

## BMMS: Mobile Media and Social IT Micro and Macro Coordination



## Micro and Macro coordination

Microcoordination	Macrocoordination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Small groups</li> <li>-Everyday life</li> <li>-Scheduling situations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Large groups</li> <li>-One time / out of the ordinary events</li> <li>-“swarming”</li> </ul>
<p>Exs.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Midcourse adjustments</li> <li>-Iterative coordination</li> <li>-Softening of schedules</li> </ul>	<p>Ex.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Socio-political manifestations</li> <li>-Flash mobs</li> <li>-Hybrid reality games</li> </ul>

2

## Flash vs. Smart Mobs

Used fairly interchangeably in Castells et. al. (2007)

- Flash Mobs typically are organized for playful, non political purposes
- Smart Mobs are political acts of resistance
- Case studies in your reading are smart mobs

3

## Flash Mobs

- Group of people who assemble suddenly in a public place, do something unusual or notable and then disperse.
- Organized with the help of digital communication technologies



4

## 1<sup>st</sup> Flash Mob (NYC, May 2003)

- Bill Wasik (senior editor of Harper’s Magazine)
- More than 100 people requesting a “Love Rug”
- Made purchase decisions as a group
- June 3, 2003 at Macy’s Department Store



## Flash Mob (Times Square, Toys ‘r Us)

- Hundreds of people



## Smart Mobs (Castells et. al., 2007)

- Bypass mass media control
- Many-to-many
- Viral nature of SMS organization

7

## Smart Mobs (President Estrada)

- Philippines (2001)
- Grassroots organizations led to a huge Smart Mob
- Groups organized quickly in Manila
- Led to Estrada's resignation

8

## Smart Mobs (President Estrada)

SMS is not the only media used to organize (Castells et. al., 2007)

- Massive email chains, blogs, online forums (Estrada)
- Combination of Facebook and SMS (Flash Mobs)
- Global dimension (via Internet)

9

## Smart Mobs (President Estrada)

Protests were not successful *solely* because of SMS

- Government was already weak
- Military sided with protestors
- Smart mob was successful because of a combination of technology and other social forces (military, church, radio)

10

## Smart Mobs (President Estrada)

- 2001: mobile phone penetration in the Philippines > only 13.8%
- Rural poor did not have access to the technology > middle and upper middle class protest
- later protests were gathered without use of mobile phones

11

## Smart Mobs (President Estrada)

Rafael (2003) points out the ephemerality of the Estrada Smart Mob

- Groups organized and came together for protest
- Estrada left office; new leadership was installed
- But before long, the groups that organized dispersed, leading to "politics as usual" in the Philippines

12

## Smart Mobs (South Korea, nosamo.org)

- 2002 presidential election (Roh Moo-Hyun)
- Youth organized in online spaces (nosamo.org)
- Traditional media was conservative and did not appeal to the youth
- nosamo's website was shut down a month before the election

13

## Smart Mobs (South Korea, Nosamo)

- Election day: groups went to chat rooms to elicit support for president
- 800,000 email messages were sent to phones across South Korea
- Youth participation in the election went up exponentially compared to earlier elections

14

## Smart Mobs (South Korea, Nosamo)

- First time the mobile phone played a significant part in changing the outcome of a presidential election
- SMS can target the partially apathetic (Drum up support in ways purely online communities cannot)
- Like with the Estrada protests, SMS was not only medium used to organize youth (message boards, email)

15

## Smart Mobs (Madrid)

- Different use of SMS for macro-coordination
- On March 01, 2004 a train was bombed, killing 192 people and injuring over 1,000 (largest terrorist attack in Europe)
- Remote control activated mobile phones

16

## Smart Mobs (Madrid)

- A national election was planned for March 14, 2004 (3 days after the bombing)
- Conservative government wanted to blame Basque resistance
- In reality, Al Qaeda was responsible, a direct response to the government's Iraq policy

17

## Smart Mobs (Madrid)

- Mass media helped incumbent government spread misleading information
- SMS gave resistance a tool to organize and bypass mass media channels
- Messages could quickly go viral
- Exact opposite of the one-to-many form of traditional broadcasting

18

## Questions

Why were the three examples we just discussed successful?

19

## Smart Mobs (RNC, New York, 2004)

How do they contrast with the U.S. example?

Castells et. al describe the RNC protests as "efficient" but not "effective." Why?

20

## Smart Mobs (RNC, New York, 2004)

- Security infiltrated activists and could monitor text messages
- Protests were not generated spontaneously and had a high level of central management and planning
- mass sms services lacked the personal character of direct person-to-person texting.

21

## Smart Mobs (SARS crisis, China, 2003)

How does the SARS case also differs from the Smart Mobs in the Phillipinies, and South Korea?

22

## Smart Mobs (SARS crisis, China, 2003)

- Mass media (including Internet) did not report on the epidemics
- Victims and their friends started SMSing to raise awareness
- Government propaganda authorities dispelled the "rumor" raised by SMS via mass media

23

## Questions

How are mobile technologies going to change the way people organize themselves (politically / socially)?

What is the added value of wireless communication vis a vis the Internet and older media in the process of political mobilization?

24