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THE FACEBOOK AND TWITTER REVOLUTIONS: ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract: In the past few years, a wave of protest has spread across the world. The particularity of these uprisings lies in the way the Internet is used to support them. Scholars have analyzed these movements as being closely related to a generation that relies on the Internet as a means of organizing themselves as a force of social change. That is, the Internet is seen as a way of promoting the active participation of young people in political issues. Public opinion and the mass media hail the Arab Spring revolutions as movements beneficial to the democratization of oppressive regimes. By contrast, when disobedient movements emerge in democratic countries, they are generally more cautious in evaluating these movements as enriching democracy. This cautious opinion also concerns the use of social media. In this article, the so-called Twitter revolutions are discussed in light of the theories of social psychology that analyze the relationship between disobedience and democracy.

Key words: disobedience; democracy; protest; Twitter revolutions; Arab spring; values

In the past few years, a wave of protest and disobedience has spread across the world. Following the desperate act of Mohamed Bouazizi—a Tunisian street trader who set himself on fire on 17 December 2010 as a protest against the confiscation of his wares by the police—tumultuous events and uprisings that soon came to be known as the Arab Spring were triggered. This revolutionary wave has led to the overthrow of despotic governments that had ruled for decades, namely in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. Even now, many national authorities (e.g. in Syria) are also trying to contain these movements by means of violence and military force. Similarly, Western democracies—also as a result of the financial crisis that is affecting the world of work and the hopes of the younger generations—are being shaken by numerous protest movements. These protests aim to achieve greater social and economic equality and to fight corruption and the influence of financial corporations and multinational companies upon governments. Movements started in Europe (Greece and Spain) with the increase in the anti-austerity protests of the "indignados" (indignants) that drew inspiration from Arab Spring movements. In turn, the indignados influenced the creation of the "Occupy Wall Street" movement, which emerged in New York (USA) on 17 September 2011 and is now active in different countries on every continent.

As Howard (2011) pointed out, all these protest movements adopted civil resistance techniques—i.e. strikes, demonstrations—and availed themselves of the use of social

networking services to organize protests and communicate their claims and the progress achieved by the struggles. Indeed, the particularity of these uprisings is not only the astonishing contagion effect across many countries, but also the broad use of the Internet and social media in support of them (Buhl 2011; Cottle 2011; Mansour 2012). The media and public opinion generally agree that the Internet and social networks are the engines of the Arab Spring revolutions as well as the Western movements, to the extent that they are usually defined as "Twitter revolutions" or "Facebook revolutions" (Joseph 2012). Rahimi (2011, 167) stated that "the overlapping of cyber with physical space marked a unique stage in the protests that, somewhat mistakenly, gave rise to the notion of "cyber revolution" or "Twitter revolution" in certain Western media outlets." Some studies (see Anderson 2011) have indeed analyzed these movements as being closely related to a generation that relies on the Internet not just as a way of communicating with or inquiring about the world but also as a means of organizing themselves as a force of social change. In this sense, the Internet has been seen as a way of promoting the active participation of young people in political issues. Facebook, a very popular social media, in effect played quite a relevant role in supporting the Tunisian uprising. Although the regime had suppressed the video website YouTube since 2007, Facebook soon became one of the main communication platforms of the protests, with more than 300,000 Tunisians registering within two months (Buhl 2011). The same thing occurred in Egypt, where Facebook users at the time numbered around 6 million (now there are almost twice as many) and where the combined use of different social networking services seemed to play a significant role. Similarly, a digital platform created on Spanish social networks and forums through the use of Twitter and Facebook was relevant in triggering the participation of an enormous number of people in the 15 May 2011 protest—the first protest of the so-called "indignados." For those reasons, successive demonstrations in Greece—organized through a similar platform—were defined as "Facebook May."

In general, public opinion and the mass media hail the Arab Spring revolutions as being beneficial and constructive movements in the progressive democratization of oppressive regimes. By contrast, when civil disobedient movements emerge in "democratic" countries, public opinion and the mass media are generally more cautious in evaluating these movements as enriching democracy. This caution in considering their positive aspects for democracy also concerned the use of social media. On 11 August 2011, in the aftermath of the British riots and just a few months after the onset of the Arab Spring, the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, suggested censuring or even shutting down social media during times of unrest and banning suspected rioters from using them. He said that:

> the free flow of information can be used for good. But it can also be used for ill. And when people are using social media for violence we need to stop them. So we are working with the police, the intelligence services and industry to look at whether it would be right to stop people communicating via these websites and services when we know they are plotting violence, disorder and criminality (Halliday 2011).

As Joseph (2012) pointed out, a study by *The Guardian* and the London School of Economics indicated that social media were used more to respond to the riots than to start them; they were also used to organize post-riot cleanups. However, the opinion of Prime Minister Cameron was not an isolated one. In particular, in Western democracies

criticism of the use of the Internet in support of the protests is becoming quite a common counterrevolutionary argument against disobedience in democratic countries. In comparison with the opinions concerning the Arab Spring, these criticisms seem only to appear when democracies, and not extreme dictatorships, are criticized by people.

This discussion re-opens an old debate recently considered during G8 protests (e.g. the 27th G8 summit in Genoa in 2001) for instance and that transcends the use of social media: do protest and disobedience enhance or present a risk to democracy? Are there differences between protests that may lead to different outcomes for democratic health? In order to answer these questions it is relevant to focus on the aims of the protests, considering that not all forms of disobedience enrich democracy, but that democracy may be pursued only by allowing the expression of disobedience and by supporting disobedience that enhances democratic processes. However, particularly when protests occur in so-called democracies—where their aims tend to be underestimated and even misunderstood—the mass media and consequently public opinion tend not to focus on the reasons behind their claims but on the risk of riots and havoc. This displacement of attention—caused both by the state and by the violent fringes of protesters—distracts the population from the real reasons for the protest and obstructs the process of social change. Above all, it may impede the potential for democracy to be maintained and progress made.

Protest and democracy

Whether disobedience against the authorities and protests against the law are useful or not to democracy is a dilemma that is at least as old as democracy itself. Indeed, the notion of democracy is that of a pluralistic and egalitarian form of government based on citizens' equal opportunity to express their opinion (Dahl 1956). Since all the citizens of a state might hypothetically determine public policy, the essence of a democracy—and that which differentiates it from other forms of government, e.g. totalitarianism—should be that of being open to all opinions in order to choose a government policy that addresses everyone. Nevertheless, even now this effective form of democracy is not achieved by political systems that are not usually open to all minorities' voices. Thus, protest movements require so-called democracies to deal with the issue of the freedom of thought and the right to dissent and to understand whether disobedience can represent a threat to or an enrichment of democratic procedures and values. This is not a straightforward issue since social change and human development are promoted simply by the action of disobedient groups against the *status quo* and in opposition to specific laws. For instance, Nazi laws against the Jews in the 1940s or US laws against black people in the 1960s were laws that were accepted and recognized within those countries. Disobedient acts against those laws are nowadays seen as having enriched democracy but—at the time—they were considered criminal acts.

As some authors have pointed out (e.g. Buchanan 2002; Lane, Ersson 2003; Lefkowitz 2007), democracy is based on citizens' willingness to obey laws and at the same time on the protection of citizens' rights, including the right to express dissent. According to Lefkowitz (2007):

> citizens of a liberal-democratic state […] enjoy a moral right to engage in acts of suitably constrained civil disobedience. […] The duty correlative to a liberal-democratic state's justified

> claim to political authority is in fact a disjunctive one: either citizens of such a state must obey the law or they must publicly disobey it (2007, 202).

In this sense, democracy combines the rule of law with the active participation of people in politics. In accordance with Dahl (1956), Lane and Ersson (2003, 14) consider "the level of contestation as the essence of modern democracy," in the sense that contestation complements the rule of law in keeping democracies democratic. The idea that protest is also related to the development of democracy—and is not just in conflict with it—is in line with some recent studies in political science and sociology (Dalton, van Sickle, Weldon 2010; Inglehart, Abramson 1999; Norris 2002). Since disobedience strengthens pluralism and defends freedom of thought, these studies consider it to be a constituent concept of democracy itself.

This is not to say that democracy always benefits from disobedience. The enrichment of democracy depends on what movements make claim to. That is, social change does not always lead to an improvement in democracy but can actually reduce it. The actions of the Bolshevik party against the Tsarist autocracy in Russia, of the National Socialist German Workers' party (i.e. the Nazi Party) against the Weimar Republic and more recently of al-Qaeda are all examples of disobedient movements that demanded social change without enriching pluralism and equality of rights.

As Farrell (2011) has pointed out, over the last decade the question of whether the Internet supports or undermines democracy has triggered a great deal of controversy as well. With its potential to provide an arena for all different thoughts, the Internet is often regarded as a means of expression that should be blocked rather than as a means that should be increasingly developed and extended. This has led to ambiguous policies, and sometimes to censorship, against the freedom of the Internet, not only in dictatorships but also in democracies.

Martin Luther King's followers: Activism or slacktivism?

In an article written for *The New Yorker*, the journalist Malcolm Gladwell (2010) drew an interesting parallel between the Greensboro sit-ins in 1960—in which four black students asked for a cup of coffee in a bar where "negroes" were not served—and the recent so-called Facebook and Twitter revolutions. The author is quite critical of the utility of Internet technology for protest. In his opinion, real social change is promoted by high-risk meaningful activism, solid group identity, cohesion with strong ties and strategic hierarchies with a conscientious and well-defined allocation of tasks (Joseph 2012). Gladwell argues that Facebook, Twitter and the other social networking services are instead based on and foster low-risk activism and weak ties. They are a kind of participation which lacks motivation and is defined as "slacktivism."

Gladwell's article raises many issues but in particular it poses some questions: if Martin Luther King could have used social network technology, would this have been a support or a hindrance to the cause of civil rights? Does social network technology lead to greater active participation or is it a means of fostering very low-cost participation? Many authors have conducted a cost-benefit analysis of social media in promoting and supporting protests. As far as the benefits are concerned (see Table 1), Internet technology is recognized as having

the great advantage of being able to quickly disseminate the aims and reasons for the protest (Mansour 2012; Niekerk, Pillay, Maharaj 2011). This is particularly true for situations in which an authoritarian regime limits the transfer of information and has enormous media control. Moreover, easy dissemination of information and scaling connections have almost no monetary costs attached (Farrell 2011; Shirky 2008; Tarkowski, Fathy, Melyantsou 2011). The result is that more social groups may find an opportunity to illustrate their claims, whereas before this chance was limited by the need to spend considerable sums on organization. Social media are also seen as lending potential assistance to the logistics and practical coordination of protests. They are a common organizing tool that do not require a rigid hierarchy with a unified party line and allow disparate groups to work together and build up ties with each other (Farrell 2012).

Table 1. Benefits and costs of social media in supporting protest movements.

Benefits	**Costs**
Dissemination	Lack of a leader
Reduced costs	Less control over the forms of protest
Logistic coordination	False consensus and Conformism
Pluralism of information	Less motivation
Overcoming geographical distance and eyewitnessing	Weak ties
Help in finding external funding	

Internet technology also helps to guarantee pluralistic information about protests; events that would otherwise be in the hands of the holders of information, often very close to if not directly linked to the authorities themselves. Kulinova and Perlmutter (2007) pointed out the critical role of Internet blogs in the coverage of the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan (February-March 2005) and Goldstein (2007) spoke of the importance of "citizen journalism" and "online opposition journalism" in the Ukrainian Orange Revolution. Anderson (2011) underlined the relevance of the Internet in giving the average citizen access to ideas that challenge repressive governments. Goldstein (2007) asserted that:

> as the Internet lowered the cost of self-publication to zero, more voices outside the mainstream media became influential. […] Web sites made an indelible impact by creating an alternative voice that led an increasing number of people to challenge the official line presented by the mainstream media (2007, 4-5).

This constant information about the progress of protests may help people to become sufficiently motivated to participate in the days that follow (Rahimi 2011). Moreover, Internet journalism has another advantage, i.e. that of overcoming geographical distance. The use of the Internet is indeed not limited to the borders of a single nation but can be seen by the entire connected world in just an instant. In this way, protesters may rapidly make contact with the international media and journalists all over the world as well as other

supporters (Segerberg, Bennett 2011; Tarkowski et al. 2011). This is a sort of eyewitness phenomenon that helps spread the protest message and protects against human rights abuses, e.g. the disappearance of demonstrators (Joseph 2012). In actual fact, the recent UN military intervention against the Libyan government (March-October 2011) was probably catalyzed by the dissemination of images related to abuses committed by Gaddafi's militias. Furthermore, overcoming geographical distance may help in obtaining assistance in the form of financial (as well as military) support for the movements (Tarkowski et al. 2011).

Finally, social networking services may also be used to lure governments. That is, protesters may direct the authority's attention (and thus counter-protest forces) to some protest marches, while at the same time organizing other more essential demonstrations via more undercover channels (Farrell 2011; Levinson, Coker 2011)

As regards the costs of using Internet technology in organizing and supporting protests, in many cases authors see elements considered to be an advantage as detrimental. Logistic coordination is indeed also seen as being poor and chaotic. This lack of coordination is considered to be related to the lack of obvious organizers and formal leaders as was the case during traditional protest rallies (Gladwell 2010; Tarkowski et al. 2011). "Because networks don't have a centralized leadership structure and clear lines of authority, they have real difficulty reaching consensus and setting goals" (Gladwell 2010, 47). In effect, many traditional disobedient movements were characterized by recognized formal leaders, who in some cases, the media saw as representing the movement itself, e.g. Martin Luther King and Subcomandante Marcos. Instead, many recent protest movements are based on an organization that is leaderless by self-definition. As Levinson (2009) pointed out, even though their decisions should more genuinely represent the will of the people and participants should be more satisfied with the progress of the rallies, leaderless movements run the risk of degenerating into a mob. To this end, Wood and Goodale (2011) stated that leaderless-ness is not the real problem, but rather spokesperson-less-ness. For these authors, this lack may be relevant as things start to get out of hand because there is no Martin Luther King to issue a plea for calm or to reunite demonstrators. Thus, a lack of a traditional organizational hierarchy behind the protest may imply less control over the forms of the protest. Furthermore, leaderless-ness may affect not only the present organization of rallies but the aftermath of the revolutions as well. Organized hierarchies are needed to anchor future political changes, otherwise counter-revolutionary hierarchies might take advantage of the possible chaos issuing from leaderless-ness (Joseph 2012). Faris and Etling (2008) have asserted that Internet revolutions may result in the creation of "thin" democracies with weak horizontal structures.

Dissemination and citizen journalism have been criticized as well. Buhl (2011) has pointed out the issue of conformism over the Net. In agreement with other scholars (Farrell 2011; Lischka 2011), Buhl asserted that social media—due to their networking structure—rarely facilitate the communication of opinions that deviate and do not conform. This enhances the probability of a false consensus effect, i.e. an egotistic bias in overestimating how much other people agree with one another (Ross, 1977). Joseph (2012) spoke of a "ghettoization of speech." That is, people tend to follow only those sites that fall in with their preconceived world view. Moreover, users of social networking services—often unwittingly—are frequently directed to content that they would probably agree with and are protected from

that with which they would not. Furthermore, information is free but sometimes sectorial (Farrell 2011; Hindman 2009; Schlozman, Verba, Brady 2010): most people focus on a small number of elite blogs while the majority of blogs have a small readership (Farrell 2011) and the most successful bloggers tend to be white, male, and well-educated (Hindman 2009). This focus of attention on a few main voices may lead to the minimizing of minority ideas. Norris (2001) spoke of the risk of a "digital divide" between those who have sufficient skills to use these technologies for expressing their ideas and those who do not. Finally, other costs relate to something that Gladwell (2010) has already identified, i.e. participation with weak motivation and feeble ties between demonstrators. However, it should be noted that the Internet helps to involve people who have not previously participated or were not represented through traditional channels (Joseph 2012; Tarkowski et al. 2011).

Notwithstanding some interesting reflections and other more questionable aspects of all these views, the point that both the critics and the enthusiasts of the new technologies sometimes forget is that social media are just tools of organization and participation. They may be useful in organizing and escalating a protest, but they do not establish its ideology and motivations. That is, social media alone do not and will not cause revolutions or demonstrations (Anderson 2011; Joseph 2012; Tarkowski et al. 2011). Moreover, this new breed of activist is supported by traditional movement structures to the point that online and offline activities have to be seen as being strictly intertwined (Tarkowski et al. 2011). Thus, the rhetorical question concerning Martin Luther King using Twitter makes little sense. The civil rights movements would have probably used social media to involve more people in their struggle. At the same time, they would have continued to use more traditional channels.

Antisocial and pro-social disobedience: The role of the population

If we conceive of the new technologies simply as a means that can serve—with all their advantages and disadvantages—the organization of a protest, it remains to be understood which elements may distinguish protests that enrich democracy from those that simply threaten it. By considering the historical progress of humanity, social influence theories (see Mugny, Pe rez 1991 for a review) have analyzed social changes as always deriving from the action of disobedience movements vis-à-vis the status quo. However, scholars have focused their attention on the influence of processes rather than on the aftermath of social change. That is, they have not investigated whether social change leads to greater equity between social groups or not. To answer this question, Passini and Morselli (2009, 2010) have considered the elements that distinguish those civil disobedience movements that promote the development of democracy in a pluralistic sense from those that ratify a system where one group should dominate over the others. The authors proposed that a distinction be made between antisocial and prosocial disobedience.

Based on their analysis of the autobiographies of three people who are widely recognized for their disobedient actions in the defense of human rights (Morselli, Passini 2010)—namely Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr. and Mohandas Gandhi—and of the literature on destructive obedience and civil disobedience (see in particular Arendt 1973; Fromm 1963; Kelman, Hamilton 1989), Passini and Morselli have identified two distinctive and fundamental principles behind civil disobedience: i.e. social responsibility and moral

inclusion. On the basis of these two notions, antisocial and prosocial disobedience were differentiated in terms of both the motivating factors and the psychologically distinctive elements behind the protest (see Table 2). Antisocial disobedience is defined as being based on a perceived threat to one's own social group values, on a shift of responsibility from the group, on the exclusion of other social groups from the moral community of reference and on a general refusal to obey any authority and law. On the contrary, prosocial disobedience is defined as being based on a perceived threat to broad community values. Its action does not go against other social groups' values (moral inclusion) and is based on a great sense of social responsibility for one's own actions. Moreover, people enacting prosocial disobedience recognize the importance of obedience and the existence of authorities and laws. Indeed, the recognition of obedience is precisely the condition for enacting disobedience. People disobey because some of the authorities' demands or laws contradict pluralism and the moral inclusion of all social groups. In this sense, complying with egalitarian values means disobeying anti-democratic demands.

Table 2. Characteristics of antisocial and prosocial disobedience.

	Antisocial Disobedience	**Prosocial Disobedience**
Condition for protest	– Threat to one's own group values (exclusive)	– Threat to the extended community's values (inclusive)
Protest based on	– Shift of responsibility – Moral exclusion – General refusal of obedience, authority and laws	– Social responsibility – Moral inclusion – Recognition importance and limits of obedience, authority and laws
Short-term effects (Social change)	– Claim for rights of one's own group versus other groups' rights – Benefits for the individual and his/her own group	– Claim for an equalization of rights – Benefits for the community in a broad sense
Long-term effects	– Intergroup conflict – Dominant/submissive relationship → Totalitarianism	– Coexistence of social groups – Pluralism → Democracy

Note. From "Authority Relationships between Obedience and Disobedience", by S. Passini and D. Morselli (2009). *New Ideas in Psychology 27*, 103. Copyright 2008 by Elsevier Ltd. Adapted with permission.

Finally, both antisocial and prosocial disobedience can be distinguished in terms of the effect they have. Indeed, antisocial disobedience aims to acquire benefits for the social group in question and, in the long run, may reproduce a dominant/submissive relationship and thus totalitarianism. By contrast, prosocial disobedience claims benefits and rights for the community in a broad sense and in the long term strives for the coexistence of all the social groups and for pluralism. It should be noted that these two types of disobedience are not the

only possible ones. That is, they should be considered more as two extremes of a continuum than as the only two possible forms of disobedience. For instance, some protest groups (e.g. right-wing nationalist movements) may be characterized by the recognition of the importance of obeying laws and authorities and at the same time by expressing exclusionary types of action (i.e. against other people's rights). Thus, it is more appropriate to talk of prosocial-oriented and antisocial-oriented disobedience. However, it is relevant to underline that these orientations—and in particular the issue of the inclusive/exclusive nature of the scope of any protest—lead to very different future intergroup dynamics. Thus, the antisocial/prosocial distinction cannot be underestimated in analyzing protest movements.

Having described how these forms of disobedience may have dramatically different outcomes for democracy, it remains to be understood who should decide whether a movement tends more towards the prosocial or the antisocial pole, and what should be done about it. Ought the government institutions to classify disobedient movements as being antisocial or prosocial? It is clear that as government institutions are the custodians of power they will tend to reject any disobedience movement by branding it undemocratic and dangerous. Similarly, it is unlikely that minorities will identify the germs of authoritarianism in themselves. Who, then, can detect and support the kind of social change that enhances democracy? Studies on social influence can help us to understand this point. Mugny (1982) has significantly altered the models of minority-majority mutual influence. If Moscovici (1976) has shown how social change was always proposed and stimulated by a minority, Mugny realized that the social influence model is not based on a dyadic but on a triadic relationship. He showed that the population—which he called the silent and the powerless majority—is the vehicle of the social change since social influence between majority (the authority) and minority (the disobedient group) is always mediated by the population. As a matter of fact, the authorities may preserve the status quo only on the basis of their influence over a substantial section of the population. Likewise, disobedient groups/minorities may achieve social change only by influencing and involving a large part of the population in their struggle (Giugni 1999). Thus, both social stability and social change processes should be analyzed within a triangular relationship involving a minority/disobedient group and two majorities—the authority and the population. It is the population that should distinguish between those disobedient movements aimed at the enrichment of the democracy and those aimed only at gaining power or protecting vested interests.

Since the population holds the balance of power in supporting the democratic develop of democracy, we should expect that the "silent majority" will easily recognize when both authorities and disobedient groups threaten it. However, history tells us that this is not so simple. History is full of examples of antisocial disobedience groups that had the support of a part of the population and succeeded, as well as prosocial disobedient groups that actually failed in involving the population in their struggle. Many antisocial movement leaders may indeed rephrase their antidemocratic claims in a way that makes them sound egalitarian and morally inclusive. In general, people give credence to leaders and their speeches, sometimes regardless of what they actually do. According to Kelman and Hamilton (1989), this is exactly what threatens democracy the most. However, not all the people are taken in by appearances. Kelman and Hamilton's (1989) distinction between three political orientations may be useful in understanding the different levels of support provided by the population.

The authors distinguished between rule-, role- and value-oriented citizenship as different ways of conceptualizing and relating to the political system. Rule-oriented citizens conceive of their task as following the rules and respecting authority's demands. Role-oriented citizens conceive of it as following their role obligations by actively obeying authority's demands. Finally, value-oriented citizens conceive of it as taking an active part in formulating, evaluating and questioning national policies. Value-oriented citizens are defined as people who attach importance to the universal values of justice and equality in their relationship with the political system and authority (Kelman, Hamilton 1989). According to Passini and Morselli (2012), when both an authority and a disobedient group issue an illegitimate and antisocial claim—i.e. against pluralism and moral inclusion—value-oriented citizens are the most likely to withdraw their support for that specific claim. At the same time, value-oriented citizens will be those people who are able to recognize such demands that are inclusive in scope and then support them. Thus, regardless of what authorities or disobedient groups proclaim, value-oriented citizens are actively concerned in understanding the claimant's values and scope. In this way, they may comprehend those movements that support or undermine democracy beyond their declarations of intent.

In conclusion, social influence studies suggest that disobedience and Internet freedom of expression should always be protected in order not to limit the development of democracy. "An open internet is essential for democracy to take root. […] Countries should support the model of an open, uncensored internet and the concept of digital freedoms as basic rights" (Tarkowski et al. 2011, 3). This means that the Internet cannot be censored by institutions and states in any way, because the risk of stunting the growth of pluralism is too high. As Andersen (2011) pointed out, the Internet cannot be controlled or restricted. However, those who utilize the Internet should be responsible and use it with good will.

As far as protest movements are concerned, people should be educated to recognize those ideas and ideologies that foster democracy and that do not threaten it. This form of value-oriented citizenship education should be based on the concepts of social responsibility and moral inclusion and should lead to turning the "silent majority" into an "active and participative majority." Active citizens are prompted to disobey authority when the latter's demands are illegitimate—i.e. against a social group's rights. At the same time, active citizens should develop a greater awareness in recognizing and supporting only the civil disobedience movements that aim to broaden pluralist and egalitarian values and that do not pursue vested interests. To this end, the Internet is a very useful tool. People should be educated to use it not only to find out about and follow protest movements. They should use all the information available to investigate the aims and the real scope of a social movement. Only in this way may they be sure to support those movements that pursue democratic and egalitarian values, thus fostering the development of democratic democracies.

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