Some Reflections on Manuel Castells’ Book "Networks of Outrage and Hope. Social Movements in the Internet Age".

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.31269/triplec.v10i2.459

Keywords: social movements, social media, Internet, protest, revolution, occupation, Arab spring, 15-M, indignadas, indignados, Occupy Wall Street, Manuel Castells, network, Networks of outrage and hope. Social movements in the Internet age.

Abstract
This paper provides critical reflections on Manuel Castells’ (2012) book Networks of Outrage and Hope. Social Movements in the Internet Age that analyses the “nature and perspectives of networked social movements” (p. 4) and gives special focus to the role of “social media” in movements that emerged in 2011 in Tunisia, Iceland, Egypt, Spain and the United States. I situate Castells’ book in an intellectual discourse that focuses on the political implications of social media and that has involved Clay Shirky, Malcolm Gladwell and Evgeny Morozov. The article also discusses the role of social theory and empirical research in Castells’ book, presents as an alternative a theoretical model of the relationship between social movements and the media, discusses the implications that some empirical data that focus on social media in the Egyptian revolution and the Occupy Wall Street movement have for Castells’ approach, discusses how Castells positions himself towards capitalism and compares his explanation of the crisis and his political views to David Harvey’s approach.

Section overview:
1. Introduction
2. Social Media and Politics: A Controversy between Clay Shirky, Malcolm Gladwell and Evgeny Morozov
3. Castells on Social Media in the Context of Protests and Revolutions: The Dimension of Social Theory
4. Social Theory Recovered: A Model of the Relationship between Social Movements and the Media
5. Castells on Social Media in the Context of Protests and Revolutions: The Dimension of Empirical Research
6. Manuel Castells and David Harvey: The Question of Political Struggle - For or against Capitalism?
7. Conclusion

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Christian Fuchs is professor and chair in media and communication studies at Uppsala University’s Department of Informatics and Media. He is board member of the Unified Theory of Information Research Group and editor of tripleC (cognition, communication, co-operation): Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society. He holds a venia docendi in the field of ICTs and society. His research interests are: critical theory, social theory, media and society, ICTs and society, information society theory/research, political economy. He is author of many publications in these fields, including the books ‘Internet and Society: Social Theory in the Information Age’ (Routledge 2008), which presents a social theory of contemporary society with a special consideration of media, information, and technology, and the book ‘Foundations of
The opening sentence of Manuel Castells' latest book Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age. (Polity Press, 2012), sets the tone of the entire work: "No one expected it. Castells explores the variety and cultural diversity of these uprisings in an ambitious project. He considers the movements from Iceland and Tunisia, from the Egyptian Revolution to the Arab Spring, from the Indignadas movements in Spain to the Occupy movements in the States. This book is an exploration of the new forms of social movements and protests that are erupting in the world today. About the Author. Manuel Castells is University Professor and Wallis Annenberg Chair of Communication Technology and Society at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, as well as Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Planning, University of California, Berkeley. He has published 26 books including the trilogy "The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture", translated in 22 languages, and "Communication Power". He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, the British Academy, the Academia Europaea, and the Spanish Royal Academy of E