CIVIL SOCIETY TRANSFORMATION IN THE INTERNET

Panel: Current Issues in the Study of Democracy

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Introduction
The paper examines the relationship between media and civil society. The definition of the subject is based on the assumptions that the changes in the information environment lead to changes in the methods and means by which civil society formulates and realizes its goals. The main challenge is the disclosure of the relationship between the characteristics of the modern information environment and the changes in civil society. The paper examines the impact that new information channels have on the strategies, objectives and actions of civil society. Achieving the main objectives of civil society – attraction of attention, recognition of motives, coordination, event planning and more – are no longer directly linked to obtaining access to traditional media outlets, and could be achieved through new media technologies. The empirical basis of the analysis is the protest movements in Bulgaria (2009-2013).

The new media-specific features enable citizens and society to produce and distribute their information contents relevant to the objectives and measures of the government. The new media technologies’ main functions afford opportunities for continuous, two-way, interactive communication that contributes to the potential of the community. Generally, new media extend the capabilities of society to organize, present and implement new public policies.

Moreover, the new media functions contribute to the elimination of the control and the limits for access to the information and media environment. Increasing proliferation of new media overcomes the traditional media outlets’ information monopoly. New media create a broader and more heterogeneous base for political participation and conduce to civil society capabilities for reaction against governmental blunders.

Media and Global Society
The modern environment is characterized by the information society. It leads to stimulation of the economic sector, convergence between the various communication fields, individualization and desire for more information and knowledge.¹

The increased level of communication and the formation of specific patterns of interaction are the core of virtual globalization. It is associated with global and virtual use of various information, technology applications, social networking and behavioral patterns being developed within the Internet. Basic social values are changing. Things that were fundamental for industrial society are ousted by new elements and values (see Table 1).

¹ Gerov, A. in Popov, M. (2012) The Virtual Man, Veliko Tarnavo, Faber, pp. 56-57. (in Bulgarian)
### Table 1: Basic Social Values in the Mass and Information Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial Society</th>
<th>Information Society</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
<td>Equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Individuality and creativity</td>
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<td>Standardization</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
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<td>Centralization</td>
<td>Decentralization</td>
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<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialization</td>
<td>Holistic, interdisciplinary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>Quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Self-Expression, self-elaboration</td>
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</tbody>
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In modern society due to a combination of social and media networks with multiple communications, relations are becoming more interactive. “Mass society” with its one-way media and centralized institutions and media organizations, is different from contemporary society which tends to be more interactive and decentralized. The traditional centralized forces begin to compete with decentralized network and this leads to the formation of new relations of power. This in turn transformed almost every area of political and public life. The state is changing under the pressure of the networks and society, and vice versa. The new media technologies create opportunities for building an active civil society, government by the people and new forms of opposition policies. Based on interactivity, provided by the new media, people are able to be more active and they have more opportunities for expression of their position.

**Communication, Information and Media**

The organization of the contemporary public communications undergoes a drastic change. Once a stable and sustainable system of mass communication now faces diverse competition, constantly creating information, reaching people through various channels. The result is convergence between the creators and consumers of information products. Thus the nature of public communications is changing, because it is possible to include a much larger number of individuals and communities. In other words, one of the most striking features of contemporary society is the globalization of information.  

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3 Marinov, V (2012) The Multimedia News Room in Bulgaria, Veliko Tarnavo, Faber p. 49. (in Bulgarian)
The most important features of the new media are: digitalization, interactivity, asynchronous communication, multimedia and narrowcasting. These particular characteristics are important in differentiating the new, audience-focused media, from the traditional ones. Figure 1 presents a model of the key characteristics of the new media.

*Figure 1: New Media Key Characteristics.*


**Digital.** Digitization improves the quality of transmission because digital signals are less susceptible to interference and distortion. Also digital messages can be compressed. Furthermore, digitization is the key to multimedia – combining text, image, and sound in two-way communication channels.

**Interactive.** Sometimes the word is used as a synonym for two-way, but few interactive media are truly two-way in the same sense as interpersonal communication. In a conversation, two people not only take turns responding to each other but also modify their interaction on the basis of preceding exchanges. Social media like Facebook and Twitter are interactive in that sense.

**Asynchronous communication.** Consumers’ ability to ‘time shift’ programs using Digital Video Recorders and Internet video renders the notion of simultaneity obsolete, as they can choose when to watch a program regardless of the time and day it was originally transmitted.

**Narrowcasting.** Rather than homogenize audiences, the new communications media cater to specialized groups and define new niches and even customize content for individuals.

**Multimedia.** This means we can choose to experience the same story in different ways, including as a conversation with other audience members, without conventional distinction between communication channels.

These specific features enable civil society organizations to successfully implement their core information and communication objectives at a lower cost and with less effort. For some groups, the Internet is perhaps the only way to reach the general public. It is a channel for communication, which in its absence would be difficult to achieve. It is important to realize that

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cyberspace is a *decentralized communication system* where people are both consumers and producers; cyberspace is interactive; users can choose what information to send and receive. Internet also allows the various groups, which have previously been subject to *censorship* or restriction from traditional media outlets, to present their positions and messages *directly* to the audience.

**Civil Society**

A major challenge in the systematic tracking and defining of civil society is the complexity of the concept and the various organizations, networks, individuals, and groups which it represents and contains. Civil society is a concept with a long history and is largely dependent on the historical and cultural context in which it is analyzed. There are many different definitions of civil society and there is no consensus about its precise meaning, although there is an overlap in some key components. Different concepts and approaches emphasize different aspects or elements of civil society: values and norms such as tolerance, the role of the media; moral dimensions that create communities and the degree to which people are representing public space, through participation and civic engagement. Some definitions focus on issues of government, politics and individual freedom, others on economic functions, social capital and cohesion. However, most analysts would probably agree with the statement that civil society is the sum of institutions, organizations and individuals located between the family, the state and the market in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests.

The primary actors of civil society include people who work in and with NGOs, religious institutions, private sector organizations, media, and other private voluntary associations. Such associations are expected to bring balance to the wheel of sustainable development. In a viable civil society, the collective actions of private citizens are expected to forge strong relationships and interactions among people in society.

The definition of civil society used in this paper is from Helmut Anhayar (2003) *Civil Society Measurement, Evaluation, Policy*, according to the author this definition allows systematic measurement and evaluation of the concept. The definition reads:

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Civil society is the sphere of institutions, organizations and individuals located between the family, the state and the market in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests.\textsuperscript{9}

Additionally, civil society is the set of institutions, which is strong enough to counterbalance the state and, whilst not preventing the state from fulfilling its role of keeper of peace and arbitrator between major interests, can, nevertheless, prevent the state from dominating and atomizing the rest of society.\textsuperscript{10}

**Civil Society Goals and the Web**

The basis for the protest movements activation worldwide is increasing opportunities and access to communication channels. Many of the causes and ideas which have led to the organization of various protests would hardly be realized without the use of and access to the tools of modern information revolution. Political actions become easier, faster and more extensive due to emerging technologies. New information tools significantly reduce costs and obstacles to organizing collective action.

The examination of the relationship between the distinctive features of the new media and the achievement of communication goals pursued by civil society, give the opportunity to highlight some of the main trends in contemporary processes – *the adaptation of civil society to the new information environment and especially the use of new media for the realization of key objectives (figure 2).*

Structuring units in civil society seek to achieve communication, propaganda and information purposes by trying to present their causes to the public and gain wider support. The main objectives that organizations in civil society are trying to achieve through the media are:

- Attracting attention;
- Promoting the motives and causes;
- Coordination and organization of people;
- The exercise of civilian control over the authorities;
- Receiving and disseminating of information (acquisition of information);
- Becoming a legitimate political actor.

These objectives are varied and interrelated and could hardly be distinguished from one another. Overall, in all communication objectives of the protest movements is presented dissemination of information and attracting attention.

\textsuperscript{9} Anheier (2003), op. cit., p. 22.
Attracting attention is one of the most important goals for civil society initiatives. This is easier to be achieved through the Internet, because of several main reasons. First, the network is accessible source for global distribution of information. Second, it has a huge audience to which the civil society realizes its communication goals. Third, asynchronous communication and narrowcasting, which are part of the Internet, allow civil society organizations to prepare, send, specifically tailored messages to different target audiences. Fourth, lack of control and censorship allow direct transmission of media content to audiences. The traditional media outlets increasingly are in a position to follow the news flow, not to lead it.

Figure 2: Civil Society Goals Achieved through the New Media Characteristic Features

The achievement of the other main goal of civil society – getting followers acquainted with the reasons of the protest – is also facilitated by the specific functions of the new media. Again the lack of censorship and the ability to directly present the motives for their protests allows civil society organizations to achieve maximum impact of their communication strategies. The information disseminated by them is easily accessible to people, they only have to visit certain sites (Facebook, Youtube) and be interested in the events. Through direct representation of their motives,
they have the opportunity to introduce their point of view and even to put pressure on the traditional media outlets and the political elite.

Another distinctive feature that helps the presentation of motives of the protest movements is the asynchronous communication. The lack of simultaneity in the consumption of media content from the Internet allows users more flexibility, which in turn contributes to the wider dissemination of information.

By the narrowcasting function the civil society could present their motives in various ways to different audiences. This adaptability to specific audiences is complemented by the multimedia capabilities to maximize the impact on each audience.

Another major goal of the civil society organizations is attraction, organization and coordination of particular public support. This tendency derives significant benefits from the new technologies and the Internet. Protest movements may define and shape the ways in which they will present their activities and thus prevent censorship and changes in the information content from the traditional media. In addition, direct access to online information enables people who want to learn about the protest, to find directly the necessary information. This is very important for the potential supporters of the protest who may wish to join. The Internet is an essential tool for raising broader public support. The Net has a vital role in creating social ties that are necessary for the growth of support for a particular cause.

Perhaps only the achievement of legitimacy as a civil society goal does not derive direct benefits from the new media functions and capabilities. Therefore gaining a legitimate status is not a subject of this study. Through the new media a particular person, group or organization could acquire popularity, but not legitimacy. One way of obtaining such status is if Internet content is used by the traditional media. The channels and tools provided by the new media do not provide direct legitimate status of protesters but create enough potential to put pressure on the traditional media, thus contributing to the realization of this goal.

Overall, the objectives of the protesters, achieved through the Internet, are mostly related to dissemination of information, coordination and organization of activities. Moreover, an important goal that is achieved through the new media is gaining broader support for certain causes or specific protest. For the protest movements new media are tools which are changing the strategies for achievement of their goals.

Protest Movements in Bulgaria 2009–2013
An Indicator of the existence of civil society is its ability to put pressure on the state to achieve certain goals and to satisfy the relevant interests of social communities. The essential tools in
achieving these goals are the media, the opinion formers, from which parties are dependent. Until now, the places where this “theater” was unfolding were the old traditional media outlets, but today it is transferred to the Internet, and this leads to certain changes in the policy.  

The primary task of this paper is to reveal, analyze and illustrate the evolution in the relationship between the new media and civil society in Bulgaria. The study analyzes three protest movements in the period 2009–2013 – Student protests in the winter of 2009, The February (Antitrust) protests in the winter of 2013 and the protests in the summer of 2013 related to the appointment of Delyan Peevski as Director of the National Security Agency. The reasons for picking up and analyzing these protests are several:  

First, in these protests the Internet plays an important role in the organization and development of the protest movements.  

Second, through these protests it is possible to trace the important role of the new media for the civil society evolution.  

Third, although they have much in common, these protests are different in scope, agenda, organization and other important structural elements.  

Fourth, these protests represent major trends in the development of the Bulgarian civil society;  

Fifth, these are the most massive protest rallies in Bulgaria in the XXI century.

**Comparative analysis of the protests in Bulgaria 2009–2013**

Analyzing the evolution of the relationship between civil society and the Web gives an opportunity to highlight some key trends and meanings of changes in the modern information environment. Each of the presented protests has its own distinctive characteristics, main problems, causes, triggers, its life cycle, tools. At the same time, these protests are united around a common ambition and desire to improve the socio-economic and political situation in Bulgaria. In order to present the development of the protest movements in Bulgaria, the paper includes comparative analysis on specific criteria – *popular support of the protests, geographical coverage, representation, duration, level of violence, achievement of the objectives and significance of the Internet*. These criteria allow understanding and highlighting key trends and traits in these protests. At the same time tracking these indicators helps us to understand the protests in Bulgaria as a *process rather than as separate unrelated events*.

**Support**
The number of people actively participating in the protests differs dramatically.

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In the student protests in front of parliament in 2009 gather no more than 5,000 people and generally the protest failed to attract a large mass of citizens who can infuse into it.

Unlike the 2009 protests in the winter of 2013 protest was characterized by mass participation, on 24 February there were over 100 000 people protesting in different cities of the country. This is one of the mass protests and demonstration of broad participation and activism of civil society in Bulgaria.

The protests in the summer of 2013 were also characterized by broad participation. During the most active period tens of thousands gather in the streets of Sofia. Civil society was able to mobilize and express its position in a categorical way, relying on broad public representation.

The new media contribute greatly to the emancipation of civil society and to the increasing support for the protests. They create conditions for massive participation, which in turn is an important source of legitimacy.

**Geographical Coverage**
The 2009 protests were focused only in Sofia. The protests didn’t spread in other major cities. Overall, the protest is limited and is not characterized by a wide range active participation.

In the winter of 2013 in Bulgaria were organized some of the most extensive protests. Protest gatherings happened in Varna, Plovdiv, Sofia, Burgas, Shumen, Ruse, Blagoevgrad, Silistra, Sandanski, Yambol, Gotse Delchev, Montana, Dobrich, Veliko Tarnovo and Kardzhali. Also, there were protests abroad. Bulgarians gather in Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Valencia, Vienna, London, Madrid, Munich, and Frankfurt, to demonstrate support for the protests.

The protest against the cabinet "Oresharski" also covered various cities. Yet, there was a great imbalance between the protests in Sofia and other cities in Bulgaria. The geographical coverage of the protests in the summer of 2013 gave the impression of greater limitations – the protests developed mainly in Sofia – compared to protests in the winter of 2013.

New media increase the representativeness of the protests.

**Duration**
Student protests of 2009, lasting about 10 days, and the actual protest when most people went out to the streets (14 January) was a single action. In other words, compared to the other two protests of this study, the protests of 2009 were the shortest.

Social protests in the winter of 2013 lasted about a month; there were several large-scale events, which include thousands of people anxious to express their discontent. The most active citizens demonstrate their disagreement on several consecutive Saturdays, but after the resignation of the government, the protest lost its power.
On the other hand the most active phase of the protests against the cabinet “Oresharski” lasted for two months. Every day people gathered and participated in the procession route – Council of Ministers – Parliament – the parties’ headquarters. The protest ended with the beginning of summer vacation, but various events related to the expression of disagreement remain part of the activities undertaken by the civil society. After the parliamentary recess protests were renewed, although there was a difference in the number of actively participating people. Overall the energy and the protest enthusiasm were lost and there was a ‘protest fatigue’.

New media allow maintenance of mobilization and therefore contribute to a longer ‘life’ of protest movements.

Intensity
Under the intensity of the protest the author takes the extent to which violence becomes a feature of the protest.

Violence remains one of the symbols in 2009 protests. Unfortunately purposes and motives of the protests remain in the background. A leading ‘news’ became the provocateurs and their clashes with the police and subsequently between the police and the rest of the protesters. These events are examples of poor organization, inexperience and poor coordination in the protest conduction.

Antitrust protests are characterized by the use of violence in different periods. Overall, violence is limited to the stoning of buildings. The targets of the aggressive demonstration are buildings related to the government – parliament, municipalities and others.

The protests in the summer of 2013 in large periods succeed to demonstrate a different culture of protest. Protesters managed to isolate and identify different groups of provocateurs who constantly appear on marches, trying to arouse confusion and cause clashes with the police. Moreover, attitudes between police and protesters move from confrontation to cooperation. There were examples where protesters helped police to surround and push away the provocateurs. This is absolutely new in the development of protest movements in Bulgaria and it is a demonstration of lesson learned from 2009 protests. This reveals the adaptability and evolution in the means and behavior in the protests.

New media to some extent takes the aggression of civil society, but it is not certain that this makes it more efficient.

Achievement of Goals
Achieving the civil society goals through the use of new media is typical for the Bulgarian protest movements 2009–2013. The main difference between the protests is the degree of success in
achieving the civil society key objectives. An evolution in the process of goals achievement can be outlined in each subsequent process. In other words, with the increasing development of new technologies; implementation and application of experience gained in previous protests, civil society gradually improved its capabilities to implement its motives to a greater extent.

Student protests were the first steps of the Bulgarian civil society on the path to mastery of new technologies and their direct application to achieve immediate goals and objectives. Overall, this protest movement has managed to achieve some of their basic objectives such as attracting attention, diffusion of motives, organization, coordination, but in a very limited scale. There was enthusiasm among the organizers and participants in the protest, but in reality their inexperience led to quick failure in the efforts to achieve something more. There was still an imbalance in the relationship between media and society. The picture of the protest represented in mainstream media fails to be sufficiently ‘countered’ by alternative sources. Although there is a use (for the first time on such a scale) of new media as a channel for presentation of alternative information, yet the power of social networks, the development and dissemination of new technologies in this period are characterized by narrowness. However, the protests of 2009 can be described with the word ‘first’. For the first time a protest movement in Bulgaria managed to achieve some of its objectives through the Internet:

– Attracting attention and support;
– Diffusion of motives;
– Coordination, communication and organization of a protest;
– Sharing and acquiring information.

Albeit to a limited extent these objectives are achieved by people participating in protests in the winter of 2009. It could be said that the goal – the exercise of civilian control over the government – is not achieved to a great extent. However, the actions taken by the government in an attempt to distort and skew the public perceptions about the protest showed that though civil unrest is seen as a threat by the executive authorities. This results in specific actions to prevent such protests at all costs.

The student protests of 2009 gave birth to the symbiosis between citizens and new media. Lead to the mastering of the first lessons in the use of alternative channels for achievement of protest goals. Furthermore, mistakes and failures set a good example and representation of an important experience for the future. The basic lessons could be divided into several areas:

– The importance of direct representation of an alternative point of view or protesters’ position;
– Opposing provocations and the necessity to isolate the external aggressive elements;
The formation of a new information environment that enables civil society to achieve its objectives in a new way.

These lessons are applied largely in protest movements of 2013.

The antitrust protests marked a new step forward towards achieving the civil society goals. Evolution is palpable, especially in terms of objectives achievement. Attracting attention, diffusion of motives, coordination, communication and sharing of information are achieved at much larger scales. By using social networking civil society managed to attract attention. When at the end of January 2013 the first protest is held, although in terms of participation it is a limited one, this marks the beginning of attracting more support, using the Internet.

The mastery of social networks and forums is the basis of the higher degree of goals realization. There are different online groups, which are intended to organize a large number of people. Moreover, various blogs and forums created topics and discussions about the importance of these protests and calls for participation in the processions. There was a gradual expansion of the protest and increasing support and participation.

In regards to the diffusion of motives there was a gradual shift to more extensive applications. Civil society took the opportunity to present their issues on the public agenda. The February protests managed to improve the capacity for organization, communication and coordination. Social networks are becoming the focal point for the organization of the protesters. Protesters managed with less effort to organize and disseminate specific details on the preparation of each protest. Therefore, it may be noted that in achieving this goal, there is an evolution in the scale and scope.

These protests rise marked a trend, characteristic of Student protests of 2009, namely the presentation of an alternative perspective. Protesters realize the importance of presenting the authentic footage filmed and distributed directly through information technologies.

The protests in the winter of 2013 achieved significantly the exercise of civilian control. The concrete expression of this was the resignation of the mayor of Varna, the finance minister and the government. These actions were the result of protest movements and reflected the demands raised by civil society. Unlike the student protests of 2009, in February 2013 there was a concrete and effective expression of civil pressure on the ruling elite, which was embodied by changes in the local and executive power in the country.

At this stage protest movements demonstrate evolution in the use of Internet as a tool. Furthermore, the gradation of the extent and scope of the objectives is a proof that civil society improves its skills in mastering the new information technologies.
In their initial stage, the protests against the cabinet “Oresharski” were a spontaneous expression of social discontent against the government. Once again, in these protests there was an evolution in the means and the achievement of civil society goals. Attracting attention from the first day of protest marks a new stage, demonstrating the latest capabilities of civil society. In just a few hours from the time of the appointment of Delyan Peevski, a fairly large part of society managed to come together to demonstrate their disagreement. The intensity with which were created online groups and the instant support for them is a new moment in the development of civil society and the modern information environment. For the first time had a protest movement of this scale and scope been organized in such a short time. Gradually, the protest became routine for many Bulgarian citizens.

The protesters managed to spread their point of view and show that they are united around a clear, specific and measurable goal – the resignation of the Cabinet. Thus they demonstrated that through the use of Internet civil society can more successfully formulate, articulate and disseminate its specific objectives and motives. Furthermore, through the new media the protest movement was able to counter misinformation and to present its motives directly.

In organizational terms, for the first time in Bulgaria, a protest was spontaneously organized in a few hours. The combination of widely shared discontent and the possibility of direct communication between citizens, led to a spontaneous coordination for a protest against the government behavior. Since the beginning of the protests citizens were able to monitor communications, to coordinate and achieve better organization. In the first day the speed with which the civil unrest was organized is a proof of the spontaneous nature of the protest. This was a demonstration of the evolution in the use of new technologies by the Bulgarian civil society. Changes in the protest were instantly available to all who were interested. Almost every participant in the protest filmed footage of the demonstration. Phones and cameras became an integral part of the protest movements.

This in turn became a huge source of information that couldn’t be censored. The ‘news’ existed and reached a wider audience, whether traditional media would have covered them. So it could be rightly said that the protests against the cabinet ‘Oresharski’ are the highest expression of the tendency of new media usage for sharing alternative information. There are many ‘news’ filmed and distributed directly by the participants in the protest. The most important and provocative of them were included in the agenda of the mainstream media, which in turn raised questions to politicians to whom they had to answer. In addition, citizens had more opportunities to acquire information and to build a more informed opinion on various public issues. In other words, it increased public awareness; on the other hand, it increased the pressure on the political elite.
Exercising civilian control during protests in the summer of 2013 also marked progress. The organization and motivation of the protest led to the achievement that the political elite must comply with civil society. Therefore, in various forms began the use and adoption of practices such as ‘civilian councils’, the demand for evaluation and opinion of various NGOs and others. Civil society managed to gain a position on an important part of the political process. If during the February protests the highest expression of civilian control was the resignations of political figures, then during the summer protests there were both resignations and new processes. Civil society was looking for deeper changes and more active involvement in social and political development. But overall the inexperience combined with the unwillingness of those in power for deeper cooperation led to incompleteness of this public enterprise. The main conclusion that can be made is that, till this moment, the protests in the summer of 2013 were the highest point in the demonstration of the civil society capabilities to exercise effective control over government policies and concrete decisions.

**Conclusion – The Significance of the Internet**

In all three protest movements the role of new media as a primary tool of civil society is significant. The only difference is in the degree of technology development. For example, the popularity of social networks among Bulgarian society in the period is different. This means that the use of Facebook in 2009 resulted in limited effects as opposed to its use in 2013. In addition, social networks, blogs and forums have improved. The technologies are improving at a rapid pace. In 2009 smart phones with unlimited access to the Internet were a luxury. However, in 2013 these technologies were widely available and affordable for the majority of citizens involved in the protests. Therefore, the scope and results differ mainly due to varying degrees of technological progress. Furthermore, there is also experience gain, optimization of methods and functions provided by the Internet.

A common characteristic of the protest movements 2009–2013 is the embracing of the Internet specific features to achieve civil society goals. In these protest movements attracting attention, diffusion of motives, acquisition of information, organization, coordination and exercising of civilian control are goals that were achieved through the new media. *The difference is only in the degree and the scope of their implementation.*

Through the Internet ordinary citizens are becoming an essential tool to attract more attention to the causes of the protests. The diffusion of different links, articles and messages online is becoming a major catalyst for citizens to express their will and to present their demands and motives. Through social networks protest motives reach directly the information environment.
Civil Society Transformation in Internet

without the necessity to be interpreted and presented by other institutions. The increase in the number of protesters would be more difficult without the use of the Internet. Through the interactive features, the narrowcasting function and the asynchronous communication civil society managed to demonstrate its positions and to find wider support for the protests.

The Internet, through its specific functions, is becoming a major driving force of the protest movements. Public support and participation in protest is difficult to be achieved without greater coordination and opportunities for direct communication. This is precisely why the new media are crucial change in the modern information environment.

The Web increases the public awareness. The ability to directly share information allows clarification of certain issues in front of a wide audience. In addition, the Internet allows better presentation of the protest perspectives. Using the Web citizens are reducing the possibility of censorship and framing. These new capabilities are essential for the development of protest movements and their ‘protest life’. The presentation of authentic footage filmed and distributed directly by protesters is an important part of the understanding of the processes in modern society. During the 2009–2013 protests, civil society was able to adapt to the new opportunities for achievement of its specific goals. In unison with the development of protest movements, the Internet allows an ordinary citizen to be able to criticize certain policies or specific decisions made by those in power. Thus it became possible for civil society to find wider support and to impose at least partial control over the government. Such actions, the gathering of groups of people united by a cause, has become an increasingly important part of modern society. Through the specific features of the Internet, the civilian control of the government is becoming an integral part of the political process.

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