Grass-Root Movement and Net Power

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Abstract

Activists struggling for a social change, see information technology as another tool to use to help facilitate their engagement. This study will examine how the use of Internet technologies by social activist groups facilitates or hinders groups’ movement strategies in the virtual and physical space. Research focuses on Falun Gong, an ancient form of Chinese qigong, to explore the limitations and possibilities that the Internet facilitates for resource mobilization of spiritual activities. Analysis will concentrate on three main functions: information distribution (founder’s teachings), community integration, and struggle for survival in light of suppression by the Chinese government. Social movement theories, like resource mobilization and new social movement, will be employed as the framework for this research. For theoretical purposes, the definition of resource, as defined in traditional resource mobilization theory, needs to be adjusted to consider the Internet as a virtual resource.