the second

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[20] Maurice Keens-Soper "François de Callières and Diplomatic Theory" *The Historical Journal*, 16, no. 3 (September 1973), 488-508.
[21] Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State*, 88.

being 'naturalist international law', which meant a specific differentiation between natural law and civil law.

Considering the characteristics of diplomacy, Reus-Smit identifies four features, diplomacy being incidental, bilateral, secretive and hierarchical. Secrecy, the word itself coming from the Latin word *secretus*, originally meaning 'to separate or to divide' as a reference used in the Middle Ages to the sifting of grain, with the purpose to separate the edible from the non-edible, the good from the bad, bespeaks discernment, the ability to make decisions and the capacity to sort out and draw distinctions.[22] This characteristic served the purpose of monarchs and therefore the maintenance of that specific international society perfectly, since these European monarchs 'considered foreign policy their private domain and thought themselves accountable only to God,'[23] and thus made decisions about foreign affairs solely in their 'private circles'. This 'privacy' basically means that they shielded negotiations from their own society inside the state, as well as from other powers outside the state, which was not characteristic for previous diplomatic practices. Therefore, in this period, the term 'public sphere' actually represented the 'public authority', the state, in contrast with everything 'private'. According to Jürgen Habermas, 'the authorities were contrasted with the subjects excluded from them; the former served, so it was said, the public welfare, while the latter pursued their private interests.'[24]

In the field of conducting diplomacy, the paradigmatic change occurred when the order was completely shattered by the outbreak of the First World War. However, changes in the basic principles governing the European order started to deviate from the absolutist conceptions already after the French Revolution with the appearance of the principles of equality and freedom, in the sense that through a 'social contract' laws should be created by

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[22] Mark Neocleous "Privacy, Secrecy, Idiocy" *Social Research*, 69, no. 1 (Spring 2002), 90.
[23] Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State*, 94.
[24] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by Alison Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 11.

those who obey them, while such laws should be applied to everyone equally. From the second half of the 19th century, these basic principles shifted societies towards the building of constitutional states with suffrage for more and more 'citizens' inside the states, while there was also a process in diplomacy on the international arena towards multilateralism in the form of conference diplomacy, which brought a certain type of 'transparency' into the matters of power politics. However, it was only at the Peace Conferences of Paris, where these principles in the frames of the self-determination of people and democracy gained decisive momentum, completely delegitimizing the authority of monarchs 'originating' from God, and emphasizing that the leaders of political entities are accountable to their electorate and to a certain extent also to the 'international community'. Through this process, the notion of the 'public sphere' evolved from the concept of 'public authority' towards the assessment of the concept as a sphere of political action and discussion, in which also previously excluded social groups and actors could participate due to suffrage and due to the very principles of democracy.

This new constellation of relations within the social entities themselves also challenged the way, in which actors on the world stage carried out their relations, calling for a 'new diplomacy'. As Trotsky argued as early as 1917 after being appointed as People's Commissar for International Affairs for the Bolshevik government of Russia, 'the abolition of secret diplomacy is the primary condition for an honest, popular, truly democratic foreign policy'[25], which meant for him the publishing of a number of secret treaties found in the archives of the Tsar. Although most political leaders did not react in such a revolutionary way, the discourse about 'new diplomacy' appeared also in the articulation of 'open diplomacy' by Woodrow Wilson at the Peace Conferences in Paris: 'Open covenants of peace must be arrived at, after

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[25] Leon Trotsky "On the Publication of the Secret Treaties" *Documents on Soviet Foreign Policy*, November 22, 1917 http://marxists.catbull.com/history/ussr/government/foreign-relations/1917/November/22.htm (accessed May 27, 2011)

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which there will surely be no private international action or rulings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly in the public view.'[26]

Therefore, both notions suggested a radical shift from the conduct of diplomacy 'behind closed doors' towards diplomacy which is 'transparent' both on the terrain of the international sphere, where negotiations should proceed in multilateral form recognizing the equal rights of every participant, and on the terrain of domestic politics, where diplomatic negotiations should be articulated to the public in a certain form.

Although the necessity for transforming diplomacy due to the change in the political order was also clear for Sir Harold Nicolson, he was rather skeptical about the ideas around the end of the First World War, saying that 'it was the belief, that it was possible to apply to the conduct of *external* affairs, the ideas and practices which, in the conduct of *internal* affairs, had for generations been regarded as the essentials of liberal democracy.'[27] While he found the solutions for restructuring diplomacy around the democratic principles of transparency rather problematic, he acknowledged that societies inside the states 'are expected to take an interest in foreign affairs, to know the details of current controversies, to come to their own conclusions, and to render these conclusions effective through press and parliament'[28], therefore he concluded that diplomatic negotiations should *always* be kept confidential, whereas 'foreign policy should never be secret, in the sense that the citizen should on no account be committed by his government to treaties or engagements of which he has not been given full previous knowledge.'[29] Thus, he basically allowed for 'transparency' in the outcome of diplomacy, while the process itself remained intact: 'secrecy' as a principle of negotiations did not lose its overall position. In such a way, he introduced a previously

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[26] Woodrow Wilson, Speech delivered in Joint Session, January 8, 1918.
http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/President_Wilson's_Fourteen_Points (accessed May 10, 2011)
[27] Harold Nicolson, *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method* (London: Constable, 1954), 85.
[28] Harold Nicolson, *Diplomacy* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1988), 138.
[29] Ibid.

unknown distinction between the diplomatic negotiation process remaining 'behind closed doors' and foreign policy shifting to the public sphere.

This tension between 'transparency' as a basic principle of democracies and 'secrecy' inherent in diplomatic practices could not be resolved through Nicolson's suggestions. Moreover, it was further complicated with the appearance of new political entities during the 20th century, which more or less brought with them the application of the 'rules of the game' of Europe to the 'rest' of the world, in the form of an attempt to apply the democratic form of governance to their societies. Parallel to this process, the proliferation of organizations carrying out political activities outside the umbrella of the state, and thus escaping the logic of sovereignty, also started at that time. These practices brought the notion of 'transparency' into play both on the local and on the international levels since their operation is based on the assumption that they reduce transaction costs of cooperation which carries with it information-gathering, information-sharing, monitoring and eventually sanctioning tasks.

Thus, the 20th century experienced the process towards democratization parallel to the expansion of the sphere of political action and deliberation both inside and outside the state. However, these changes could not reconcile the inherent need in diplomacy for secrecy, since as it was already pointed out by Paul Sharp, it is 'a discrete human practice constituted by the explicit construction, representation, negotiation, and manipulation of *necessarily ambiguous identities,*'[30] so for carrying out diplomatic activity among 'necessarily ambiguous' political entities, without the principle of 'secrecy' there would be misunderstanding, non-cooperation and the overall process of diplomacy would be disrupted. In order to explore this problem further, however, it is crucial to outline the reasons why the identities of political actors are 'necessarily ambiguous' and why this state of affairs cannot be easily reconciled.

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[30] Sharp, "For Diplomacy: Representation and the Study of International Relations", 33.

1.3. The Present State of Diplomacy – as Mediating Estrangement

While it was already touched upon briefly why 'transparency' is necessary for democratic societies and how this principle has also been introduced on the international arena, it has to be outlined what the reason is for the inevitably secretive nature of diplomacy. Here, it is fruitful to bring in the conceptualization of diplomacy by James Der Derian, who in his book, *On Diplomacy,* analyzed the history of diplomacy as the history of mediating estrangement. For understanding the relevance of the notion of 'estrangement' for the purposes of the present argumentation, it is necessary to describe how he conceptualized the meaning of alienation through mapping the genealogy of the concept. The starting point for his analysis is the terminology which was used first in Rome as a noun – the 'other', 'another' or as a verb *alienare,* which meant 'to take away' or to 'remove' something. This meaning embraced various connotations throughout the European history of political philosophy. In the Middle Ages, it was associated with the separation from God, on the one hand, and with the juridical transfer of rights in economic relations on the other. In the Enlightenment process, through the workings of the 'social contract writers', as Der Derian calls such philosophers as Hobbes or Rousseau, both connotations of the concept changed in a way, that transfer of rights moved away from the economic realm into the political, while separation from God evolved into a more 'down-to-Earth' approach in the frames of separation from the 'self' and from the 'others' at the same time.[31]

These are the reasons why the concept of alienation appears as the driving force of capitalism for Marx, while has some special 'religious' reminiscence in the works of Feuerbach or Hegel. In Der Derian's formulation about diplomacy, which also resembles Hegel's notions of alienation, necessarily ambiguous identities derive from the fact that the

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[31] James Der Derian "Mediating Estrangement: A Theory for Diplomacy*"* In: *Diplomacy* ed. Christer Jönsson and Langhorne Richard, Vol.1. (London: SAGE, 2004), 287-295.

principle of universality, which is incarnated by Hegel in the concept of the *Spirit,* in his book *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, is estranged from the beings and they have to 'share' this notion also among each other – which necessarily leads to their alienation from each other. This means that they could only recognize themselves or the others completely, if the principle of universality would be at work as a unity. Instead, beings of every kind find themselves locked in the situation depending on the recognition of others in order to resolve the dubious 'feeling' of being left alienated. The diplomatic process also resembles the necessity of mediation between identities being left in the confusion about themselves and 'others', in which constant cognition and recognition of the actors is in place at all times. This is the reason why Costas Constantinou embraces diplomacy as the constant process of framing and en-framing, which refers to the form of the process in diplomacy for mediating. As he argues, 'the secret is that diplomacy *does not exist*. The challenge is to make diplomacy appear'[32], which refers to the phenomenon that the appearance of diplomacy *is* diplomacy itself, the process by which the 'picture' about the constellations of relations between entities is constantly framed, interpreted and re-framed in another way. Therefore, formulating diplomacy as mediation among estranged entities embraces not only state actors, but such a process is necessary among other political entities operating on the global arena as well, while during that very process ambiguity and therefore secrecy becomes inevitable.

Thus, from this particular theoretical perspective, the challenge which is posed by WikiLeaks as a non-profit organization is twofold. On the one hand, it promises exactly the delivery of the 'content' of diplomacy by 'revealing' its secrets and disenfranchising from its 'myth', whereas the attempt to disrupt the real core of diplomacy, namely the mediation process will rather become an ephemeral phenomenon. On the other hand, it challenges the 'limits' of democratization and the 'limits' of transparency by acting upon precisely those

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[32] Costas Constantinou "Diplomatic Representations… or Who Framed the Ambassadors?" In: *Diplomacy* ed. Christer Jönsson and Richard Langhorne, Vol.1. (London: SAGE, 2004), 319

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notions which invoked, for example, the disclosure of the Russian diplomatic papers already almost a century ago. In this case, the result of 'the fight for a world of total transparency'[33] as the operation of WikiLeaks was characterized by the American magazine, *The New Republic*, could only lead to the dissolution of diplomacy in its present form. The attempt by WikiLeaks also signifies a certain change in the international order, since diplomacy constitutes a core institution of that very order reflecting upon the shifts in its principles and driving forces. However, the nature of this alteration could only be elaborated more precisely if the phenomenon of WikiLeaks is scrutinized more profoundly. This requires taking up another perspective for analysis, namely the logic of the Internet, which brings in another differentiation for the principles of transparency/secrecy and also for that of the private/public showing how WikiLeaks could connect through the Internet to the process of diplomacy and therefore also to the operation of the international order.

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[33] Todd Gitlin, "Everything is Data, but Data isn't Everything" *The New Republic*. December 7, 2010. http://www.tnr.com/blog/foreign-policy/79678/data-isnt-everything-wikileaks-julian-assange-daniel-ellsberg (accessed 10 December, 2010)

CHAPTER 2 - TRANSPARENCY AND ORDER REVISED – THE LOGIC OF THE INTERNET

As became already apparent in the previous chapter, the meaning and significance of the principles of 'secrecy' and 'transparency' in relation to diplomacy in the present order already represents a complex phenomenon, which leads to further questions from the perspective of the Internet. The reason for such an undertaking is that the Internet itself is often assumed to 'embody values like freedom, community, equality, altruism and democracy'[34] or it is characterized as a decentralized 'network of networks' incarnating the ultimate space of transparency. At the beginning of the 'digital-boom', certain activists of the cyber-libertarian movement even professed their own Declaration, stating the complete independence of cyberspace from every kind of authority and the creation of a social space where individuals freed from their power-positions, backgrounds or any mark of differentiation could interact in an equal and transparent environment[35].

Thus, the Internet is assumed to represent an ultimate democratic space and therefore already its justification becomes politicized representing certain values and world views. WikiLeaks started to operate on such principles enabled by the Internet itself, stating that

> everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom
> to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and
> ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.[36]

In this sense it seems to be important to highlight WikiLeaks' character on a more profound level since it will add valuable elements to the understanding of the complicated relationship it has to diplomacy. Thus, the aim of the present chapter is to articulate the particular logic

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[34] Christopher May quoted in: Andrew Chadwick, *Internet Politics: States, Citizens, and New Communication Technologies* (New York: Oxford UP, 2006), 16.
[35] John Perry Barlow, "A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace" February 8, 1996. https://projects.eff.org/~barlow/Declaration-Final.html (accessed: May 17, 2011)
[36] WikiLeaks. "About WikiLeaks." http://wikileaks.ch/about.html (accessed May 20, 2011)

which seems to animate the operation of the Internet. The nature of the World Wide Web could be grasped through various theoretical perspectives; here the starting point will rather be the conceptualization of the phenomenon as an emerging social space, leaving aside the notions which consider it only as a technological tool for society. In such a way, the main assumption is that the logic of the Internet represents a particular restructuring force in social relations, that impacts on the meaning of transparency/secrecy, and therefore also on the construction of the differentiation between the public and private spaces.

2.1. From the Society of the Spectacle to the Terrain of the Hyperreal

For assessing the conditions which made the emergence of the Internet as a social space possible, it is necessary to outline the impact of technological development in the dissemination of information and the reproduction of social relations even before the appearance of the World Wide Web. Through the possibility of technological reproduction via the printed press, the radio or the television, and through the speed of the transition of information via the telegraph or the phone, the distinctions between the private and the public sphere and social relations among political entities started to change. While conventional international relations theorizing leaves out the investigation of technology and technological reproducibility from its research scope, the examination of the WikiLeaks phenomenon as an artifact which arrived exclusively through the electric mediation field into the political discourse, could not be possible without considering the interaction of technology and social reality.

While the beginning of the 20th century, especially after the end of the First World War, indicated the rise of the principle of democracy and self-determination of nations, which resulted in attempts to democratize inside Western societies, as well as in rearranging the

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relations among nations, parallel to and in connection with these developments, technological reproducibility also left its mark on the nature of social relations. Although Walter Benjamin approached the question from the perspective of aesthetics, his thoughts about the loss of 'authenticity' as a core characteristic for not only artistic works, but also every materialized mass products has profound implications for the social relations of human beings. The concept of 'authenticity' itself refers to the attribute which signifies that a particular work of art disposes of its own 'original' context, one cannot be manufactured through technological reproduction. As Benjamin writes, 'even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.'[37]

As a consequence of technological reproducibility, works of art, but also other objects of production, are contemplated from a different perspective – since they are taken out of their context, the measure of mass production will become that of quantity. It also means that through the constant technological reproduction in the form of images and representations via the printed press, the radio and especially television, the standard for judging the 'value' of a certain object or event will be that of the frequency with which it appears in front of the eyes of the masses, therefore it will require a certain 'representational' value incarnated into that specific image or representation, which results in the reshaping of that given image for being able to 'fit' into the environment of technological reproduction.

Jean Baudrillard also referred to this phenomenon when he articulated rather radically, that the sign reached the 'fractal' era where no point of reference prevails; the 'valuation' in the traditional sense becomes impossible and this situation rather results in the constant circulation of representations:

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[37] Walter Benjamin, .*Illuminations* ed. Arendt, Hannah (New York: Schocken, 1986), 220.

> …it is like a man who lost its shadow; […] it must either fall under the sway of madness or perish. This is where the order (or rather disorder) of metastasis begins – the rule of propagation through mere contiguity, of cancerous proliferation.[38]

In this manner, the principle of 'transparency' takes up a new understanding, namely it will refer to the measure of visibility by the people taking up the majority of society. And this phenomenon also creates a new base for not only the restructuring of relations among products and their 'consumers', but also for re-imagining the structure of whole societies themselves – and this new base will be the 'spectacle' designated by Guy Debord as such in his book *The Society of the Spectacle*. The event made through the constant dissemination of certain representations visible, transparent for the 'public' and its relevance measured through the quantity of the reproduced images 'worth' representing, which remain kept under the 'surveillance' of the masses.

This was also the basis for how Guy Debord contemplated the operation of modern society calling it the '*société du spectacle*'. He stretched further the thoughts of Walter Benjamin and theorized about modern social relations being manifested through the divide between social actors based on the attribute of the 'spectacle', which appears as a special 'mediator' among beings. However, in modern societies where the modern conditions for production and constant reproduction prevail, this phenomenon results in a different organization of social action, namely that directly lived life circulates around the 'spectacle', around the sphere of representations. Therefore, the realm of the 'spectacle' not only means the accumulation and dissemination of images in forms of various events taking place at every arena of social life – but as Debord expresses it,

> The spectacle cannot be understood either as a deliberate distortion of the visual world or as a product of the technology of the mass dissemination of images. It is far better viewed

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[38] Jean Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*. (London: Verso, 2002), 6-7.

as a *Weltanschauung* that has been actualized, translated into the material realm – a world view transformed into an objective force.[39]

This *Weltanschauung* embodies a different form of alienation, since beings alienated from themselves and from each other find themselves under the circumstances of a new form of mediation, the mediation through the 'spectacle' – which renders these beings in the social space into spectators or audience and creators of the 'spectacle'. In such a way, the meaning and differentiation of the private and the public sphere, as well as the principle of transparency, take up a new meaning.

While already outlined in the previous chapter, the assumed meaning of the 'public' sphere articulated in democratic states represents the organizing center for political action and discussion[40], which should be made accessible for the whole society and through which representatives gain their acceptance and legitimacy. On the other hand, personal relations or economic matters (although this started to change with the appearance of political economy) could be kept hidden from the 'public'; they rather constituted the sphere of the private. However, the 'spectacle' through the constant dissemination of information and images transforms the notions about the private/public distinction, since it enables the 'spectators' to gain insight into 'matters of the public' without actually participating in them. Moreover, these particular affairs are determined by the logic of the 'spectacle', which does not necessarily coincide with the 'traditional' understanding of the public/private distinction, since every event could shift into the sphere of the public upon turning into a 'spectacle' taking up representational value. In such a way, the 'private' will rather account for unobserved events, for happenings which do not evolve into a 'spectacle' by either a person or a machine being able to disseminate the recorded event in mass quantities.

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[39] Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1995), 12-13.
[40] Mark Poster, "Cyberdemocracy: The Internet and the Public Sphere" in: David Holmes, *Virtual Politics: Identity and Community in Cyberspace* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 217.

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As an opposition to the realm of the private, Paul Virilio even claims that the public sphere, through the 'spectacle', becomes the media sphere, the sphere of *publicity*, stating that 'avenues and public venues from now on are eclipsed by the screen, by electronic displays, in a preview of the "vision machines" just around the corner'[41]. This results in the illusion that the 'spectacle' makes the sphere of the public visible and transparent through enabling the masses to participate in 'matters of the public', however in reality, the audience or the recipient masses are excluded from the process through which 'spectacles' are set in motion and therefore also from participation. Therefore, the 'spectator' society finds itself 'outside' of the public sphere again, in spite of the promise of the 'spectacle' to involve everyone into the public sphere through the 'gazing eye' of the screens. Therefore, the question emerges, how could the authority of the 'spectacle' and the small group of people participating in its creation be challenged, could the promise for participation in the 'matters of the public' be realized in the age of technological reproducibility? Before outlining the possible answer to this question (the logic of the Internet), it is necessary to map out the differences between the society of the 'spectacle' and the terrain of *hyperreality,* which in several aspects goes beyond the limits of the 'spectacle' resembling the characteristics of the digital age.

2.2. The Internet as the Terrain of the Hyperreal

The illusion of visibility and transparency through the constant and vibrating dissemination of representations and its impact on social relations is also apparent in the works of Baudrillard, however he goes one step further by enabling the 'spectacle' with the creation of its own world, with the simulated environment which does not have any reference in the 'reality' it attempts to imitate. For Baudrillard, this new sphere of simulations becomes the *hyperreal* and its ultimate metaphor, the depthless screen. *Hyperreality*, in his

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[41] Paul Virilio, *The Vision Machine* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994), 64.

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formulation, is the logic which operates behind contemporary mass media; it is the sphere

where the real and the fictitious, the senders and receivers of the overflow of information or

the boundaries between object and the subject melt away in the sphere of the simulation.[42]

Simulation is a key concept for understanding the workings of the *hyperreal,* since it

epitomizes the essence of the contemporary social world according to Baudrillard – through

simulations not only the logic of the 'spectacle' prevails, but the chain of 'spectacles' build up

a virtual world imitating the 'original' without its original context, perfecting it in such a way

that it becomes 'more real than the real itself'.

> Abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror or the concept.
> Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the
> generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal.[43]

As a consequence, the boundaries between the traditional categories, such as real-

fictitious, sender-receiver, content-form, object-subject, starts to blur, while another overtly

important and unbridgeable distinction arises, namely the distinction between the simulated

self and the material. Although seemingly the basis for the simulation is the material, actually

the world of the simulation, the terrain of the hyperreal has nothing to do with the palpable

environment since the concept of 'authenticity' is missing and this alienation of the simulation

from the material restructures the traditional distinctions of inside and outside at every level.

In the terrain of the hyperreal, in the sphere of 'publicity' through its most important

embodiment, the mass media, the logic of the 'spectacle' prevails, in as much as the standard

for the dissemination and circulation of random images about events is the maximization of

the value of representations – therefore the 'spectacle' which was originally imagined as a

tool for mediating between the alienated beings turns into an end in itself by creating its own

world. For instance, in the case of WikiLeaks, the stated aim of Julian Assange is to publish

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[42] Jean Baudrillard, *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*. Ed. Mark Poster (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2001), 169-175.
[43] Ibid, 169.

information about every kind of organization which could have the power to keep certain events in secrecy, therefore 'covering up' abuses of human rights, corruption or spying. However, among the leaked diplomatic cables appearing in the virtual sphere, one not only finds classified and confidential documents, which embarrassed the relations of the United States with certain countries, but also dispatches on Bavarian election results and Argentine maritime law,[44] which points to the operation of the 'spectacle' mediating sense and non-sense at the same time, rather than to the consistent follow-up of the stated aims of the website.

In the case of the Internet, while it emerges as the ultimate manifestation of the 'spectacle' since it offers mediation through technology and the dissemination of representations, it also goes beyond the 'spectacle' towards the sphere of the hyperreal in as much as it introduces another distinction which was not emphasized by the nature of the 'spectacle'. This relatively new space seems to arrive at the ultimate end of decontextualization, since it liberates the subject interacting with it from time, space or any kind of social power relation which bound it in 'real' life. Without the material or the physical, the simulated self could interact with other simulated beings in an equally shaped manner, being freed from their own social context. Mark Nunes expressed this phenomenon as the following: 'the virtual utopian sees the immediate and immanent fulfillment of the Enlightenment ideals in a world liberated from itself through virtuality'[45].

While the Internet offers the end of alienation through breaking up the borders of space and time, and all kinds of borders which separate beings, this complete disappearance of the traditional lineages will be realized by the complete alienation of the material self from the virtual, or as Baudrillard calls it, from the simulated self. This new type of alienation happens through the building of a completely new, virtual space for interaction, which does not

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[44] Christian Caryl "WikiLeaks in the Moral Void." *Home | The New York Review of Books*. December 10, 2010. http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2010/dec/07/wikileaks-moral-void/ (accessed: May 19, 2011).
[45] Mark Nunes "Baudrillard in Cyberspace: Internet, Virtuality, and Postmodernity." *Style* 29 (1995), 10.

substitute the material world in any way, it surpasses it. 'That which was previously mentally projected, which was lived as a metaphor in the terrestrial habitat is from now on projected entirely without metaphor, into the absolute space of simulation.'[46] In this respect, the Internet appears to have such characteristics as the television or the mass media in general, embodying the terrain of hyperreality. The difference between the 'traditional' mass media and the Internet materializes in the characteristics of the virtual space for bringing back the promise of 'participation'.

While the mass media aims at reaching a generalized audience and in most cases communicates one-way, the Internet enables single beings to construct their identities in relation to ongoing dialogues as part of a two-way communication pathway. In doing so, every user of the Internet inscribes his own simulated self into the terrain of the hyperreal through unfinished dialogues enabling the actors of society to escape from their context completely[47]. Therefore, the Internet could be seen as an attempt to resolve the dilemma of modern society which created the spectators and the group of participants shaping the events of the public shpere, since it seemingly brings the 'spectators' back from their status as audience into the sphere of action. Thus, it offers the further expansion of the public shpere and also the fulfillment of the democratic principles, however this time through the workings of the 'spectacle'. The operation of WikiLeaks could be interpreted in such a way, giving the notion to the 'audience' that they could also participate in shaping political action through 'publicizing' so far secret documents.

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[46] Jean Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1987), 16.
[47] Poster, "Cyberdemocracy: The Internet and the Public Sphere", 221-222.

2.3. Virtuality and digitalized politics

After outlining the possible operation of the logic of the Internet, it is necessary to examine what impact could the 'spectacle' and later on the creation of the hyperreal could have on the workings of politics and power. For capturing the essence of the hyperreal, Timothy W. Luke elaborated the metaphor of the digital clock: 'Time simply reads out statements about its passage in the form of continuously changing signs'[48]. This refers to the importance of "now-ness" without any reference, any source for the sign, while decontextualized, disjunctive units appear constantly, simultaneously as flows of signs. In the sphere of the hyperreal, where the ultimate transparency and 'publicity' prevails, power and politics is compelled to follow the logic of hyperreality, the political turning into 'spectacle' and taking up the value of representation.

While parallel to this process, power seems to disperse among the billions of disseminated images and, according to Baudrillard, even to evaporate. 'Power is no more held than a secret extracted, for the secrecy of power is the same as that of the secret: it does not exist'[49]. After all, hyperreality maintains only the pretence of power where power reproduces only its own virtual representation. And after all, while it

> produces nothing but signs of its resemblance, […] at the same time, another figure of power comes into play: that of a collective demand for signs of power – a holy union which forms around the disappearance of power. Everybody belongs to it more or less in fear of the collapse of the political.[50]

What Baudrillard means here, is that the 'spectacle' and the hyperreal, by absorbing the public sphere and turning it into 'publicity', seems to leave the political completely outside of this terrain. And the operation of the public sphere in a democratic community, in the sense

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[48] Timothy W. Luke "Power and Politics in Hyperreality: The Critical Project of Jean Baudrillard." *Social Science Journal* 28, no. 3 (1991), 356.
[49] Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication,* 51.
[50] Baudrillard, *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, 183.

Jürgen Habermas imagined it, as a homogeneous space of embodied subjects in symmetrical relations, pursuing consensus through the critique of arguments and the presentation of validity claims[51], with the turning of live speech into pulsing electronic signs offers only its very transparent semblance. Besides, with the operation of the distinction between the simulated self and the material body, all the distinctions which appeared before in the terrain of politics, the differentiation of inside/outside with the help of the international and state level, seems to be blurred and disappearing and the outcome could be the 'global' totality and its particular unit, the local as the level of action or discussion.

Not only Baudrillard, but also Paul Virilio contemplated the possible consequences of these developments, and asked 'what remains of the notion of things "public" when public images (in real time) are more important than public *space*?'[52]. Apparently, the answer for this question was offered by Baudrillard as the collapse of the 'public sphere' *as we know it,* due to its transformation into *hyperreality* which only allows the operation of the logic of the 'spectacle'. And, as was already characterized above, the 'spectacle' requires the constant dissemination of representations and images, and the principle of 'transparency' in the sense of the instant visibility of the flow of signs, which cannot escape this visibility from the very point of making them accessible in the sphere of the hyperreal. And this is the point where the logic of the Internet could be contrasted with the operation of diplomacy, which in certain activities still requires the principle of 'secrecy' in the sense of privacy understood in contrast to the publicity issue.

Thus, interestingly, the logic of the Internet outlined above paragraphs would lead in the same direction as the thinking of James Der Derian, in as much as Derian stated that the

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[51] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* xvii-xviii.
[52] Paul Virilio "The Third Interval: A Critical Transition" *Rethinking Technologies* Ed. Conley Verena. Andermatt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1993), 9.

dissemination of the 'secrets' of diplomacy would lead towards its collapse, since mediation is necessary among estranged beings, while Baudrillards stated that through the workings of hyperreality and the logic of the Internet, the political will be ousted from the public sphere and therefore the disclosure of diplomatic cables on the Internet could only lead towards the cessation of relevant diplomatic processes. However, this argument is of such tremendous importance that it should be contrasted with the promise of WikiLeaks itself as the guardian of democratic values, especially the freedom of speech, and through the dissemination of such information, the expansion of the public sphere will provide the basis for reaching the state of 'good life'. Therefore, in the next chapter, the empirical investigation of WikiLeaks will revolve around the issues raised in the previous and present chapter.

CHAPTER 3 - THE CURIOUS CASE OF WIKILEAKS

Throughout the previous analysis about the change in the meaning of transparency and secrecy linked to the debate about the private and the public, the main question surrounding WikiLeaks crystallized as the following: to what extent does it contribute to the expansion of the public sphere with the dissemination of more and more information, or this accumulation of enormous amounts of information resembles rather the disappearance of the public sphere sliding into the representation of every kind of relevant and non-relevant issues without any sense whatsoever? As the Janus-faced question assumes, there is an ongoing process towards the state of 'total transparency' through the dissemination of more and more information which results either in the 'perfection' of the public sphere or the complete disappearance of it. Fhese outcomes rather resemble ideal-typical solutions while the premise about the case of WikiLeaks embodies an approach that after analysis, the outcome would be somewhere in-between. This also signifies an important moment in the constitution of the present order, since WikiLeaks does point towards the process through which the building of the social relations rather approaches one ideal-type than the other. However, before being able to determine which end of the two 'poles' could be more determinative when looking at world politics from the perspective of WikiLeaks, the articulation of certain features of the analytical tools are necessary.

While determining factors for analyzing social phenomena constantly bears an arbitrary nature, the previous description of the research problem provided one central concept which allows for setting up categories for assessment of the question. Considering the concept of the 'spectacle', as already outlined, it restructures social relations dividing actors in the social sphere into 'spectators' and 'audience', and how it could absorb the sphere of the public and turn it into publicity, blurring differences between so far untouched and seemingly

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settled social artifacts. It was also contemplated how the Internet could represent its ultimate embodiment while it attempts to bring back the participatory nature of the public sphere. These broad characteristics of the 'spectacle' may be helpful in further determining certain categories for approaching the huge amount of uncertainty about WikiLeaks.

First and foremost, it was outlined that the operation of the 'spectacle' has a unique impact on various social artifacts which are assumed to constitute certain binary opposites building up the social scene and whose boundaries are blurred through the operation of the 'spectacle'. Thus, operating in the environment of the 'spectacle' and hyperreality, it is somewhat more difficult to decide whether certain disseminated and circulated information is of political importance, since the value of representation could be on the same level in cases of radiating sense and non-sense alike. In the case of WikiLeaks, the secret documents contained embarrassing information for the US Government about the war in Afghanistan, as well as the fact that Nicholas Sarkozy once chased a rabbit in his office[53]. Therefore, the question which needs to be addressed in the first sub-section is whether the act of disseminating the given documents rather points towards the operation of the 'public sphere', assumed to be the sphere for the discussion of important matters for managing the life of the community, and therefore mean a relevant step towards the 'democratization' of diplomacy, or whether it resembles the operation of the principle of the 'spectacle', in as much as the documents take up the value of representation, which does not require the selection of the cables from the standpoint of 'national interest', but rather the perspective that they could be presented to the 'audience' regardless of their actual content. Therefore, as the first signifier for the tension between the two meanings of 'transparency' and 'secrecy', the analysis of the cables will be assessed from the perspective whether they take up any political relevance for

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[53] Angelique Chrisafis "WikiLeaks Cables: 'Nicolas Sarkozy Thin-skinned and Authoritarian'" *Guardian*. November 30, 2010. http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/30/nicolas-sarkozy-personality-embassy-cables (accessed: May 25, 2011)

the countries involved or whether they rather contain technicalities or completely irrelevant information from the standpoint of 'politics' as such.

Secondly, the basis for the changing nature of the divide between inside/outside, content/form, object/subject or real/fictitious rested on the assumption that there is a different type of alienation going on in the sphere of hyperreality, which means rather the estrangement of the material self from the simulated self. This particular distinction results also in the re-interpretation of the difference between the private and the public sphere: the private being the opposite of the spectacle, therefore an unobserved and unrecorded event which cannot be disseminated in mass quantities. In this case, the principle of 'secrecy', which is inevitable in maintaining the diplomatic process according to Der Derian, will be irrelevant since estrangement is taking place on a different level in the sphere of the hyperreal. Therefore, the next sub-question, which needs to be further addressed, could be formulated whether the 'new' distinction of material/simulated results in the disappearance of the criteria for 'secrecy' in diplomacy, so in the evanescence of alienation of beings, since the answer for this question further determines the 'fate' of the public sphere in general. In the case of WikiLeaks, it is interesting to see in which cases they decided over the 'secrecy' of their sources making a difference themselves between turning certain actors into spectacles or not.

Thirdly, this particular remark also points to the question of power, namely who has the responsibility and who has the capacity to disseminate the secretive documents at issue, and this question already shifts the focus towards the problem of power and politics in hyperreality. The question is whether the appearance of non-state actors, such as the non-profit organization of WikiLeaks, taking up political activity could point towards the expansion of the 'public sphere', or whether the Internet not only decentralizes the relations of power through empowering such actors, as WikiLeaks, but also highlights the dispersion of power and politics and through that the disappearance of the 'public sphere' by degrading the

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forces of politics – for example by depriving the state of its 'myth' as the one and only actor for political activity. Therefore, it seems to be justified to look at how the government of the United States responded to the leaking of the documents itself and whether the operation of WikiLeaks resulted in the liquidation of the 'myth' of the state.

Finally, the question of participation versus spectatorship should also be touched upon briefly, since the terrain of the hyperreal through the Internet promises to bring the sphere of action back into the 'public sphere'. Thus, the last sub-question could be articulated whether the operation of WikiLeaks could be regarded as an articulation for the expansion of the 'public sphere' in the sense that it offers a platform for participating in political action and discussion, or whether it remains in the terrain of the 'spectacle', since this 'participation' only remains virtual, and as such unable to 'leave' the terrain of hyperreality, therefore offering only the appearance of participation. In the case of WikiLeaks, therefore, it will be addressed, how effectively it could work as a 'Wiki', namely that theoretically anyone could be involved into the dissemination of confidential information and whether this participation in the sphere of the hyperreal could amount to politically relevant participation or whether it is only the small group of activists employed by WikiLeaks who actually take up this particular role.

3.1. Sense/Non-sense

Breaking down the phenomenon into such smaller 'signifiers' gives the opportunity to focus on smaller 'sub-stories' of the main discourse which could be assessed through the process described by Mark Laffey and Jutta Weldes in their *Methodological Reflections on Discourse Analysis*. Thus, first and foremost the main signifying elements for each 'sub-story' must be identified – in this case, it is assumed that diplomatic cables contain politically

relevant and 'sensitive' information concerning 'national interest', somehow enhancing the 'survival' of the state on the international arena, therefore these documents contain only the overtly crucial texts for the smooth conduct of diplomacy. Such elements which were mentioned could be thought of also as nodal points[54], where several different connotative chains come together and embody a certain terrain for struggle. Nodal points could represent precisely the problematique which is present in the different connotations associated with what makes up sense and non-sense in relation to diplomacy and WikiLeaks. The next step constitutes the articulations of these representations with institutions such as the American diplomatic practice, while the last element in the deconstruction of a certain discourse highlights the various subject positions, namely that it identifies 'who is speaking' through the explored texts.[55]

As to the question of the relevance of the disseminated documents for the foreign policy of the United States in general, there were various dissenting opinions coming from the US Government itself, Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates stating: 'Is this embarrassing? Yes. Is it awkward? Yes. Consequences for U.S. foreign policy? I think fairly modest,'[56] while Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, not only sensed a threat towards American national interests, but announced that 'Let's be clear: This disclosure is not just an attack on America's foreign policy interests. It is an attack on the international community–the alliances and partnerships, the conversations and negotiations that safeguard global security and advance economic prosperity.'[57] The stance of Robert Gates reflects the clear distinction between

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[54] using the notion of 'nodal points' based on its elaboration by Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau in: Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy*. (London: Verso, 1985), xi.
[55] Mark Laffey and Jutta Weldes "Methodological Reflections on Discourse Analysis" In.: Yoshiko M. Herrera and Braumoeller, Bear F. "Symposium: Discourse and Content Analysis", *Newsletter of APSA*, 2, no. 1 (Spring 2004), 28-29.
[56] News Briefing, *Department of Defense*, DOD News Briefing with Secretary Gates and Adm. Mullen from the Pentagon. Nov 30, 2010. http://www.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=4728 (accessed: 28 May, 2011)
[57] Glenn Kessler "Clinton, in Kazakhstan for summit, will face leaders unhappy over Wikileaks cables" *Washington Post* November 30, 2010,

foreign policy and diplomacy in the sense that Harold Nicholson differentiated between the two already in the interwar period. Namely, that on the one hand, the leaks of diplomatic cables is embarrassing since they reflect the process of negotiations which are rather assumed to be kept secret, while foreign policy is articulated already to the public, therefore the leaking of the documents does not have significant effect on them.

Broadly speaking, the documents found nothing which was not already known in the field of world politics, however the precision and detail of the documents give a remarkable insight into the workings of American diplomacy.[58] Their impact on American foreign policy could also be questioned from another perspective since the documents originate from US embassies and the Secretary of State, while in the formation of foreign policy such agencies as the National Security Council or the Department of Defense also participates actively, the cables therefore represent only a partial view of the operation of the American foreign service. It also has to be emphasized that the documents are grouped according to classification and there is not a single document bearing the sign 'top-secret', which represents the most secure communication between agencies of the government. However, approximately 11,000 documents released were categorized as secret, which by the U.S. government's definition would cause 'serious damage to national security.'[59] While it is interesting to see that the number of 'secrets' designated as such by the U.S. Government has risen 75 per cent, from 105,163 in 1996 to 224,734 documents in 2010[60] which also represents so far a fairly less amount of 'aired secrets' than the discourse after the first leaks suggested.

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http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2010/11/30/AR2010113001095.html (accessed: May 24, 2011)

[58] See for example: Scott Shane and Andrew W. Lehren. "Leaked Cables Offer Raw Look at U.S. Diplomacy" *The New York Times*. November 28, 2010.
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/29/world/29cables.html?_r=2&bl=&pagewanted=1 (accessed: May 10, 2011)

[59] Massimo Calabresi "WikiLeaks' War on Secrecy: Truth's Consequences" *Time Magazin* December 2, 2010.
http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2034276-1,00.html (accessed: May 23, 2011)

[60]"Report to the President" *Information Security Oversight Office*. April 15, 2011.
http://www.archives.gov/isoo/reports/2010-annual-report.pdf .(accessed: May 21, 2011): 7.

On the other hand, looking at the 'secret' documents more closely, the data coming

from the Secretary of State in most cases represents technical information and certain 'orders'

directed towards embassies, for example discussing the Indian national biometric card[61] or

how to prevent the shipment of 17 Mercedes trucks from Germany to Syria[62]. Also, the

analysis coming from diplomats stationed abroad contain in certain cases information which

does not qualify as politically relevant, from which one of the most cited was the revelation

that the Libyan leader is rarely without the companionship of 'his senior Ukrainian nurse',

described as 'a voluptuous blonde',[63] while such descriptions could also be found as a lengthy

account from 2006 describing the lavish wedding of a well-connected couple in Dagestan,

where one of the guests happened to be the 'leader' of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov.[64]

However, perhaps the strangest connections to the diplomatic cables came in February 2011,

when a media-hype about possible UFO-Cables appeared on the Internet, and Julian Assange

also said 'in passing [that] there is information about UFOs in Cablegate. And that is true, but

these are only small passing references. Most of the material concerns UFO cults, and their

behavior in recruiting people.'[65] Clearly, it is not a representative sample of the content of the

'secret' diplomatic cables, however the emphasis on the wide range of different data shows

how the label 'secret' encompasses both politically important information (as the suggestions

of Saudi Arabia to militarily respond to the Iranian nuclear efforts[66]) and also technical, and in

certain cases not even relevant analysis. Therefore, the publishing of the diplomatic cables

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[61] Cable 09STATE129198, (S/NF) "Indian National Biometric ID Card" Secretary of State May 22, 2009. Released: April 23, 2011. http://wikileaks.ch/cable/2009/12/09STATE129198.html (accessed: May 20, 2011)

[62] Cable 07STATE135366,(S) "following-up with germany on its efforts to" Secretary of State. September 25, 2007. Released: February 21, 2011. http://wikileaks.ch/cable/2007/09/07STATE135366.html (accessed: May 24, 2011)

[63] Shane and Lehren, "Leaked Cables Offer Raw Look at U.S. Diplomacy." *The New York Times*.

[64] Cable 06MOSCOW9533, "A CAUCASUS WEDDING" Embassy of Moscow. August 31, 2006. Released: December 1, 2010. http://wikileaks.ch/cable/2006/08/06MOSCOW9533.html (accessed: May 24, 2011)

[65] Andy Greenberg "WikiLeaks' UFO Cables: More About Raelian Cult Than Alien Life" *Forbes*. February 7, 2011. http://blogs.forbes.com/andygreenberg/2011/02/07/wikileaks-ufo-cables-more-about-raelian-cult-than-alien-life/ (accessed: May 23, 2011)

[66] Cable 08RIYADH1134, "SAUDIS ON IRAN REF UPCOMING NAM FM MEETING" Embassy of Ryadh. July 22, 2008. Released: November 28, 2010. http://wikileaks.ch/cable/2008/07/08RIYADH1134.html (accessed: May 24, 2011)

represent rather a collection without considering their content analytically and making visible sense and non-sense next to each other. At this point, the 'operation of hyperreality' could be realized implying various new connotations for the word 'secret' and its usage in classifying information as a practice by the American administration, and therefore rather pointing towards the operation of 'public sphere' as a sphere of publicity than the space for meaningful political discussion.

On the other hand, the overall not ground-breaking informational content of the cables also points towards the nature of diplomacy itself described in a previous chapter through paraphrasing Costas Constantinou as the constant process of framing and en-framing, which refers to the form of the process in diplomacy for mediating. As he argues, 'the secret is that diplomacy *does not exist*. The challenge is to make diplomacy appear'[67], which refers to the phenomenon that the appearance of diplomacy *is* diplomacy itself, the process by which the 'picture' about the constellations of relations between entities is constantly framed, interpreted and re-framed in another way. Thus, the nature of the diplomatic process itself could also serve as a basis for transmitting information which does not unfold previously completely unknown and relevant 'machineries' of the US diplomatic service, since the emphasis is not on this 'task' in the diplomatic process. Therefore, as a consequence for the main question, it could be said that the information appearing in the diplomatic cables neither represents completely new information, nor does it effectively place a system of distinctions between sense and non-sense from the perspective of political relevance, as a result its operation rather points towards the meaning of 'public sphere' as was theorized in hyperreality which threatens the disappearance of the political in that very terrain.

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[67] Constantinou, "Diplomatic Representations...", 319.

3.2. Materiality/Simulation

One of the core assumptions of the theories regarding the 'spectacle' and hyperreality is the altered nature of alienation. As was already articulated more thoroughly in the previous chapters, according to Der Derian, beings are estranged from themselves and from the others, while Baudrillard re-interprets the meaning of alienation and stresses that through the sphere of hyperreality beings will be estranged from their material self and their simulated self, which circulates as an orbit through the disseminated images constantly in the sphere of the simulation and in the case of estrangement taking place through the workings of the hyperreal, the necessity for the principle of 'secrecy' inscribed into diplomacy will disappear. However, the 'materialization' of this phenomenon is overtly difficult to reach - perhaps one example from the activities of WikiLeaks could be translated as such.

While Julian Assange overtly emphasized that the 'secrets' of organizations should be revealed, in an interview with the *Time Magazine*, he stated that they try to keep the secrecy of the identity of the sources with extraordinary care,[68] which points towards the preservation of privacy, meaning the preservation of the 'integrity' of a certain person - keeping him or her outside the spectacle, unobserved and unrecorded. Therefore, in this sub-story, the main nodal point would embody the notion of 'secrecy' and through the unfolding of the phenomenon to its particles, it will be shown how WikiLeaks leads towards a different interpretation of 'secrecy' than was touched upon in the previous section about sense/non-sense, and a different interpretation than was articulated in the case of diplomacy.

Although Hillary Clinton and also the US State Department's legal adviser, Harold Koh, stressed on various occasions that WikiLeaks 'could place at risk the lives of countless

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[68] "Transcript: TIME Interview with WikiLeaks' Julian Assange" *Time Magazin*. December 1, 2010. http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2034040,00.html (accessed: May 23, 2011)

innocent individuals,'[69] it is so far unclear whether WikiLeaks could be held responsible for harm caused to innocent individuals directly or indirectly connected to the leaked documents[70]. The organization even contacted the US Government and asked for specification in cases where the revelations would jeopardize individual persons, which could be considered as an act for popularizing its activity, but it could also signify the 'power' of the organization to designate the boundaries of private and public, in the sense that it could make a decision whether social actors will be part of the 'spectacle' or not. On the other hand, many documents exist containing references for diplomats' confidential sources, for foreign legislators, for military officers, for human rights activists or journalists, however in these cases, the problematic distinction of private/public could be identified with the labels which warn Washington with "Please protect" or "Strictly protect"[71].

The effort of WikiLeaks to 'keep' certain actors outside of the 'spectacle' could also be detected in its cooperation with established media organizations, such as the *Guardian*, *Der Spiegel, Le Monde* or *El Pais,* for which the documents were made available and which redacted the names of persons under potential risks[72]. Therefore, the 'creation' of this new type of alienation between the simulated self and the material 'reality' empowers such institutions as WikiLeaks itself, the media organizations which dispose of adequate means for making decisions about whether a certain social actor could remain in the 'private' sphere or

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[69] See Katie Connolly "Has Release of Wikileaks Documents Cost Lives?" *BBC.com*. December 1, 2010. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-11882092 (accessed May 23, 2011) and also, "Letters between WikiLeaks and the US Government" *The New York Times*. November 26-28, 2010. http://documents.nytimes.com/letters-between-wikileaks-and-gov#document/p5 (accessed: May 20, 2011)

[70] Although the Tunisian Revolution is referred often as the first 'WikiLeaks-Revolution', here, I do not intend to incorporate the indirect effects, which the diplomatic cables are assumed to cause in the Middle East, but for further analysis see for example, Elizabeth Dickinson "The First WikiLeaks Revolution?" *WikiLeaked / FOREIGN POLICY*. January 13, 2011. http://wikileaks.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/01/13/wikileaks_and_the_tunisia_protests> (accessed: May 23, 2011)

[71] Scott Shane and Andrew W. Lehren "Leaked Cables Offer Raw Look at U.S. Diplomacy." *The New York Times*. November 28, 2010. http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/29/world/29cables.html?_r=2&bl=&pagewanted=1 (accessed: May 20, 2011)

[72] See for example, Cable 09STATE49854, S/NF) KUDOS TO EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES FOR ,,""BIOGRAPHIC REPORTING AND TDY SUPPORT ,,"" ,,""REF: A. BUENOS AIRES 000490 ,," B. BUENOS AIRES 000558 ,,"". Secretary of State. May 15, 2009. Released: March 4, 2011. http://wikileaks.ch/cable/2009/05/09STATE49854.html (accessed: 23 May, 2011)

not. This particular action already has political relevance, which could be detected also in the offensive and negative response of the US government, where the representatives of state feel their power threatened. In such a way, instead of being able to decide for themselves about the 'secrecy' of diplomatic documents, the emphasis will be laid on the identity of certain persons, which shifts the mediation of estrangement among alienated beings towards the distinction between the material and simulated self.

This also demonstrated that, alongside the notion of the disruptive effect of WikiLeaks on diplomacy, the main concern of the US Government was that the organization put lives in jeopardy[73] and this argument clearly points towards the operation of a distinction between materiality/simulation in this case. While the contemplation about the institutional side of this 'sub-story' is bound with the question who has the responsibility and who has the capacity to disseminate the secretive documents at issue, already points towards the necessity to address the question of power and politics through the WikiLeaks 'spectacle'.

3.3. State/Non-state

As was already outlined previously, the terrain of hyperreality disposes such characteristics which point out the dissolution of power and, according to Baudrillard, even the complete disappearance of the political – and therefore the public sphere conceptualized as the sphere for political action and discussion. While Julian Assange sees in the operation of the Internet the possibility for enabling also other social actors with political power than the state. This particular sub-question could be approached from two perspectives. On the one hand, from the possibility of accessibility of the 'public sphere' for certain social actors, in which case WikiLeaks certainly embodies an instance for the struggle of this sphere among various social actors along the lines of the differentiation of state/non-state, where the state

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[73] "Transcript: TIME Interview with WikiLeaks' Julian Assange" *Time Magazin*.

represents the legitimate actor and WikiLeaks is struggling for the expansion of the 'public sphere' through its activity. On the other hand, the disseminated documents themselves, and especially the discourse which evolved around it in the mass media, representing the operation of the 'spectacle', could contribute to the degradation and dispersion of state power through packaging the content of the documents into 'spectacles' based on their representational values.

Therefore, the first task is to reveal to what extent the documents and the discourse about the documents resulted in the disenchantment about the 'myth' of the state as the 'adequate' actor for carrying out political activity. This 'myth' could resemble the widely held belief that the 'sovereign' state provides the 'survival' of the given political community on the international order articulating and carrying out its 'national interest' with the help of state diplomacy and the military. It is also assumed that highly trained and skilled diplomatic staff are necessary for the smooth conduct of relations among states for advocating that particular 'national interest'. The 'myth' of the state, on the other hand, is linked to the technocratic language and rhetoric which significantly differs from everyday life conversational language of 'ordinary people'. However, the most widely cited and most 'embarrassing' details found in various diplomatic documents destroy exactly this 'myth' of the state, through moving away from 'diplomatic rethoric' to the engagement into prosaic conversation between the embassies and the Secretary of State. As, for example, asking for '*No More Mr. Nice Guy*' in Italian immigration policy is not an expression to be expected from the Embassy in Rome[74]. More closely, references to certain leaders with nicknames or certain characteristics, as for example sticking to the name of Angela Merkel, '*Teflon',* in the cables,[75] or referring to the

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[74] Cable 09ROME438, NO MORE MR. NICE GUY (III): INEFFECTIVE ITALIAN. Embassy of Rome. April 17, 2009. Released: February 24, 2011. http://213.251.145.96/cable/2009/04/09ROME438.html (accessed: December 10, 2010)

[75] Cable 09BERLIN1106, CHANCELLOR ANGELA "TEFLON" MERKEL TAKES LIMELIGHT. Embassy of Berlin. September 9, 2009. Released: November 28, 2010.
http://213.251.145.96/cable/2009/09/09BERLIN1106.html (accessed: December 10, 2010)

Turkish Prime Minister as a 'perfectionist workaholic'[76] or to Hamid Karzai as 'weak' and 'paranoid'[77], erode the overall discourse about state officials and diplomats being professionals in conducting relations among each other in order to express 'national interests' on the highest level and the most efficient means for preserving or expanding those interests.

Such revelations also hamper the smooth operation of the diplomatic process, since the flow of 'diplomatic language' will be interrupted with 'unwanted' publicity. For example, Vladimir Putin reacted to the characterization of him and Dmitry Medvedev as 'Batman and Robin' to the CNN on 1 December 2010 that 'we did not suspect that this [criticism] could be made with such arrogance, with such rudeness, and you know, so unethically'.[78] However, he also stated that he does not consider the leaks as 'any sort of catastrophe', while warning the US diplomatic service to 'be more careful',[79] which points also towards the stance of Robert Gates already described in a previous section about the non-relevant impact of the documents for actual foreign policy, but their effect on the diplomatic process itself.

By the use of such prosaic language, also the broad national and international audiences could have the impression that their leaders cannot accomplish their tasks properly and therefore their very existence in their positions starts to be questioned – and their power *vis-à-vis* non-state actors or disempowered social groups starts to decrease. On the other hand, the 'embarrassing' details contribute to the overall degradation of the 'myth' of the state and with the emphasis put on the formulation of 'scandalous' disclosures in the mass media discourse, the operation of 'hyperreality' could be detected, in as much as it attempts to turn

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[76] Cable 07ANKARA1905, TURKEY: AN INSIDER'S VIEW OF PRIME MINISTER ERDOGAN. Embassy of Ankara. July 26, 2007. Released: 28 November, 2010.
http://213.251.145.96/cable/2007/07/07ANKARA1905.html (accessed: December 10, 2010)
[77] "U.S. Envoy To Afghanistan Calls Karzai 'Paranoid,' 'Weak'" *Radio Free Europe*. December 3, 2010. http://www.rferl.org/content/karzai_wikileaks_us_envoy_paranoid_weak/2237725.html (accessed: May 23, 2011)
[78] Andrew Osborn "Wikileaks: Vladimir Putin Warns USA to Stay out of Russian Internal Affairs" *Telegraph* December 1, 2010. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/wikileaks/8173716/Wikileaks-Vladimir-Putin-warns-USA-to-stay-out-of-Russian-internal-affairs.html (accessed: May 23, 2011)
[79] Claire Bigg "Latest WikiLeaks Cables Brand Russia 'Mafia State'" *Radio Free Europe*. December 2, 2010. http://www.rferl.org/content/wikileaks_russia_organized_crime/2236673.html (accessed: May 25, 2011)

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political activity and discussion into 'consumable' events, which in such a way loses its original meaning and takes up the value of representation.

However, there are also limitations for the notions that politics and power disappears from the sphere of the hyperreal and, as was already implied, these limitations are linked to the possibility of decision-making about the actors who appear in the sphere of the hyperreal. While it was already briefly outlined how WikiLeaks together with established media organizations could decide whether certain actors evolve into the 'spectacle' or not, the government of the United States also attempted to carry out such activities which at least tried to mitigate the dissemination of the cables already 'out there'. Such private companies as PayPal, MasterCard or even Apple reacted to the indirect appeal of the government about WikiLeaks operating on illegal grounds with the withdrawal of their services.[80] Besides, when Senator Joe Lieberman, released a statement saying that 'I call on any other company or organization that is hosting WikiLeaks to immediately terminate its relationship with them'[81], Amazon reacted with the termination of its activities with WikiLeaks. However, due to the logic of the Internet which asserts that the dissemination of information which is already present in some form in the virtual space is almost impossible to remove, WikiLeaks managed to maintain the website and the accessibility of the documents.

The interesting fact is that the US Government started to treat Julian Assange and his organization completely differently to the already established media organizations, since unlike WikiLeaks, these companies were, for example, not called for their prosecution under

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[80] Yochai Benkler "Free Irresponsible Press: WikiLeaks and the Battle Over the Soul of the Networked Fourth Estate" (Working Draft. forthcoming) *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*. http://www.scribd.com/doc/51259857/A-FREE-IRRESPONSIBLE-PRESS-WIKILEAKS-AND-THE-BATTLE-OVER-THE-SOUL-OF-THE-NETWORKED-FOURTH-ESTATE (accessed: May 20, 2011), 25
[81] Joseph Lieberman "Amazon Severs Ties with WikiLeaks." December 1, 2010. http://lieberman.senate.gov/index.cfm/news-events/news/2010/12/amazon-severs-ties-with-wikileaks (accessed May 23, 2011)

the Espionage Act of 1917[82]. The answer for the different treatment could be found in the argument that while such decentralized globally networked actors such as WikiLeaks pose a threat to the maintenance of the relatively stable and loyal relationship which exists between the US government and its media organizations[83], they therefore represent a rather controllable social actor for the state power. Interestingly, the Wall Street Journal started to apply the techniques of WikiLeaks for information gathering, namely it launched its own "WikiLeaks-site" for publishing documents[84] which already highlight the refinement of the radical appearance of WikiLeaks in the virtual social sphere through already established and through 'state-approved' organization, but which also signifies that the idea of WikiLeaks has a 'raison d'être' in the contemporary social order.

However, the establishment of such sites could cause problems in the maintenance of diplomatic correspondence in its present form, since unlike following Harold Nicholson's suggestion that diplomatic negotiations should be kept 'secret' among the states before reaching a conclusion about a particular matter, this tendency implies two possible solutions for diplomacy which could be present at the same time. On the one hand, negotiations will be 'in the public eye' under the scrutiny of media organizations, which could lead to major changes in the way diplomacy is conducted and, on the other hand, it could lead to the increase in 'secrecy' measures from the part of states and embassies, as is already visible in the case of the United States with stricter measures of information dissemination, for example in the case of such information providing systems as SIPRNET. However, this phenomenon not only reflects the process of 'total transparency' on the international arena and the attempts to constrain it, but it promises the backup of participation from the side of the 'public' through

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[82] Dianne Feinstein "Prosecute Assange Under the Espionage Act" *The Wall Street Journal* December 7, 2010. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703989004575653280626335258.html (accessed: May 23, 2011)
[83] Benkler, "Free Irresponsible Press", 16.
[84] Chris Gayomali "The Wall Street Journal's Version of Wikileaks Is Now Open For Secrets" *Techland – TIME Magazine.* May 5, 2011. http://techland.time.com/2011/05/05/the-wall-street-journals-version-of-wikileaks-is-now-open-for-secrets/ (accessed: 23 May, 2011)

the possibility to upload relevant and authentic documents, and the question of the possibility of participation through the hyperreal still needs to be addressed.

3.4. Participation/Spectatorship

While one of the most important characteristics of the 'spectacle' was outlined as the re-structuration of social relations in the divide between the participants and the audience of the spectacle, the Internet seems to offer the creation of a social space where virtual participation could unfold. Considering the case of WikiLeaks, it was originally created modeling Wikipedia, therefore ensuring editing and participating options for the users of the website. As a Pentagon Report on WikiLeaks in 2008 stated, the threat posed by the organization lies precisely in its structure according to which 'anyone can post information to the […] site. Persons accessing the Web site can form their own opinions regarding the accuracy of the information posted and they are allowed to post comments.'[85]

While it also allows for donations, submission and revision of documents, the organizations creates the impression that everyone could contribute to the dissemination of information and that some universally negotiated, balanced unveiling of human affairs is being approximated.[86] However, such participation being virtual in the first place, removes the demand for 'live' negotiation and discussion, while through the dissemination of diplomatic documents it renders the negotiation and discussion of certain affairs in the diplomatic field problematic through the disturbance of the process itself. Besides, the 'audience' of the website and the constant circulation of the cables re-creates the spectatorship

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[85] Michael D. Horvath, *"Wikileaks.org—An Online Reference to Foreign Intelligence Services, Insurgents, and Terrorist Groups?"* NGIC-2381-0617-08, Army Counterintelligence Center, March 18, 2008. http://www.scribd.com/doc/28385794/Us-Intel-Wikileaks. (accessed: 22 May, 2011)
[86] Jaron Lanier "The Hazards of Nerd Supremacy: The Case of WikiLeaks" *The Atlantic* December 20, 2010. http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2010/12/the-hazards-of-nerd-supremacy-the-case-of-wikileaks/68217/1/ (accessed: 23 May, 2011)

attitude of the users. This is also reinforced through the discourse of the US Government about WikiLeaks operating as a 'high-tech terrorist organization', rather than an organization acting on behalf of the public good. This en-framing of Julian Assange and his activists alienates its 'audience' from participating actively in his 'crusade' for transparency and reinforces the notions that in the sphere of the hyperreal, there is no longer space for political activity. While it cannot be estimated how many 'activists' contribute to the disclosure of such documents, it is obvious that the 'audience' of the website reaches out in numbers. Whereas, also the imprisonment of Bradley Manning, the United States Army soldier who was arrested in May 2010 on suspicion of having passed the diplomatic documents to WikiLeaks, does point towards the notion that while Julian Assange and his organization praises virtual participation in the 'public sphere', such participation could have serious restrictions in 'real' life for the contributors to the activity of the website.

As for summarizing the findings which could help in locating WikiLeaks in the question whether it represents a move towards the expansion of the 'public sphere' through its activity of the dissemination of diplomatic cables or whether it signifies the expansion of the operation of hyperreality and the 'spectacle' contributing to the disappearance of the 'public sphere' by means of shifting it towards publicity, it could be said that through the analysis of the crucial distinctions such as sense/non-sense, materiality/simulation, state/non-state and participation/spectatorship, the organization points towards the building of an order which rather moves towards the principles of hyperreality, than towards the expansion of the sphere where meaningful political discussion and activity could take place. With the dissemination of diplomatic cables regardless of their political relevance, WikiLeaks leaves out the important function of diplomacy to investigate the meaning and importance of the assessed documents and creates a place for the 'audience' to deduct its own consequences. However, these

consequences are rather mediated through the mass media, since the amount of documents embrace such a huge information base which requires more time to analyze than the political process could allow for. Besides, instead of the secrecy of the diplomatic documents, importance will be laid on the preservation of the integrity of individuals connected to the cables themselves out of the 'spectacle', which reflects on the change in how diplomatic communication could be conducted and how the focus from the process will rather divert back on individuals.

On the other hand, it also strengthens the efforts of the state, not only to keep individuals, but also the diplomatic documentation out of the 'public eye' by restricting access to diplomatic communication – through more security checks or through the reliance on face-to-face communication without any documentation at all. While the question, whether the state as such would somehow be seriously challenged by the social actors appearing on the Internet, it could be stated that there are tendencies towards the restrictions on the accessibility of this social space which even strengthened during the last years worldwide. For instance, political leadership in China, Iran, Thailand or Tunisia have cut off access to news websites and social networking services during periods of unrest, as well as Egypt shut down the operation of the Internet in early January 2011 due to protests against the government.[87] Besides, there is an effort to create balanced relations with various established media organizations in an effort to somehow control the information which could reach the sphere of 'publicity'. And finally, this notion also hinders the promise of WikiLeaks and the Internet to create a platform, where meaningful political participation could take place, since the unbridgeable distinction between the virtual and the 'real' does not allow for the actual expansion of the 'public sphere', only for that of its digitized version.

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[87] Christopher Williams "How Egypt Shut Down the Internet" *Telegraph*. January 28, 2011. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/egypt/8288163/How-Egypt-shut-down-the-internet.html (accessed: 28 May, 2011)

CONCLUSION

The importance of the appearance of Wikileaks on the stage of world politics could be articulated as a particular moment which signifies a relevant change concerning the building of the present international order. The main question, which crystallized around the WikiLeaks-problematique and was addressed in the present thesis, was in a broader context identifying the reason behind the appearance of WikiLeaks and what it means for the wider international order. While more narrowly speaking, it embraced the question whether the organization of Julian Assange contributes significantly to the expansion of the 'public sphere' through the disclosure of diplomatic documents, or on the other hand, through the caused disturbances in the process of diplomacy, it adds to the processes which threaten the 'public shpere' with disappearance. The question rests on the assumption that the contemporary world is in that state of affairs in which the dissemination of more and more information, and an ongoing process towards 'transparency' could be accepted as a constant feature. However, going beyond the problem of the illegality of revealing secretive documents, the issue at stake concerned the meaning of the principles which build up the international order, such as the delimitation of the public and private sphere, and the substance of 'transparency' and 'secrecy' and how these principles and characteristics operate in the diplomatic process and how they could be connected to WikiLeaks.

I applied two approaches towards the analysis of the principles of 'transparency' and 'secrecy' justified on the basis of their connections to the international order through diplomacy, and to the virtual sphere of the Internet. The problem was that these two theoretical aspects rather resemble paradoxical understandings of the principles and the distinctions between the public and the private spheres, which were also articulated throughout the whole discourse of WikiLeaks, showing that there is a certain struggle going

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on in the field of delineating these particular notions. At this point, I arrived at the narrower puzzle which WikiLeaks represents, namely whether it highlights the further expansion of the public sphere by enabling average members of society to look into secret diplomatic cables or it rather causes the cessation of the public sphere since it abolishes 'secrecy' as a legitimate principle for conducting diplomatic relations among political entities. Through my analysis of the case itself along the factors which crystallized during the theoretical cornerstones outlined in the first two chapters, I found that WikiLeaks does not signify either of the two ideal-type solutions for the 'public sphere', but it rather represents such an in-between state of affairs, where already its appearance on the stage of world politics points towards a certain move towards the operation of the sphere of 'publicity' and the expansion of that particular understanding of the 'public sphere'.

While this result has its limitations concerning the scope of the research and the empirical data, it could be expressed that WikiLeaks signifies change for the international order and therefore it also has implications for the diplomatic process itself. There are already signs how diplomatic communication could alter in the future: on the one hand, there is more 'security' in the sense that there is restricted access to the overall diplomatic process, to somehow hinder the possibility for entering the sphere of 'publicity', while on the other hand, there is an attempt to further publicize, even through established media organizations, 'secret' diplomatic documents without references to individuals involved. However, it should be noted that in the case of the analysis of the longer term effects of WikiLeaks on diplomacy, a less time-bounded perspective is necessary. Therefore, my thesis could contribute to the research in the field of the connections between technology and international politics in as much as it tried to understand the appearance of the WikiLeaks phenomenon, and connected to it, its implications for the operation of the present international order.

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