Culture and Globalization

Media Activism in XXIst Century

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Abstract: The new instruments and means in social media practically reinvented the social activism and the "activists" are better defined through these means than by the causes they manifest for. The easy auto organization through social media opens the possibility that the one involved to manifest in real time, more efficiently, in national, regional or global sized spaces.

Keywords: activism; polycentric society; vigilance; denunciation; surveillance

Internet development is performed in a true source of *informational bombardment* where, most of the times, puts us in critical and sometimes difficult hypostase**s** in identifying the relevant and attention drawing information. In many situations the absence of information becomes as dangerous as its abundance. Even since last century when "the society was not exclusively structured anymore around class conflicts organized on the labor field (Rosanvallon, 2010, p. 79)", social mobilization relocated, a few days or even hours being enough. The time when social mobilization requires months and even years is gone and this is due to the Internet. Information and communication technologies have more and more "the capacity to transform the exercise of political power" and one of the effects is found in permissiveness, sometimes too much of the society, towards the activism pressure from non-state actors.

The debates on this topic have brought into focus a variety of ideas that should not be neglected and expressing that "the future society will be *polycentric*, meaning that it will have a form of democracy that can also lead to fragmentation or (...) to *tribalization*" (Cabin & Dortier, 2008, p. 291). This large flow of information produces also modeling and adequacy, even in international relations. In the new virtual reality, even if there is no "conflict, or criticism, only participation, cooperation, merger of the mind", various forms of indirect democracy are very

quickly developing. Following the fact that info sphere offers individuals the possibility to participate to a social and cultural dialogue in interest issues, through several forms of expressions and through several perspectives, cyberspace democracy makes that the civic vigilance to be "doubled from now on by another form of vigilence, more diffuse, manifesting as a continuous flow of assessments and critics of governmental action formulated by the one governed, at a very decentralized level and in the most various fields of the public policies" (Rosanvallon, 2010, p. 57).

We are today witnessing some unconventional forms of citizen intervention in public space being supported by Internet, a performed expression of the vigilance, denunciation and evaluation functions. The state of dissatisfaction is accompanied by the need for change. It is indeed a "global overturning that brought shaking concepts where companies have lived for long periods of time, and that proved to be ineffective and thus lost prestige" (Le Bon, p. 8). In this context, we can move towards a crowd classification according to the criteria of science evolution and implicitly of its applications connected to the evolution of political and social life. Thus, we bring to attention the transition from revolutionary crowds to contractual crowds and, more recently, to the one designed by the media- associations. Although trade union movements had their major role in industrialization century, especially in the 30s of 20th century, today 'the proliferation of ONG reflects the rapid demassification of interests and patterns of living (…). Trade unions have a residual role to play, but. For surviving, they need a roadmap and a more performing vehicle" (Toffler & Tofller, 2006, p. 37). Information technology information represents a substantial support for the organization and consolidation of some collective identities which produce "authority effects" and which "exercise at the same time a real power, meaning a capacity to modify and constraint the behavior of the one focused" (Rosanvallon, 2010, p. 82).

The present militancy manifest especially between what economical neoimperialism represents, social doctrines, social and economic patterns, but its manifestation in the public apace is still characterized by "the spirit of revolt" and which in fact is the "most visible and structured vector of counter democracy" (Rosanvallon, 2010, p. 81). These new social movements claim the remodeling of management on the control of social manifestations in public area, as long as in this period a new trend is configured due to the post-ideological movements towards new democracy derived forms. Inadequacy of assurance and intervention

strategies from the governmental structures may generate major malfunctions socially and politically. Conclusive for this are the *mineriade (miners' demonstrations and fights)*, social events that proved that the order forces may be supplanted and even replaced. All these happened due to some intervention strategies and tactics over passed by reality, probably valid in other social and political contexts.

Generally, voters manifest their dissatisfaction rather towards the quality of representatives. By reference to counter democracy, we are assisting today to a "disintegration of traditional social categories that parties rely on (Szele, nov.-dec., 2011, p. 71) at cultural level, this social transformation lead also to weaken some popular identity sources, as religious, linguistic, regional, moral or, more recently, even sexual affiliation. These categories became laxer than before and could not fulfill properly their role of identity creator." (Szele, nov.-dec., 2011, p. 71). Protesting movements of our days reveal that the world has changed, it "has never been more diversified. Regional, cultural, linguistic identities assert themselves on all continents, through communication means, from television to internet, which merge and split at the same time the different segments of public area." (Petre, 2010, p. 24) It would be a mistake to consider that the present protesting movements are incoherent and inconsistent as long as they are generated by serious social problems and *built* in online space. Although interconnectivity most of the times "does not necessarily develop the civic participation…once with the expansion of digital information increases also the risk of manipulation" (Beciu, 2011, p. 160).

Relevant for this stage is the fact that the society of our days lacks its negative referential – communism, totalitarian regimes, and thus the democracy of the beginning of the 21st century seems to be in a "self defining dilemma", especially because "democracy is never completed because it can never hope to precisely overlap the political people produced by the mechanism of citizenship over a society that, by expressing itself politically, is urged to incriminate and condemn the imperfections o fits own image" (Rosanvallon, 2010, p. 13). This kind of social and psychological realities claim the appropriation of the message and the communication activity as long as we do not know whether this kind of protesting movements were manipulated or not, even if we get a message individually oriented and implicitly to the future protesting crowd, message which is based on the knowledge of desires, needs ad psychical mechanisms of the individual it is

initially part of a virtual public and further transformed into a social movement. A conclusion, at least interesting referring to the crowds is that they may be intelligent as a consequence of the developed interactions "in forms that have not been yet predicted and for which there are no control or optimization procedures" (Bădău, 2011, p. 31).

The rules of formation and disintegration in the public area, the transmission of influences over the crowd may be manipulated considering that the public opinion seen as a psycho-social dimension of the social life means the determination and structuring of the social behavior. Thus, the opinion "assigns an interpretation perspective of the social fact, accepted, supported and promoted by a person or a social group" (Cristea, 2011, p. 243) and the public or virtual public assumes that "the members of a social group to be involved – emotionally, intellectually or motivational – in the development of a social fact" (Cristea, 2011, p. 11). The new tools and means from social media practically reinvented the social activism and "the activists" are better defined by these means than by the causes they manifest for. The easy auto – organization through social media opens the possibility that the one involved manifest themselves in real time, more efficiently, in national, regional or global spaces.

Media – associations developed based on the more and more complex information on the social, political, economical, cultural, legal, etc. issues from the public area. Beyond all the benefits the internet provides we do not have to miss the creation and explosive development function of some new social structures. Thus, the real power of the online environment consists of its capacity to diffuse information everywhere, fast, and no costs which make that the protesting movements to be more and more conceived, planned, implemented and assessed through internet. Influence for mobilization is based on promoting the actions cause in a persuasive manner and most of the times "the issue of unique websites will contain hundreds of supporting articles and reports that support their position on this handy topic. Images or video clips are often chosen to be presented online based on the appeal to emotional component. Most of the websites types do not allow public interaction, eliminating any immediate potential of the public to answer to the host statements"[1]. In general, online persuasion is associated to the educational function and also we can use fundamental techniques of propaganda, adapted to the context, which may include "the appeal to the simple individual (I am one of you),

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[1] http://www.web.net/robrien/papers/netaction.html.

statements (I have seen…as I see you), crowd effect (everybody does it), biased selection (presentation of a single version of the story), transfer (positive or negative associations), brilliant generalities (idealist or stilted language ...) and labeling (racist, tree lover…)" (Gass & Seiter, 2009, p. 30). Therefore, in relation with the new online environment where new identities are created and assumed we cannot exclude violence to the others. The so-called "*cyberpunk trend*" still brings to our attention that we are still "searching for the philosophies that help us orientate our lives, theories that trace the path of contemporary history and politics that fight against all what is bad and produce the best of everything for us" (Kellner, 2001, p. 382). We appreciated that it is dignified to keep in mind that beyond all science and education progresses through which individuals "on the entire planet become more and more connected to each other and receive access to a huge quantity of information" (Rothkopf, 2013, p. 111), still the combination of primary instincts of the human being with the new technologies has as effect also the globalization of drug vices, terrorism, corruption, human traffic, prostitution, bank etc. At the same time, at government level, in the fierce competition for resources and markets interfere also some manipulation actions through modernist constructions of images, sound, color and messages that provide new cultural representations, ,most of the times on the purpose of supporting some political decisions.

All the evolutions of the 21ˢᵗ century society will be both accompanied also by these global "business", some of them even corporized in the field of classic criminality and cybercrime. Beyond these considerations, media culture along with other factors, "contribute to imposing hegemony of some political groups and specific projects", trough which, at the end, we are determined to see some ideologies as "a matter of fact". Information globalization changes most of the times the perspectives on information, which cannot always be the same. This kind of situation changes the content of concepts of intelligent power and soft power, and on the communication on these coordinates, we keep in mind that beyond the entire information technology, communication has a political dimension and a cultural condition trough which identities, lifestyles, attitudes etc. are justified.

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