

## **From "alterglobalization" to "outrage": rebuilding social networks in the beginning of the XXI century**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper analyzes the use of Internet from new social movements to build networks for activism, and how it influences their strategies. In direct connection with traditional concepts of new social movements, this paper considers the period from the "alterglobalization" movement of 2000's to the "outrage" movement of the 2010 decade. Internet can be considered here as a platform for social networks, making smaller the distance among people involved. Social organizations have been discovering it since the end of the 1990s, with the growth of networks worldwide.

The so called alterglobalization movement was developed in the beginning of 2000s, bringing new strategies and actions into the scene and taking part of many demonstrations against a globalized world. Defining possible shapes around the slogan "another world is possible", these movements were frequently left wing positioned in relation to the World Social Forum initiative, accused to be closer to parties and governments.

Outraged movements emerged in 2010, as a reflex of the world crisis in the representative democracy and its institutions. Their actions are not shaped in one only organization model, leading to a misunderstanding of its practices and demands by traditional political regards. The use of social networks by those movements brings challenges on what concerns privacy and freedom of expression, regarding governments and companies' interests.

The changes involved in this short period of time stresses the need of assuming democratic regulation of Internet and open access to knowledge as important areas of common activism. Understanding how these movements are building a contemporary agenda, based on the appropriation of the regulatory processes, is an extremely necessary aspect that inspires our research.

Communication democratization, as understood since NWICO's perspective at McBride Report, reviewed in updated basis by the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS), is reorganized in a new agenda after the creation of the Internet Governance Forum, one of the outcomes of WSIS. The broad and complex variety of issues regarding Internet regulation, as long as its future, is a first level priority for these new social movements, inspired by Internet network structure and assuming it as an online public space.

Based on this picture, it is considered the need of assuming strategies for dealing with regulation of Communications and Internet as human rights, as outrage demonstrations are part of the process of putting in evidence society dissatisfaction and mobilization in the contemporary society.

**KEYWORDS:** new social movements; alterglobalization; outraged; Internet regulation; social networks; cyberculture; communication policies.

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## **Introduction**

This article is motivated by the understanding of possible similarities between two recent movements in the history of social movements. For a better clarification, this paper identifies the first, that came into the scene at the end of 2000s, as the “alterglobalization” movement and the second one, with its begin at the 2010s, as the “outraged” movement.

The proposal here is to look at their identities and ways of action in an historical perspective, putting in evidence motivations that led to the emergence of these demonstrations, taking each context into consideration. At the same time, some elements are identified, in order to distinguish its technical and political properties i.e. mobilization tools, ways of organization and public policies demands to Communications and Internet. In special, expressive trial of technological Internet control by governments and companies, which regulatory aspects leads to the restriction of freedom of expression, bringing threatens to citizens privacy and the socialization of knowledge.

In a first part of this paper, there'll be analyzed “alterglobalization” movements, emerged around demonstrations occurred by the meetings of the so-called G8, composed by the seven more industrialized countries (Germany, Canada, United States, France, Italy, Japan and United Kingdom) and Russia. Alterglobalization is considered in this paper as it is required by the movement itself. In the words of François de Bernard, coordinator of the Critical Dictionary of Mundialization, the term highlights a “process of building alternatives to the dominant paradigm” (Bernard, 2006). On its turn, the term “antiglobalization”, adopted initially in the demonstrations, was spread out by corporative media, putting in evidence the mere contestation to the economic, financial and political globalization, showing its restrictiveness in relation to the real intentions of its main actors.

The following part will analyze the occupation movement that reivindicates a “Real Democracy now”, motivated by the world economic crisis, that since 2008 puts in doubt certain financial models and public policies. For methodological reasons, this movement is considered here as “Outraged”, that comes from the book “Outrage!” by the french political scientist Stéphane Hessel. However, these occupations began in May 15, 2011, in Spain, and they were known in the country - and, in a certain way, in the world - as “15M”. Inspired by the protests occurred in Egipt, in Tunis and in Syria in the beginning of the same year, such mobilizations were reflected in many countries, and

specially in United States, where the so-called “Occupy Wall Street” reached a more significant place in the media than other demonstrations. Besides being presented as reindications for a “Global Revolution” or an “Arab Spring”, such terms are questioned by some authors, and even activists, because of their different (and, in many times, opposite) demands and forms of action in the territory, as it will be seen later.

The counterpoint between the ideas of occupation and outrage, such as the difference between alter- / and anti- globalization, are built around these recent movements and consists in a fight for meanings, that defines not only political perspectives in relation to future initiatives, but even also the legitimacy of these movements to and by the society.

Following the description and analysis of these movements around their own historical contexts, the third part of this paper identifies their similarities and differences, in order to find and clarify possible key ideas to contribute in the contemporary challenges by the people involved, identifying areas and forms of action in times of a consolidated technological media convergence and of a restrictive Internet governance.

### **1. A movement for ALTERnatives to the globalized world**

A starting point relatively in consensus around the so-called alterglobalization movement is the year 1998. At that time, various movements launched a worldwide coordination of resistance against global market, known as Peoples' Global Action (PGA), whose purpose was to protest against the "Free" Trade and the World Trade Organization.

This articulation was based on five key principles:

1. A very clear rejection to the capitalism, imperialism, feudalism and all trade agreements, institutions and governments that promote destructive globalization;
2. A rejection of all forms and systems of domination and discrimination including, but not limited to, patriarchy, racism and religious fundamentalism of all beliefs, embracing the full dignity of all human beings;
3. A confrontational attitude, since it is believed that the dialogue may have no effect on organizations so deeply undemocratic and biased, in which transnational capital is the only real policy-maker;

4. A call to direct action, civil disobedience, and support for social movements' struggles, advocating forms of resistance which maximize respect for life and oppressed peoples' rights, as well as the building of local alternatives to global capitalism, and
5. An organizational philosophy based on decentralization and autonomy.

The PGA's public demonstrations introduced significant differences to the ways of organization and protest of the society. Based on the principles of "non-violent civil disobedience and constructive actions directed by the people" (Manifesto, 2011), the demonstrations around PGA were decentralized and autonomously organized, in which nobody was allowed to respond as leaders of movements. PGA does not recognize itself as a membership organization, but a initiative of coordination from organizations referred to it. So it never had legal personality or physical or legal representation in any country.

The political visibility of this organizational mode is reflected in public events without great sound centralized apparatus, with no clues of members from traditional society, such as parties and unions, to pronounce his speeches with ready settlements for militants from many different vinculations. The absence of a sound truck, which materializes the command of the acts, and its division into independent blocks, interconnected with specific demands exposed at their flags and music. At the same time, the groups organized into different functions like safety and mutual protection, health, communication and others, provides, at the same time, a greater feeling of belonging to the demonstrations, and the comprehension of being part of a whole that is mobilized from a common base. For Felipe Correa (2011), researcher and activist connected to the People's Global Action in Brazil, it was adopted

in non hierarchy assemblies and methods for decision making, the integration of many demands under the umbrella of anti-capitalism were proposed and there are integrated into different cultural and identity demands, taking into consideration pluralism and discourse of "new" about the "old", characterized, by far, than hierarchical forms of organization, such as parties, trade unions etc.

In the scenario of global political mobilization of civil society organizations, PGA is opposed to the internal institutionalization and the external linkage with government's and parties' structure. Specially organized around the World Social Forum (WSF), a network of NGOs, social movements and various organizations of civil society, which realize meetings on a global scale since 2001, in a counterpoint against the anual event of the World Economic Forum, that bring together various government leaders from around the world.

The recurring criticisms against WSF are related to its close connections with traditional left-wing organizations such as parties and unions, bringing into the social movements' scene a considerable novelty in its organizational way and in the radicalism of their actions, particularly those not directly involved with the building of institutionalized WSF practices, that wondered a bigger autonomy and the decentralization in the management of processes. Pablo Ortellado (2005), currently USP researcher and a PGA activist at the time, understands WSF as "structured exactly in the same basis of the World Economic Forum: a meeting of global leaders to discuss global programs (...) having a bureaucratic and elitist structure", whose political meaning was restricted to their core activities and its political use by former President Lula. Moésio Rebouças, in his turn, summarizes the participants' understanding of PGA, in relation to the role proposed by WSF. For the activist, interviewed by the newspaper Folha de São Paulo, "the WSF is reformist on the economic traditionalist on the political and conformist in the social dimension" (Kormann, 2002).

However, in despite of the criticism against WSF exposed through demonstrations by PGA related groups, this did not become effective and clearly continued in their militancy practices. It was seen as a movement around its own principles, more than a programmatic building of a project for society and its ways of action. For Felipe Correa (2011), "this new movement created by PGA bases promoted absolutely central issues," but brought "a lack of classist and popular political perspective, the reassignment of program proposals and alliance policies, and the culture of irresponsibility and lack of commitment ", components that threatened its continuity.

In this context, practices in communication were essential to the activists mobilization and for the plans of future actions around the world events promoted by institutions like the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), among others. In 1999, in Seattle, it is created the equivalent media project for conferences and events around the PGA, the Independent Media Center (IMC)<sup>3</sup>.

At a time when there were no blogs, video sharing websites or social media, the IMC portal was the reference of the globally organized activists. Besides the possibility of sharing contents and organizational practices about demonstrations against financial globalization, various movements circulated their contents in places where they could freely express themselves. IMC therefore represented a first experience of digital technologies appropriation to social networks

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.indymedia.org>

promotion. Many of its actors and principles are now at the outraged movement, keeping in consideration the strong distinctions related to economic contexts (growing neoliberalism in 2000 in relation to a unprecedented global crisis in modern times, as Naomi Klein clarifies in a recent speech at Wall Street occupation, in 2011<sup>4</sup>) and the expansion of information and communication technologies, particularly the Internet, social media and use of mobile devices.

At the present moment, of the revival of street to carry out demonstrations in global dialogue, it is worth revisiting François de Bernard's reflection (2006), as a warning to future challenges:

alterglobalization lacks, at least at this stage, an inherently utopian dimension. If it has forged unique places of indisputable strength - such as the WSF - who want to remain anchored in the realm of prolematic regulatory issues (economic, social, political ...), accounting end to end to neoliberal principles, to inclusive speeches and the globalizing processes, it also ends in the same level of the designated opponents, and can not project beyond it, as it is required by the all truly utopian course.

## **2. A 99% movement which takes the public space**

As previously discussed, it is possible to consider the "alterglobalization" movement in the history of the so-called "New Social Movements", bringing to the new mobilizations a new and important element: the global dimension of these struggles and a decentralized organizational structure, both the result of a digital communications network that began to take shape at the beginning of the millennium.

If, at that time, some movements used Internet strategically, today the World Wide Web is already part of the lives of millions of users around the globe. More specifically, it is identified in 2005 the establishment of a new stage in the history of the Internet, called "web 2.0". At this same time there happened the consolidation of social networking and content sharing devices that became network participation popular, including the presence of companies and governments in the so-called "cyberspace".

New conflicts and new spaces appeared and, consequently, new actors in the political struggle. This is the case of the "Outraged" movement, understood here as a continuing search for new forms of organization and social mobilization. Just like the "alterglobalization" movement, the outraged also bring a new paradigm in this context: the massive use of digital

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<sup>4</sup> Fully text, in portuguese, at <http://baixacultura.org/2011/10/24/o-comercial-e-propagacao-do-occupy-wall-street/>

networks in global scale in the strategies of mobilization and diffusion of protests and alternatives to a political and economic system increasingly globalized.

## **2.1 The spring of social networks**

One of the pioneering experiments in the use of social networks for political purposes was the "Iranian Green Movement", during the 2009 elections in the country. The censorship imposed by the government to traditional media leded opponents of the regime to the widely use social networks, in order to express their feelings against the results of the election, considered forged for the maintenance of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as president of the country.

At that time, Twitter and Facebook were used not only for disseminating counter-hegemonic information, but also to organize protests and DDoS<sup>5</sup> attacks to government websites, which also led to censorship of the Internet in a second time. Thus, the total suspension of the connection, the decrease of the bandwidth speed and the access blocked to certain websites were tactics implemented by the Iranian government to suppress the voices of the movement that contested the current policy. Although Ahmadinejad remains in power, the engagement of the population around what became also known as "Twitter Revolution" took off an imaginary around the changing power that social networks could have that, in principle, are designed for entertainment and contents sharing purposes.

If such mobilization did not reach significant effect on a global scale, the contestation environment in the region remained at more or less expressive levels till hatching the media in the beginning of 2011. Protest demonstrations against dictatorial governments in power began to emerge between North Africa and the Middle East, under the slogan "the people want to overthrow the regime". Encompassing political and cultural realities as diverse as Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen and Syria, among others, manifestations of civil resistance had consequences more or less violent and more or less successful in different countries.

The series of protests known as "Arab Spring", which strengthened a strong collective imaginary around the mobilizations, was reflected beyond the Arab region. However, for some scholars of the movement, this expression raises controversy. Paolo d'Urbano, a researcher at the

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<sup>5</sup> A DDoS attack comes from "Distributed Denial of Service", and means to forge the traffic capacity in a web server, making unaccessible to the users websites and contents hosted in it.

Center for Media and Film Studies at London University, explains that the meeting of different movements under the same "arab" umbrella excludes a number of local subjectivities and trends: "(...) such expression comes from the Bush doctrine of democratizing the Middle East, and only reproduces the essentialist, culturalist, and ultimately racist views in the region" (d'Urban, 2012).

The strong emphasis given to the role of social networks in these mobilizations also raises controversy: some enthusiasts of the "digital revolution" believe that such tools would have been greatly responsible for the outbreak of a large-scale movement, while others argue that the contesting environment in the region was already in the air and that demonstrations would have occurred even without such devices. In this sense, Juliette Harkin (2012), from the University of East Anglia, stresses that the reduction of such movements to a simple story about social media threatens to override the actual debates and ideas that were part of this construction.

An analysis about the effective role of social networks in the Arab revolutions would require a deep study, taking into account the reality of each country involved. However, as the aim of this paper is to observe approximations and ruptures of the current global movement with that of the beginning of the decade, it is prioritized here an aggregating approach of these mobilizations.

In general, social networks had a strategic role in social consciousness and organizing protests in different Arab countries, inspired by the Iranian experience. Most demonstrations were initially convened by Facebook - except by the first protest in Tunisia, in December 2010, when the wave of protests had not actually begun. However, the different political and social dynamics led to appropriations and consequences of the Internet political use at different levels in those countries.

A study of Dubai School of Government (2011) analyzes the impact of social networks on civil movements of the region. According to the report, the number of Facebook accounts in Arab countries has increased significantly, reaching 27,711,503 users in April 2011, of which about 70% are between 15 and 29 years. In countries like Qatar and UAE, about 29% of the total population is a user of Facebook, and Yemen, for example, saw an increase of 47% of social network users in the previous year. The study also shows that in Egypt, about 60% of Facebook users claimed to use it to raise awareness about the movement or the organization of protests, while in Tunisia, 94.29% of respondents had social networks as main source of information during the protests.

In the same way that maximizes the outbreak of protests, Internet was also perceived as a threat to regime stability more or less active by governments. Thus, as the Egyptian population has experienced a total Internet blackout for six days, in Syria just a few social networks were blocked, thereby significantly increasing the traffic in other content sharing sites like Youtube. Curiously, the study published by Dubai School of Government shows that 60% of users of such social networks in the involved countries considered positive the Internet locking. For respondents, it boasted a more active participation of citizens in protests and impelled the search for creative alternatives about communication and organization of the movement.

In addition to the purposes of internal organization, social networks have played an important role in delivering real-time demonstrations, providing a media repercussion to the movement on an international scale - as also the "alterglobalization" movement was involved, by IMC and other networks. As it will be seen later, the arabian experience also pointed out to the subsequent movements the risk of public exposure of activists mobilization in social networks, leading to the creation of more independent communication alternatives. And if in the case of arab countries, protests were focused on criticizing the dictatorial regimes in their mandates, requiring the installation of democratic governments, the imaginary created around the citizen potential of digital networks inspired protests in countries where democracy itself was called into question.

## **2.2 The Spanish 15M and the emergence of the outraged movement**

In Spain, the financial crisis that affects the country since 2008 has also led to a social and political crisis: the population, disbelief in their leaders and searching improvements, was in a state of individualism and pessimism that hindered an effective collective mobilization.

In February 2011, a bill restricting the sharing on the Internet on behalf of the preservation of intellectual property was proposed by the former Minister of Culture, Ángeles González-Sinde. This controversial legislation was part of the "Law of Sustainable Economy", a series of intergovernmental practices to combat the crisis in the country. The argument that there would be no other way to preserve culture industry convinced part of the population not politically engaged, but who used Internet to communicate and share content, and which, in turn, did not want to see restricted their liberties.

The campaign "Do not vote them"<sup>6</sup> denounced politician and parties who supported this bill, which became known as "Law Sinde". Moreover, the "Manual of Disobedience to the Law Sinde"<sup>7</sup>, published by Hackativists collective, reinforced the call to action, under the imagery that it is about the defense of a common space for everyone.

As unemployment and precariousness of the system were aggravated, especially regarding housing and health, the economic crisis became the meeting point of the expansion of the movement. As the elections were closer and with the apparent lack of answers from the left-wing government to the social problems of the population, a joint demonstration was called for May 15. The act was headed by the movement "Real Democracy Now", which demanded a more participatory democratic system, based on popular power. Inspired by the Arab demonstrations, various social movements of the country gathered in several places, leading to paths that not even the protesters themselves had predicted.

In the main city Madrid, when the night fell, the police brigade tried to disperse the gathering of protesters, but the activists decided to remain in the Puerta del Sol Square, demanding the freedom of public space occupation. At the same time, it was created a twitter account @AcampadaSol and a first video shot with a cell phone was transmitted by streaming in real time, resulting in the formation of new camps in other cities on the following days.

The different social movements of the country were already connected to the mobilization, which guaranteed more or less lasting settlements in each city in the country. For several weeks, it was seen the emergence of demand for a different form of social organization and political protest, proposing the re-occupation of public space as a place of interaction and social mobilization.

As previously discussed, the motion was recognized under the name "Outraged", inspired by the work "Outraged!", by the French political scientist Stéphane Hessel, published at the beginning of the same year. According to Hessel, "the reasons to be outraged today may seem less clear, or the world too complex. Who rules, who decides? It is not always easy to distinguish all the currents that govern us. We don't have a small elite to be against, with actions clearly understood. It is a vast world, and we have a strong feeling that it is also interdependent" (2011: 14). His call clearly inspired the movement: "When something outrages you as I was outraged by

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<sup>6</sup> <http://wiki.nolesvotes.org/wiki/Portada>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.diagonalperiodico.net/IMG/pdf/manual\\_desobediencia.pdf](http://www.diagonalperiodico.net/IMG/pdf/manual_desobediencia.pdf)

the Nazis, then we become strong and engaged activists. Then we joined the course of history, and the general course of history must follow through each of us" (2011: 12).

So the occupation movement that began in many cities of Spain found impact in different countries, especially those touched by the global financial crisis, having as common point the occupation of public space as a metaphor of citizen participation in the democratic system. Once again, understand the motivations that led to the emergence of similar expressive movements in different countries require a closer look under the sociopolitical particularities of each region. The focus of this work will be maintained in the common points of these mobilizations and collective imaginary around a "global revolution".

### **2.3 In the streets and networks: local issues and global connections**

The "outraged" movement consists of a meeting of transversal different social classes, as liberal workers, unemployed, students, independent artists, foreigners, etc.. These are organized around agendas from criticism of the global financial system to the building of new forms of enjoyment and sharing of common goods. In these movements, it is seen the denial of the parties as the only form of political organization and it is called into question the effectiveness of representative democracy - points previously identified as civil rights by traditional politicians movements. In this sense, we can observe these different mobilizations under the name "Outraged", "Occupy", "99%", among others, as a critical update of the current capitalist system, and their new power relations.

After a few months, the experience of the Spanish outraged had spread to other locations, leaders and activists from different countries and movements were connected via digital networks, in order to articulate a joint action at the global level. It was so called for the October 15th a world decentralized mobilization, under the slogan "United for Global Change". The call on page Takethesquare.net, one of several sites that meet the ideas and actions of the movement, explains:

the key to October 15 should be not only mobilize people through some simultaneous actions, but realize that the world acts together, and thus begin to build a network between all of us to decide together, as this is the only possibility that the world should be. We know that the power is worldwide, that we live in a globalized world, so therefore our response must be equally global (blog Takethesquare.net, 2011).

As it has been raised by the "alterglobalization" movement, the outraged seek to emphasize that the main weaknesses of the current system - and their potential for improvement - not just depend on government alone, but are directly linked to transnational organizations - from United Nations to the International Bank for Development. If on one hand there are questioned demands regarding the environment, the financial system and against the war, on the other hand is much more complex to set priorities in a global and so diverse scale. Each country has its priorities and internal dynamics for implementing public policies. Thus, the common ground found by the movement - knowing that each location has specific political contexts - is the fact that, in general, governments do not have represented the citizens who elected them.

### **3. Devices, narratives and collective imaginaries**

Inspired by the principles of cooperation and sharing of free software and copyleft, these movements are committed to creating their own narratives, and fight for other forms of knowledge diffusion. The creation of a collective imaginary through tools of production and circulation of information increasingly accessible can be understood as a real time made history, by its own participants.

The page "We are all Khaled Said", for example, with more than 200,000 fans on Facebook, sought to preserve the memory of the young man tortured by Egyptian authorities and became a symbol of the struggle against police violence in the country, spreading around the world as an example of the use of digital tools in contemporary activism. The statement "We are all Khaled Said", until then an unknown young man like so many other victims of torture, points out the character at the same time anonymous, collective and based on identities of this kind of demonstrations through social networks.

The occupations held in the United States affirmed the slogan "We are all 99%" – of the world's population, submitted to the policy decisions taken by the 1% that concentrates economic power - claiming similarly this solidarity around an issue in common. Just like the anti war posters "not in my name" and "we are winning" on the city walls by the "alterglobalization" movement, these new expressions reconfigures the notion of collectivity on a global scale, against power concentration also in "planetary functional networks" (Castells, 1998:45).

Ivana Bentes, in a debate during the Digital Culture Festival<sup>8</sup>, explains that contemporary experiences mediated by the use of technology, generated a "global affectivity": in Spain, the streaming video of the camp in Puerta del Sol<sup>9</sup>, from its first hours, contributed to disseminate the experience, encouraging camps in other cities around the world, coming from a sense of collective mobilization and sharing because of the outraged cause.

Thus, it is observed that this digitalization process is not just about the content transposition into digital, but on how technological elements change social relations from a new configuration of knowledge and culture. And this culture of networks established in the digital media acts as a powerful instrument for the connection between social groups and constructive wills, which until then were dispersed, enabling collaborative productions and alternative conexions through new technologies.

However, this large variety of social networks that has mobilized new activists and opinion makers also arises the attention of companies and governments, that have also sought to make strategic use of such tools. If marketing and advertising agencies follow the development of such platforms and users contents, published for developing and closely promoting products and services, government structures have, in these networks, an unprecedented mapping, reasonably efficient and especially spontaneous, of citizens and their movements and practices. The criticism is centered in the negligence of these possibilities by most part of users. Precisely because, in most cases those are free services, one pay at the end with a symbolic good, but not least important: personal data and generated content, which can be understood as efficient mechanisms of audiences management, not existing before social media such as Twitter or Facebook (see Cabral, 2011).

For this reason, the structural defense of the Internet has also become a banner of this new activism, and passes through consistency in how this infrastructure is used, by what means and under what principles. To this factor it is added the relative ease of software and applications building, which allows the community to develop their own solutions for communication and content sharing. They use free softwares with open source and flexible licenses, in which each user is free to study, modify and adapt the source code for specific uses and integration with other tools, and also share it with new users, who have control of data and content published.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://culturadigital.org.br/?p=5082&preview=true>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.tomalatele.tv/web/>

References of "alterglobalization" movement alternative media, like Global Voices and the mentioned Independent Media Center, have played an important role since the beginning of the XXI century, from sharing alternative information to traditional media, and are also used by "outraged" movement. Moreover, the Spanish collective Hackativistas sought to develop alternatives of communication considering the consolidation of the movement. The website Tomalaplaza.net<sup>10</sup>, for example, brings together content, calls and useful information about each camp and neighborhood assemblies, and remains an important tool for internal and external communication of the Spanish movement. The platform also inspired the creation of the already mentioned Takethesquare.net, which seeks to gather information of the movement on a global scale, and was used extensively by Occupy Wall Street.

Another example is the N-1 platform<sup>11</sup>, a free social network developed by spanish collective Lorea to answer the demands of articulation and organization of social movements. It is possible to create blogs, forums, groups and mailing lists under different levels of confidentiality and ownership. The network, which has seen an exponential growth after May 15th, has more than 30,000 users in Spain, France, Germany, Holland and United States.

#### **4. Politics, democracy and social movements: version 2.0?**

Although it is too complicated to use the term "society", in all its diversity and considering all their differences, the mentioned examples show that today the political movements in a country reflect and motivate experiences in other territories, in a much faster, viral and informal way. Regarding the collective learning process of doing politics 2.0, Javier Toret, philosopher and cyberactivist of the group Democracy Real Ya Barcelona, believes that:

if democracy in the modern era was the invention of liberty, democracy is now the invention of the common, of what unites us. We created a source, like a free software, and putted it at the disposal of all, because we also saw how our brothers from the Arab world had done. (...) This is not about how to transmit messages, but how a collective, interactive organization emerges and a small collective intelligence is created. And of course, by releasing the source code, we modify and improve it (Savater Fernandez, 2011:54).

The main point is that these agents are not connected only by a technological structure, but by a political culture that involves autonomy, sharing and collaboration, where local actions

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<sup>10</sup> <http://tomalaplaza.net/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.n-1.cc>

are enhanced by these established networks. For the journalist Eugenio Bucci, "is not the technology that changes society. It never was. A society, or social movements or social relations, is what gives social and historical meaning to the technology, not the contrary" (Cohn and Savazoni, 2009:208).

The relation between online collaboration and cooperation in the territory, implemented by the "alterglobalization" movement, it is then potentiated by the outraged movement, armed with new tools and through the massification of its social uses. The independent journalist Alba Muñoz recounts the social dynamics during the camps in Spain:

The way we behave in the squares was precisely the same as the network: a distributed, crossed movement, where anyone and everyone at the same time rule, and where digital work is vital to achieve a common good. We demanded anonymity while we experienced a real and free participation in something that is collective (Fernandez Savater, 2011:41).

However, this kind of decentralized organization is in the opposite direction of democratic institutions as they are now known, inherited from previous centuries. In particular, political parties and trade unions – coming from left or right wings – mistrust these movements and tactics, which are at the same time individual and collective. The Portuguese left-wing collective Passa Palavra is a severe criticist of the camps that were formed in a clear allusion to the "alterglobalization" movement, that's also analyzed here:

In general, we can say that in these discussions the notably absent is the class struggle question. They talk about new forms of struggle, open and democratic meetings, refusing the system, and comparisons are made, mechanically wrong, with the events in Cairo and Tunis. In the end of the line, they almost always come up with general, vague and encompassing slogans containing the central idea of the World Social Forums that 'another world is possible' (Passa Palavra Collective, 2011).

However, the understanding of such movements as a "new political class," takes into consideration the current dynamics of the class struggle today. If we consider the "social class" concept as an historically constituted particular way of the production organization, the globalized financial networks on which economy is currently established, might be considered as a possibility of a new division of labor.

The traditional movement for communication democratization is based on the demand for regulation of structures historically far from social appropriation. The preferred focus of those

mobilizations are print and broadcasting media, where the development of community media initiatives appears as an alternative, in despite of its restricted range.

Moreover, the contemporary militant practice at the Internet takes place at the same territory where the denounced agents are, and in the same place where regulation is claimed. So, the contemporary use of digital networks not only works as an alternative media to traditional ones, but also they would be able to create a cooperation and sharing environment in which this virtual environment would be increasingly perceived as having an activist role in symbiosis with the streets manifesto. In this sense, Dahlgren suggests Internet as a communication and social relations network that expands public space and thus alters the traditional forms of political action: "The internet comes into the scene precisely when the vitality of certain democratic institutions seems to decline (...). If the initial cybereuforia calmed down, certain fundamental aspects of the Internet still have some interest for democracy" (Dahlgren, 2000:167).

The "alterglobalization" and the "outraged" movements have fairly common features with each other, but differences not only on what concerns their time distance, although considerably short in a historical perspective. As precisely stated by Ortellado (2004), the various movements around alterglobalization

converged more or less casually, attracted by the fascinating events in Seattle. But the movement, of course, did not start in Seattle, as said by the slogan at demonstrations against the FTAA in 2001. In fact, Seattle was the media showcase of a movement that can have many origins, but which in its extreme part, dates back to the inspiration of the Zapatista uprising in 1994 and the articulation of the days of global action in 1998.

Considering the expansion of the Internet on a global scale, its use by supporters is not only a strategy, but an action inherent in the quest for efficiency of the demonstrations. And it's even its very reason for being, measured not only by breadth and quantity of the initiatives, but also by the circulation of the ideas shared by its members. However, the russian researcher Evgeny Morozov relativizes Internet power, paying attention to the fact that any theory able to be drawn from social networks use should be "highly sensitive to local context, considering the complex relations between Internet and foreign policies in general, which do not originate in what technology allows, but in what a given geopolitical environment requires" (Morozov, 2011: 17).

Thus, fair regulation of the World Wide Web becomes an important agenda for the contemporary mobilizations, in addition to the communication movement. For this reason, they organize through wikis, social networks, and also the old and good mailing list, to defend Internet architecture as it was designed: neutral, decentralized and free. Neutral, because as a structural flow of informational traffic, the network cannot make no distinction of senders, recipients and contents, which are expected to run without restriction of bandwidth, speed and connection. Decentralized, because the lack of a central server was the reason why Internet was developed in the 60s, during the Cold War when U.S. government needed a secure network for exchanging information, which could not be destroyed in a single point. And free, as its subsequent expansion in the following decades is due to hackers, engineers and researchers who developed the network autonomously, according to their communication and production needs.

The need to emphasize the concern for privacy, the maintenance of data security, the access to infrastructure, to freedom of expression, new economic and cultural models, among others, will inevitably lead its members to increasingly engage with aspects related to a possible democratic regulation of Internet in global level, from the participation of the nation-states. In this new mode of existence and action of social movements on a global scale, the search for more democratic regulations becomes an indispensable feature, through the institutional activity connected with government and regulators, or through the appropriation of tools in search of a full autonomy to use their capacities.

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