Abstract:
Analyses of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the internet have underlined, on the one hand, their capacity to enable processes of participation and democratic dynamics and, on the other hand, have criticised certain tendencies to a technological determinism and cyberutopianism regarding this capacity. These debates have intensified with the emergence of social media, associated with a richer user experience and architecture of participation, openness, freedom and horizontality. In the context of this dualism among utopian and dystopian visions, this study aims to examine the uses of social media in social mobilisation and their transition to sustained spaces of social participation, i.e. social movements. The study includes three cases of recent social mobilisations: Occupy Wall Street (USA), Taksim Square protests (Turkey) and #YoSoy132 (Mexico). Discourse analysis was used to compare uses of social media in the narratives associated with those mobilisations. Three main themes were analysed: 1) references to democracy, in particular criticisms of representative democracy and proposals for alternatives; 2) comments on the role of social media in social mobilisation and its development; and 3) reflections on tensions between online and offline actions as part of collective action. The findings indicate that social media are mainly used for the emotional mobilisation of individuals and visibilisation during the period of major collective action and there is a two-step development from social media to collective mobilisation and from collective mobilisation to social movements.

Introduction

From its early days, one dimension of analysis on the impact of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and, particularly the internet, has focussed on their relationship with democracy. Discussions have revolved around the political impact of the Internet on traditional political dynamics of representative democracy – such as campaigns and elections (Davis, Elin, & Reeher, 2002) – the internet's potential to contribute to a new era of participatory democracy, i.e. a revitalised public sphere (Thornton, 2001), as well as the possible emergence of a new space for democratic dynamics – the cyberspace – and, consequently, the configuration of a new phenomenon called cyberdemocracy (Poster, 1997).

The capacity of the internet as a community builder in the context of rising political disengagement and disenchantment (Davis et al., 2002) has been explored. It has been argued that the use of internet may contribute to advancing democratic dynamics in liberal-capitalist political contexts (Dahlberg & Siapera, 2007) and indeed that cyberspace practices can lead to the pluralisation of the public sphere as a consequence of cyberspace practices (Dahlgren, 2005). Particular technological characteristics of the World Wide Web have been associated with a democratic potential, mainly its decentralized nature and interactivity. Some approaches propose that there is a certain continuum between those characteristics and some dimensions of democracy and the public sphere, such as its interactional and deliberative dimensions, while at the same time, technological decentralization could be associated with the destabilization of political communication systems (Dahlgren, 2005). With the arrival of social media and the so-called Web 2.0, the democratising potential of the internet has been highlighted, since the resources that it provides are associated with a richer user experience and an architecture of participation, openness, freedom and a trend to collaborative dynamics.

But, as some authors have argued (Bingham, 1996), these readings of the potentials offered by ICTs are underlined by a certain technological neo-determinism that – as Wyatt (2013) proposes – runs across theory and research as well as public policies and everyday uses of technologies, and it is based on the assumption that technological progress equals social progress. In addition, Morozov (2011) has criticised what he calls cyber-utopianism – defined as the inability to see internet's negative impacts on society and the assumption that online communication is inherently emancipatory – and internet-centrism – a tendency to consider all political and social changes through the prism of the internet.

This debate on ICTs' potential also characterizes analyses of the internet and social movements. On the one hand, some authors argue that the stress on the positive role of social media in riots and social protests confirms what they call "a new fetishism of technology" and distracts from the core contradictions of contemporary capitalism (Fuchs, 2012). It has been suggested, on the contrary, that social media have generated new communicational practices, providing novel patterns of interaction and forms of expression that stimulate wide civic participation, and hence contribute to new dynamics of social change and public mobilisation, fuelling revolts and bringing about political transformation (Bardici, 2012).

In this context, the aim of this paper is to analyse uses of social media during episodes of social mobilisation in order to examine how the focus on visibilisation or articulation of dissent shifts with the transformation of social mediated mobilisations into sustained participatory processes. The tensions between articulation and visibilisation are crucial in the use of social media platforms during social mobilisations and also impact on social phenomena that emerge as a result of those uses: sustained social movements that enable people to participate in democratic processes, re-invigorated politics; or social media mobilisations, a more ephemeral democratic dynamics, linked to certain "communicational happy islands" (Alfaro, 2000).

The Three Cases

The multiple case study presented here deals with three recent episodes of dissent: Occupy Wall Street; Taksim Square protests in Turkey and Mexican #Yosoy132 (English: #Iam132).

The original protests of Occupy Wall Street were initiated by members of the Adbusters magazine, who registered a World Wide Web domain – OccupyWallStreet.org – and emailed the magazine's subscribers calling for America to have its own version of Egypt's Tahrir Square where huge demonstrations were happening at the time. Other internet-related groups – such as Anonymous – also encouraged their supporters to take part in protests. Demonstrations began on 17 September 2011, the organizers turned to the microblogging site Twitter the evening before the protests and within 24 hours one in every five hundred hashtags was #OccupyWallStreet. A Facebook page was created two days later, featuring a YouTube video of earlier events, and by 22 September, the number of Facebook page users reached a critical mass. A month later, Facebook listed 125 Occupy-related pages and other hashtags associated with the protests began to appear on Twitter: #OccupyBoston, #OccupyDenver, #OccupySD and so on (Berkowitz, 2011).

In Istanbul, the capital of Turkey, demonstrations began on 28 May 2013 in Taksim Square. These were initially against the urban development plan for Istanbul's Taksim Gezi Park and, subsequently spread across Turkey covering a wide range of concerns –from freedom of press, expression and assembly, to the government's encroachment on Turkey's secularism (Taspinar, 2014). The important role played by social media and, particularly, by Twitter, has been underlined by different analyses (Demirhan, 2014; Taştan, 2013), explaining it as a response to a perceived lack of media coverage about the protests in mainstream Turkish media. For instance, over a 24-hour period in late May 2013, "at least 2 million tweets mentioning hashtags related to the protest, such as

#direngeziparkı (950,000 tweets), #occupygezi (170,000 tweets) or #geziparki (50,000 tweets) have been sent" (Barberá & Metzger, 2013), most of it in Turkish and from within Istanbul.

The beginnings of #Yosoy132 are associated with popular support, via Twitter, to a university student protest against the then-Mexican presidential candidate Enrique Peña Nieto. A video of the protest – that took place on 11 May 2012 during his visit to the Ibero-American University in Mexico City – was uploaded onto social media but mainstream Mexican television channels and national newspapers reported that the protesters were not students. Then, 131 of them released a video on YouTube identifying themselves with their university ID cards and people showed their support by stating, mainly on Twitter, that they were the "132nd student", thus giving birth to the #YoSoy132 movement.

Despite their diversity of motivations and particular contexts, these episodes of mobilization share some common characteristics: no centralized leadership, a certain level of spontaneity, similar repertoires of dissent (sit-ins, popular assemblies, encampments) as well as a wide use of ICTs. All of these are pertinent for the research presented here. By including different cases of mobilisation from a wide range of contexts and geographical regions we will arrive at relevant comparisons, particularly given the diversity of social movements and their repertoires of collective action (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Oliver, Cadena-Roa, & Strawn, 2003; Tarrow, 1994).

Methods

The case study uses qualitative methodology, involving mainly the discourse analysis of texts linked to the three selected mobilisations (declarations, interviews, speeches and other texts). If, as Castells (2004) affirms, social movements are what they say they are, then discourse analysis is an appropriate method for examining the issue. It is also adequate in this case since the analysis focuses on a communicational issue as well as due to the particular importance that social movements assign to their communicative dimension. A qualitative perspective was also selected as the research aimed to uncover possible interrelationships, explain causes and effects and describe dynamic processes (Burns, 2000). A holistic perspective (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz, 1991) and an interpretative approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) were central for the research.

Discourse analysis has become a significant method for understanding social movements, particularly their culture and the cultural dimension of mobilisation (Taylor & Whittier, 2004). According to Melucci, discourse analytical approaches to social movements are increasingly concerned with meaning and its construction, "aware of this complexity and try to creatively approach the multiplicity of levels implied in a collective discourse" (2004, p. 57) and tend to focus on movement-related texts in the effort to identify patterns, linkages and structures of ideas related to those collective agents (Jonhston, 2002).

The discourses of social movements operate at three levels: 1. a world-historical discourse, that refers to general issues and a certain meta-narrative; 2. an organisational discourse, frequently associated with texts produced by intellectuals, leaders, committees and functionaries of social movement organisations; and 3. texts and speeches produced by the individuals who participate in the movements (Jonhston, 2002). In order to understand the communicational dimension of social movements, it is important to examine the complex dynamics that involve these three discursive levels. Franzosi (1998) proposes to focus on the narrative dimension since it provides a perspective focused on actors as well as on discourse structures which enables a better understanding of the interrelationships among the different levels of discourse and the processes of meaning construction. This approach transcends the focus on the search for the meaningful, i.e. in those words supposedly more loaded with meanings (like adjectives), and moves on to the meanings contained in the structure and the narrative sequences of texts, in what is described as a transition

"from variables to actors, away from regression-based statistical models to networks, and away from a variable-based conception of casualty to narrative sequences" (1998, p. 527).

In the discourse analysis we included these types of texts: 1) interviews with participants in the mobilisations, taken from both mainstream and online alternative media published at the height of collective action; 2) texts that appeared on social network sites linked to those collective actions – for instance, blogs, Twitter profiles and Facebook pages; and 3) public declarations and other documents published by the social movements on blogs or other online spaces associated with the mobilisations. We focussed particularly on: 1) references to democracy, particularly the criticisms of representative democracy and proposals of alternatives to it; 2) comments on the role of social media in the processes of social mobilisation and its development; and 3) reflections on the tensions between online and offline actions as part of collective action. The following section discusses findings for each question that we focussed on.

Results

Criticisms and Alternative Visions of Democracy and Politics

Democracy and participation are permanent and transversal notions in the discourses of social mobilisations and their participants. For Occupy Wall Street democracy has been central also for the movement's self-definition – a "people-powered movement (...) fighting back against the corrosive power of major banks and multinational corporations over the democratic process" (http://occupywallst.org/about/) and a socio-political and economic order where a minority of the richest people sets the rules of an unfair global economy. Protests and occupations questioned the political order and the exclusion of citizens from decision-making processes. In opposition to these, mobilisations proposed a new sense of politics that "starts with citizens talking to one to another and listening" in an effort to arrive at consensus by articulating "agreement and disagreement with mutual respect" (http://occupywallst.org/about/).

Although the primary driving force behind the protests in Taksim Square was opposition to the planned urban regeneration which would have eliminated Gezi Park and its trees to give way to a new shopping mall, protesters stated that they were asking for justice and democracy and argued that "the really invisible flag, here, is that of our resistance, and the power we can have when we get together on a common ground to reclaim a different way to live together" (Müştereklerimiz, 2013). Based on a perspective that assumes that there is an intrinsic link between the ecological crisis and the crisis of democracy, the occupation of Taksim Square was considered by participants "an explicit demand for the citizen's right to political participation" (Müştereklerimiz, 2013).

From its inception, the #Yosoy132 mobilisation stressed media democratization and questioned the quality of Mexican democracy, labelling it a "farce". The mobilisations denounced the fact that politicians were completely divorced from citizens and questioned a politics limited to "vote every six years, although even that is not respected" (Attolini, 2012). A poster by a protester clarified his opposition to the presidential candidate Peña Nieto: "it is neither hate nor intolerance against his person but rather indignation about what he represents" (Attolini, 2012).

Coherently with their criticism of representative democracy, these mobilisations propose a new form of democratic experience, a participatory one, trying to configure an anti-hierarchical and anti-authoritarian consensus-based politics. During the protests in Taksim Square, there was a transition in the repertoire of dissent from speakers' corners – centred on the right to voice one's opinion and be publicly heard – to popular assemblies as decision-making platforms. It was a response to the criminalisation of "any political demand [that] would be systematically gassed on a daily basis" and the militarisation of a public area. The experience of participants in the new scenario of democracy was described as follows: "something completely new is happening. It's a square in the heart of a country cleansing itself of decades of systematic burial of whatever contradicted the ideologies it

was built on, a practice which denied the many traditions, languages, religions, cultures and histories which have nurtured this soil" (Müştereklerimiz, 2013).

Occupy Wall Street presents itself as a leaderless movement, representing the 99 percent, but with no – traditionally understood – representative goal. It was defined by one of the facilitators of the movement's contentious discussions and action-planners as a situation where "nobody has authority here", as part of a particular dynamic through which "people lead by example, stepping up when they need to and stepping back when they need to" (Nicole Carty in Worthington, 2011). For instance, the General Assemblies of Occupy Wall Street (OWS) rejected a document entitled the "99 Percent Declaration", created by one OWS group that favoured specific demands, since it considered the text an attempt to co-opt the "Occupy" name. The opposition to the establishment of specific demands was a widely extended position among participants, since they argued that it would limit the movement by implying conditions and limiting the duration of the mobilisations.

Denouncing a hegemonic politics based on "empty figures and oxidized speeches" and an "indolent citizenship and complacent civil society", the members of the #YoSoy132 claimed that "it truly is time to reassess the symbolic dimension of politics" and demanding "an authentic democracy, just right know" (Attolini, 2012). In a particularly metaphorical action, the movement held a funeral march on 31 August 2012 to symbolically bury the country's democracy. In a new democratic order, members of the #YoSoy132 define the goal of the movement as "becoming the shadow of who is in power" (Alina Rosa Duarte in Moraga, 2012).

The opposition between existing representative democracy and "true democracy" (as understood by protesters) is played out on social media sites. Protests are considered "healthy expressions for any democracy"; (Teyve de Lara in Moraga, 2012) a resource for stating "the lack of spaces to express our dissent", even for people who confessed they had never attended a protest before and participated in those collective actions because it was seen by them as "more than politics" (Calatayud, 2013). Demonstrations are considered effective forms of action for "putting pressure on corporations or governments with a mass of people in the street telling a unified story" that have some key ingredients that make it possible to achieve their goals: a clear motive and story and possibilities for individuals to participate (http://occupywallst.org/about/).

Social Networking Media and Social Mobilisation

As mentioned earlier, social networking media played a central role in the emergence and spread of the analysed mobilisations and in this section we analyse how participants understood their role. Social networking media were described as a resource for touching "some sensitive emotional chords inside (…) citizens", making it possible to connect "away from mainstream media", as part of the "miracle of solidarity and the power of the many" (Müştereklerimiz, 2013). So-called "hashtag politics" figures in participants' repertoire of action given the current environment that "encourages absolutely everyone to participate in conversations about current events". Hashtags are considered "powerful tools for conveying a conversation around a strategically chosen subject", thus stressing that action cannot be limited to "send[ing] a message, but through social media like Twitter and Facebook, it will also convene a conversation" (Meisel, n. d.).

Participants narratives shed light on their understanding of the interrelationship between social media and mobilisations. Social networks are characterized as "a fabulous way of fostering social mobilizations" and "a mechanism or something that has led me to a mobilization and solidarity" (Diego Dante in Goche, 2012). The horizontality of social networks is also highlighted: "In social networks no one is more important than anyone else; we all are 140 characters" (Rodrigo Serrano in Goche, 2012). Some of the most retweeted tweets during the emergence of the #YoSoy132 mobilisation reveal the connections between social media and collective action, particularly associated with emotions and a netlike structure: "IMPORTANT - Let's spread this WARNING! #

YoSoy132 – RT!" (@ElPsicosofo), "Come on guys, you are the change in this country" (@polo_polo), "Let's go to the Zocalo [the main square in Mexico City] on Saturday to sing with the # YoSoy132!" (@julietav), "PRI's [Partido Revolucionario Institucional; Institutional Revolutionary Party] dream is to cause the collapse of # YoSoy132. They can't erase or infiltrate a decentralized movement" (@anonopshispano).

During the occupation of Taksim Square, the most mentioned hashtags were #direngezipark (ResistGeziPark; 950,000 tweets), #occupygezi (170,000 tweets) and #geziparki (50,000 tweets), showing again the importance of Twitter in spreading a call for action and mobilisation. Another important hashtag was #BugünTelevizyonlarıKapat (TurnOff TVToday), as a response to a perceived lack of media coverage about the protests in mainstream Turkish media (Barberá & Metzger, 2013). Occupy Wall Street protesters created over 100,000 different hashtags, using up to 17,000 different hashtags per day. The most popular ones were those associated with the name of the movement: #occupywallstreet, #ows, #occupywallst, #occupy, #occupyboston, or #takewallstreet. Among the most retweeted Occupy-related tweets, there were references to social change: "Break the system by creating something new", "Today, through peaceful protest, we changed the world. Tomorrow we'll continue to change it. And every day after that too.#ows" (https://twitter.com/OccupyWallSt).

Some participants explicitly declared that social networks were the direct cause of their participation in the mobilisations. "I saw a couple of tweets from credible sources, and then I took a taxi and came," (Calatayud, 2013) said a participant in the Taksim Square protests. Participants compared the lived experience of collective action with the dynamics of social networks: "I see this park as the incarnation of Twitter. People retweet the information they receive, respond to it and save what they like most in their list of favourites" (Engin Onder in Calatayud, 2013). There were also individuals who only participated in mobilizations online, for instance, by "redistributing everything that was published on the #YoSoy132 website. What I did was find the sources [of the original information] because there were many things that were not true; this is a common trend in social networks, to manipulate the information and images. What I did was to corroborate the source where the information came from, and to post, post, post, so the credibility of what I post could not be questioned. I supported the movement this way because I did not have time to participate in assemblies and demonstrations. My activism was completely on the social networks" (Tania in De Mauleón, 2012).

However, despite recognizing the importance of protests as part of the repertoire of collective action and of the importance of social media for mobilisation, participants also expressed concerns about the future of the movements in relation to both demonstrations and social media. Participants' comments on the use of social media clarify that while they understand their importance for "creating awareness among people", they "also know that hashtags are ephemeral and that it would be very good if people moved into the streets instead of protesting only on social networks" (De Mauleón, 2012). The call for "Occupy Wall Street" in Adbuster Magazine's first tweet confirms the importance attached to moving from social media networks into the streets. However, participants recognise the limits of collective action and the need to go beyond protests and demonstrations in order to achieve political change. "We know that [the resignation of the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan] will not happen, so here we are, enjoying the moment; we know that this is a good thing, we are all together, but, and then what? We do not know" (Gokce Gunac in Calatayud, 2013). Besides this feeling of uncertainty, there is the conviction that, although marches are a way of raising public awareness, "we must reach a point where we stop. We cannot be marching every day" (Israel Carreón in Moraga, 2012).

What Next? From Online Mobilisations To Offline Social Movements

Although social media are considered main resources for social mobilisation, there is – as already

suggested – an explicit necessity to go beyond online collective action. The tension between the online and offline dimensions is also expressed in debates about the future and the development and spread of social action. Comments on social media argue for the "need to organise to do something that affects corporations" since "I am concerned that marching and sign carrying will not make any impression on the rich corporations or the politicians who may be dependent on the contributions of the rich" (Kathymoi, 2011). According to some individuals, "the absence of organisation and serious discussion about moving forward (from Occupy Wall Street protests) is troubling (...). Perhaps the time to actually organise in ways that have a substantial impact has arrived" (Kennedy, 2012) and they propose that "we need to organise and recall them [politicians]" (http://wearethe99percent.tumblr.com/).

Participants understand the necessity of propelling the movements beyond social networks because "although the internet has become the great engine of democracy, there are people in this country that still does not have access to it, then we must go to those locations" and so they propose "to create informative groups to take to the streets and spread the movement" (Carlos Cario in Afirman que el movimiento..., 2013). But, at the same time, they recognise that "while the movement calls for these marches and calls for these symbolic actions [it cannot be only limited to these actions], it has a very specific agenda, for example with regard to media law" (Teyve de Lara in Moraga, 2012). Protesters differentiate, for instance, between the totality of the movement's political position and statements and the focus on tactics at the level of mobilisations and concrete actions. A permanent concern is voiced about the continuity of the movement beyond collective actions – demonstrations, sit-ins, occupations – and, in that respect, organisational aspects are stressed – e.g. by proposing strengthening of local assemblies, organisational potential, nation-wide spread – with the purpose of "being capable of organising ourselves very well and consolidate us as a movement, so we will get to become something like a citizen oversight, very active politically speaking, to propose agendas on issues of reforms" (Alina Rosa Duarte in Moraga, 2012).

During the Taksim Square protests, local processes of organisation were developed by participants, as part of their strategy both to resist as well as to maintain the occupation. They organised everything from open yoga sessions to free libraries, protesters cleaned every day and people collected and distributed, in an organised way, free food to protesters. Communities also organised lists of doctors, lawyers, and businesses volunteering to help protesters in need, as well as lists of WiFi passwords for protesters to use, places to get gas masks, and more. A poster by a participant in Occupy Wall Street summarises the effort to define the nature of the mobilisation and its future aims: "It is not a protest. It is a movement" (Calatayud, 2013).

As part of that goal of becoming social movements, participants develop assemblies, meetings, conventions and other face-to-face collective spaces for discussing issues of internal organisation and long-term demands that will guarantee continuity. Examples of those strategies are the Interuniversity General Assemblies held by the #YoSoy132 and its strengthening of local assemblies, or the Park Forums that emerged after the protests in Taksim Square, as "open mass meetings to discuss the way forward for the movement", where participants discussed "how to transform themselves into People's Assemblies. (…) how to create a network of representatives from towns, suburbs and streets". By August, 2013, about 70 Park Forums had been created, and many of them planned "to form city and regional People's Assemblies" and discussed "candidates for next year's local elections" (Ayman & Imrek, 2013).

Although participants recognise that "new organising capabilities of social media combined with a passion for freedom" (Ayman & Imrek, 2013) form the basis for the emergence of mobilisations such as Occupy Wall Street, #YoSoy132, or Taksim Square, at the same time, they are also fully aware of the tendency of decreasing audiences in meeting spaces once the face-to-face mobilisation has finished, such as the Park Forums. In some cases, there is an explicit feeling of disappointment:

"I was 132. I witnessed how it emerged on a Thursday night from a trending topic on Twitter. I lived the collective feeling of a march for the first time, I embraced a political banner. I participated in internal meetings at my school, I even was a spokeswoman and I gave interviews. I organized, I tweeted, voted and wrote... but the genesis of energy change was not constant" (Pérez de Acha, 2013).

In the case of Occupy Wall Street and #YoSoy132, some analysts argue that participants have largely lost interest and the movements have been almost diluted, although their leaders keep their trenches on social networks (Gómez Quintero, 2014; MIT Technology Review, 2013). In both cases, analyses agree in emphasizing the quick spread of mobilisations, rapidly spreading in communities via social media in general and, in particular, via Twitter, as well as their decreasing presence in those technological spaces once the mobilisation ended. But, at the same time, all the cases considered here culminated in the creation of internet-based spaces of alternative communication: TaksimDayanışması (Taksim Solidarity), (http://taksimdayanisma.org/) linked to the protests in Taksim Square; Colectivo Másde131, (http://www.colectivo131.com.mx/) associated with #YoSoy132, and Occupy Wall Street – NYC Protest for World Revolution, a website created as part of Occupy Wall Street protests (http://occupywallst.org/). Each of these sites also has Twitter and Facebook accounts associated with them.

The first post in TaksimDayanışması was published on 2 June 2013, the day after the sit-in in Taksim Gezi Park had been restored, developing into an Occupy-like camp with thousands of protesters. Posts during the first days and weeks – while protests took place – included declarations, calls for solidarity, press statements and numerous emotional texts, including frequent symbols, expressions of sense of belonging and phrases like: "we are united in the streets, we will achieve our demands in the streets!" or "ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!", underlining the consequences of the protests: "After the Gezi Park demonstrations, the country has now woken up to a new day" (All quotes from: http://taksimdayanisma.org/). The word "democracy" – and its derivations, such as democratic or democratically – is a constant presence in posts (a total of 93 times, especially concentrated in the first months). But, while during the protests and in the few months that followed even more than one post was published a day, since January 2014 on some weeks we can find only one new post.

In comparison, the Occupy Wall Street website was created two months before protests began, on 16 July 2011, as part of the previous campaign on social media. The first post highlighted the role of technology as a resource that "has made it easier than ever before for the people to stay in close contact and assist one another in achieving a collective goal", declaring its aim of making these tools "available" so collective action can be successful and underlining that "it isn't enough to simply make these tools freely available, they must also belong to the people" (All quotes from: http://occupywallst.org/). The website activity began to increase, reaching a peak in September and October 2011. At the time, posts with visual and audiovisual content (pictures of the occupation, posters, videos of sit-ins and police actions against these from YouTube, etc.) dominated. After that period, the website included, above all, informative texts on actions to be held (including meetings, protests, marches and so on). It has had sections such as forums, chats, and a repertoire of collective action with descriptions about different strategies and forms of civil disobedience, streaming service and donation requests for funding "the spiritual insurrection".

And finally, the ColectivoMásde131 website was created in May 2014, two years after the mobilisations of #YoSoy132. It defines itself as a space of alternative communication working to "empower the voice – from citizen to citizen – through projects aiming to strengthen our social networks through empathy". Its objectives are to develop "complaints accompanied by purposeful actions, with the participation of all Mexicans", to achieve "well informed citizens" and "an authentic democracy" (All quotes from: http://www.colectivo131.com.mx/). As a communicative

experience, they focus on communication projects (documentaries, campaigns, special coverage). In some analyses, this website is given as one of the few expressions of continuity of the #YoSoy132 mobilisation, which focussed on the electoral process and when the period of elections was over, "the crowd and emotions (...) were diluted for obvious reasons due to a political context, it is not election time" (Gómez Quintero, 2014). In this perspective the movement has faded, leaving behind only "trenches on social media" maintained by its principal leaders who, on the contrary, affirms that "the government still fears the organization" because "we continue to work, we did not hide to mourn in our homes after 1 December 2012 [when our candidate lost the election]. Although we know that people are afraid to protest because of repression, there are discussions and specific actions in which more and more people participate" (Carlos Brito in Gómez Quintero, 2014).

Discussion and Conclusions

Previous analyses of recent social mobilisations (e.g. Borge-Holthoefer et al., 2011) have identified some tendencies of hierarchical structure in their online dynamics, particularly in their use of online social networks, indicating the complexity of the interrelationships between a technology induced capacity – interactivity – and a cultural one – participation. In this respect our discourse analysis of contents linked to what we can term social media mobilisations – i.e. social mobilisations in which social media play a core role in their emergence, maintenance and/or spread – arrived at some interesting conclusions about the use of social media. Previous research that has been conducted on these three cases of mobilizations has dealt with the uses of ICTs and social media in particular, it considered the uses of ICTs and social media as sources of information and organization for collective actions (Taştan, 2013; Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2013), the political potential of social media as alternative social environments where participants can manifest their political identities (Gülşen, 2014), the potential of those technological resources for media democratisation (García & Treré, 2014) as well as the links between social media and public spaces proposing the emergence of what has been called a logic of aggregation and more decentralized forms of organizing and networking (Juris, 2012). However, there are no previous comparative studies of these three cases or analyses that focus on the tension between articulating participation and making dissent visible, a tension that is crucial for understanding the development of these social mobilisations and their transformation into social movements. In this respect, we show that the discourses of those collective mobilisations are characterized, at the historical macro-level, by a scathing criticism of representative democracy and the aim of creating spaces of "true democracy" for which social media are considered relevant tools, mainly because of their deliberative nature. Despite the differences in the ways in which democracy is practised, understood and imagined in the three countries where the mobilisations were based, there is a common trend in all the cases to question the quality of the existing democracy in the given context. This is significant since we are interested in the discourses about democracy as expressed by protesters through social media, and also the role assigned to these technological resources as part of democratic processes.

Technology is seen as a resource for successful collective actions and, consequently, these resources must belong to the people, importantly the use of ICTs must involve both the objective and subjective dimensions, i.e. their practical uses but also shared visions (values, symbols, etc.). However, while democracy is a central dimension at the historical macro-level of the discourse level and social media are seen as important technological resources for social participation, at the organisational level, there are tensions between the importance of social media and the development of social action as well as the general impact of such media on society and their role in enabling conditions of continuity – i.e. social mobilisations developing into social movements.

Particularly when mobilisations originally emerged on social media – like #YoSoy132 did – this two-step tension becomes a core dimension of mobilisations: participants underline the limits of a social media- centred collective action. A number of factors – including the digital divide that prevents some from participation and the need to establish a presence beyond the internet –

highlighted the necessity of moving from social media networks to the streets. But, since that offline presence takes, during the first moments, the form of protests and mobilisations, it is not enough either to move from social networking sites to the streets as at the same time, participants consider it essential to develop a strategy that would allow the long-term survival of collective action by becoming a social movement. In that regard participants make – in all the cases analysed – significant symbolical efforts to distinguish their action, presenting it as a movement and not only a protest. The two-step development could be summarised as from social networking media to social mobilisation, and from social mobilisation to social movement, taking place within the tense continuum of online-offline collective action.

Previous studies (Barberá & Metzger, 2013; Monroy-Hernández, 2013) have shown that the uses of social media as part of mobilisations are associated with making them visible, public-facing social media platforms – such as Twitter and YouTube– increasecthe visibility of collective actions and allow them to overcome mainstream media censorship, they have also underlined the performative dimension of those mobilisations, called "insurgencies" (Arditi, 2012). In that sense, our analysis reveals the particular importance of both the emotional and symbolic dimensions in the visibilisation through social media. Emotional and visual narratives have an important presence in social media during periods of more active collective action when mobilisation emerges (demonstrations, sit-ins, and occupations). For instance, the Taksim protests produced – largely based on the expansive, viral and reticular dynamics of social media – a number of iconic images associated with the protest and opposition to government forces, such as the Woman in Red or the Standing Man.

In terms of the importance of the emotional dimension, there is no difference between those mobilisations that primarily exist on social networking media (#YoSoy132) and those that use social media as a tool against mainstream media censorship (Taksim Square). At moments of rising collective levels of "emotional energy" (to use Collins' (2004) term), social media are used mainly as resources for mobilising emotion and visibilising dissent. That emotional dimension connects social media to social mobilisations and, in a way, transcends the duration of demonstrations; the participants understand that to become social movements, mobilisations need to go beyond a strategy only centred on social media . In that sense, there is a double shift: 1) from social media to streets, when the first are mainly used as mobilising and emotional resources; and 2) from streets towards long-term strategies, where social media are mostly spaces of alternative communicative practices and participation.

Following the three-level typology of discourse, at the individual level, there is – in all the analysed cases – an explicit concern surrounding this issue. Although participants acknowledge both the importance of demonstrations and protests as well as the usefulness of social media platforms – as tools for mobilising, organising and dissemination and even as a specific means of collective action (cyberactivism) – they highlight the necessity of developing other long-term organisational dynamics through assemblies, meetings, etc. These offline spaces and resources are considered necessary in order to, for instance, define goals and claims regarding public policies, as well as strategies of action and forms of organising structures as these are all understood as enabling conditions for the transition from mobilisations to movements. There is a permanent concern about what comes next and the inability to maintain long-term high levels of social mobilisation promoted through social media networks. Social media seem to generate dynamics of high emotional density, however, these are short-lived, so participants associate sustained processes of civic engagement and participation, i.e. social movements, with offline processes and actions.

According to Arditi insurgencies are "political performatives" where "participants start to experience what they strive to become" and "vanishing mediators or passageways to something other to come" (2012, p. 1). Our analysis has shown that this sense of prefiguring experience occurs

in experiential spaces as well as in online ones, and, in addition, participants compare the experiences of actual occupations with those on social networking media thus suggesting that both spaces share the same dynamics of collective participation. Therefore the social media experience could be seen as a having an experiential dimension – associated with identity, information, emotions, mobilisation and organisation – that mediates different levels in the evolution of social mobilisations to social movements. But the role of social media in this transition is very complex and participants do not seem to have clear strategies for achieving this.

We argue that changes and decreases in the use of social media platforms once the period of high levels of collective action is over are directly related to how social media were used for social mobilisation. In this regard, we can distinguish between social media use as a resource for participatory articulation of dissent, which would imply some use directly linked to certain democratic processes and citizens' sustained meaningful civic engagement, and social media uses predominantly for making dissent visible. The latter use – as we have seen in the three analysed cases – underlines the evolution of social media use, as the effort to ensure the continuity of social mobilisations involves the creation of sustainable communicational spaces.

Given the particular communicational restrictions that dissent faces during social mobilisations – like censorship in mainstream media during the Taksim Square protests – making dissent visible becomes a key objective and repertoires focus on communicative-centred actions. This trend, criticised even by some participants, results in a subsequent – as part of the transition from mobilisation to long-term social movement – prioritization ofthe communicational dimension of participation. Hence the sustained processes of civic engagement and participation arising from demonstrations find expression primarily in alternative communication spaces, a trend that can be considered a consequence or continuity of the communicative-centred perspective observed during the period of social mobilisation. The importance ascribed to interactivity and visibilisation in the use of social media platforms in social mobilisation then becomes a major influence on how ICTs are used for such mobilisation, even at the expense of other uses that focus more on articulation and participation. Consequently, the emergence of sustained civic engagement that arises from social media mobilisations requires social media use that, instead of prioritizing emotional visibility, articulates the complementary dynamics of visibilising the articulation of participatory processes and articulating such visibilisation as part of online and offline collective action.

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