Civil resistance 2.0

How online resistance serves a tool to express societal dissatisfactions

MA Thesis New Media & Digital Culture

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Abstract

This thesis researches the notion of online civil resistance, a particular form of mediated activism. The possibilities for citizens to strengthen their social, economic and cultural conditions by challenging governmental power in the information age have shifted. Resisting political conduct by protesting against governmental power has online extensions as well. Unlike e-democracy initiatives which collaborate with governmental power, and applications of social media which facilitate offline gatherings of protesters, citizens can also use the Internet itself as a place to protest. This is achieved through various forms of mediated activism, such as hacking. It is argued that the Internet enables citizens to express societal dissatisfactions in ways in which regular initiatives of e-democracy and e-participation fall short.

This study embeds the characteristics of regular civil resistance in an online setting. First, a theoretical framework will be provided to explain how in today's networked world citizens have new options to influence others through media manipulation. Then in order to analyze how these new possibilities make way for specific new social practices, critical discourse analysis will be applied to understand how the Internet enables groups of citizens to express dissatisfaction as they oppose certain political conduct based on their current cultural values and beliefs. Frame analysis supplements this by highlighting how media manipulation works in the discursive events researched.

By using these methods, three cases are analyzed which act as discursive events of struggle for power. The first case revolves around the dissatisfaction concerning poor use of the Dutch language and 'being Dutch' surrounding the 'Koningslied' prior to King Willem-Alexander's inauguration in the Netherlands in April 2013. The second case features online discontent in the form of hacking performed by Anonymous and aimed against the impediment of Internet liberties which were threatened by the ACTA treaty. The last case will feature the use of citizen journalism (a concept based upon newsgathering by public citizens) used by Turkish protesters and aimed against violations of freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, and governmental encroachment on secularism.

This allows for a fresh and contemporary outlook on digitally networked-based resistance, explaining if we can truly speak of online civil resistance as an additional way of citizen engagement within the (global) networked public sphere, able to express societal dissatisfactions and perhaps change political conduct in order to better reflect values and ideas existent in civil society.

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Introduction: Online representations of citizen interest

Democratic processes can generally be understood as processes which reflect the 'social, economic and cultural conditions' of all eligible citizens in the 'proposal, development, and creation of laws', as defined on Wikipedia, which is a democratic definition of democracy by itself due to the open-source nature of the platform (cf. Democracy, Wikipedia). With the advent of the Internet, much has been written about its capability to improve the connection between political conduct and the cultural interests and values of citizens. Media scholar Henry Jenkins explains how average people can now access their interests on many types of media (2006, p. 308), and sociologist Manual Castells refers to the ability of individuals or groups to bypass traditional media systems in their communication (2007, p. 247). Instances of such initiatives aiming to strengthen the electorate's power on political decision making through online technologies have often been labeled e-participation.

One of the most referred notions of e-participation is provided by digital governance scholar Ann Macintosh. She defines the phenomenon as "the use of information and communication technologies to broaden and deepen political participation by enabling citizens to connect with one another and with their elected representatives" (2004, p. 364). The common denominator of e-participation innovations is that they revolve around a joint digital dialogue between government and its electorate. The idea is to get citizens more involved in governmental processes, not to abolish governmental power in favor of citizen power. Information science scholar Petrik Klaus explains how it is a cooperation of top-down generated institutional power with bottom-up generated input to influence political decision-making processes, aimed to improve the connection between political conduct and citizen-conditions (Klaus, 2009, 3). However, e-participation initiatives are not the only online means for citizens to get a public hearing.

This thesis aims to highlight the Internet's ability to represent citizen interest in a way which is digital, but non-cooperative with governmental power. Cooperative methods such as electoral voting have historically been accompanied with non-cooperative methods such as acts of mass protests, thereby enhancing democratic citizenship as it represents cultural interests and values of citizens. In this thesis, "citizen" is used to reflect the meaning of "resident" as due to the borderless nature of the Internet it would be untenable to uphold the narrow legal way of people who hold a passport. On the other hand governmental power should be defined as the preparing, making and enforcing of political decisions through (legal) authority (Klaus, 2009, 2).

With today's networked technology available it becomes possible for citizens who share no physical space or clear identity to oppose governmental power together through bottom-up social empowerment. Worldwide examples of this include the role of the social networking service *Twitter*

during the Arab Spring, where the usage of networked communication technology facilitated citizens to congregate together in opposition to governmental power. Resistance in a networked society is not confined to social networking sites either, as for example online activist groups like *Anonymous* show by using networked technology to protest by means of collaborative, international actions of hacking (called hacktivism), targeting popular websites.

The object this thesis studies can best be described as mediated activism in the form of online civil resistance, as the social practices researched are non-cooperative by nature. Historian Adam Roberts characterizes traditional civil resistance by its non-violent methods performed by civil groups to challenge a particular power, force, policy or regime (Roberts, 2009, p. 24). Assuming civil resistance has always been a driving force for political change (to be elaborated on in the next chapter), this thesis aims to explore how non-cooperative online user engagement enables citizens to express societal dissatisfaction and to explain if such resistance is able to enhance the notion of democratic citizenship. The main question of this thesis therefore is; "how do acts of online civil resistance enable citizens to embed and coalesce their political dissatisfactions into public debate, and are such instances of resistance able to enhance the notion of democratic citizenship?".

Unlike traditional offline applications of civil resistance, the phenomenon is now analyzed in a context of online international relations, politics, and contemporary history. The hypothesis is that by empowering citizens in a way that is non-cooperative with dominant authorities, online resistance is able to connect and amplify extraordinary values and beliefs existent in civil society into the public domain. This approach to online resistance is a continuation when compared to the history of offline resistance, which in the past helped representing minorities by shaping public debate and political action. The sit-ins performed by African American Civil Rights Movement in the United States between 1958 and 1960 are an example of this, as they contributed to the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Regular forms of political engagement (which are again characterized by the intertwinement of the electorate and the government, such as voting) proved to be unsuccessful ways for the African American people to help them obtain equal civil rights. This illustrates the potential for civil resistance to influence public debate in an offline case.

A qualitative a literature review will serve to develop the theoretical framework for the thesis. First, contemporary communication studies (Castells, 2009) and civil resistance studies (Roberts & Ash, 2009) will be combined to embed the characteristics of civil resistance into the realm of the Internet where citizens share no physical space or clear identity, but are able to share a common disapproval concerning a (political) topic. The work of sociologist Manuel Castells serves as a basis for this thesis, as in his work he intertwines the notions of 'communication', 'power' and 'online networks'. These

notions help to understand online user empowerment combined with the ability to influence people or events in a non-cooperative form of engagement. These findings will then be linked to media manipulation and power framing studies (Entman, 2004) as citizens are able to utilize their acquired empowerment to influence others by releasing bottom-up generated frames. Media manipulation concerns itself with the concept of a the series of related techniques in which an image or argument is created in media that favors a particular interest. Framing is a technique suited for media manipulation as the concept revolves around constructing a particular interpretation or point of view concerning a political issue or public controversy (Entman, 2004, p. 5).

To present a comparative and contemporary outlook (that being online democratic discourse) various secondary sources will be added. These include theoretical concepts such as digital democracy (Leighninger, 2011) and networked public sphere (Benkler, 2006). In the analysis itself, several instances of mediated activism will be discussed in order to characterize the type of non-cooperative user engagement. The first case sees the use of slacktivism (Christensen, 2011) as a tool to persuade public opinion, which is an inactive form of engagement operating within legal boarders. The second case takes hacktivism (Samuel, 2006) as its form of online resistance, which is characterized by its active form of engagement operating outside legal boarders. The final case focuses on citizen journalism (Radsch, 2013), which is a more active form of online engagement and operates within legal boarders. Finally, Evgeny Morozov's (2011) work on internet activism will be incorporated in the analysis to critically reflect on these types of mediated activism.

Two research methods are applied to uncover how acts of online resistance in different social contexts enable citizens to embed and coalesce their political dissatisfactions into public debate. The common denominator between the social groups in the different cases analyzed is that they feel a particular socio-political issue is in violation with their own socio-political ideas and values. To research how these social groups shape their resistance, it becomes necessarily to investigate the social practices of each social group engaged in online civil resistance. Therefore critical discourse analysis is used as a first research method because it allows for a linguistic approach on social and political domination. Discourse analysis scholars Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer define this method of analysis as 'language as social practice', and consider the 'context of language use' to be crucial (2009, p. 5). This means the analysis focuses on the relationship between a specific discursive event and the context which frames it. The context consists of situations, institutions and social structures. Social practice is shaped by these contextual factors, while in turn social practice also stabilizes and changes these factors. Wodak and Meyer describe how critical analysis seeks to "root out a particular kind of delusion" (2009, p. 7). Therefore the term critical is used to explain the kind of analysis that doesn't limit itself to just explaining and describing, but also produces a form of awareness.

The discourse this thesis analyzes is about a struggle for political power, formed between the social practices of governmental institutions, and online acts of citizens. Critical discourse analysis focuses on the linguistic aspects of such social practice, and so the texts which make up the discursive event are the sites of struggle as they provide a perspective on different views and ideologies contending for dominance (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 10). The social practices transform the current social status quo, and therefore affect power relations between the governmental institutions and online citizens.

Critical discourse analysis is pertinent to the theoretical framework because this research method involves itself with the struggle for political power between governmental institutions and civilians. The theory discusses how citizens are able to empower themselves through the Internet, and the social practices analyzed explain how citizens utilize this empowerment in non-cooperative political engagement. Combined with contextual factors such as the current socio-political status quo and the kind of mediated activism applied by the protesters, it becomes possible to determine how these social practices shape a mediated societal dissatisfaction and subsequently what kind of impact this dissatisfaction has on the ongoing political debate. The exact parameters by which the social practices and contextual factors will be discussed in the analysis chapter itself.

As a second research method, frame analysis will help to explain how online civil resistance movements are able to jeopardize governmental power through online action. It is argued that framing (as a process to construct meaning through media manipulation) acts as a source of power for both citizens and governmental institutions. It supplements critical discourse analysis by highlighting the subjective nature in the social practice performed by the protesters and aimed to influence others in each case. Frame analysis is originally defined by Erving Goffman as a method to examine the process by which a communication source defines and constructs a political issue, as Goffman assumes that "definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principals of organization which govern events […] and our subjective involvement in them; frame is the word I use to refer to such of these basic elements as I am able to identify" (Goffman, 1974, p. 10-11).

Framing has been related to social movements by sociologists David Snow and Robert Benford. They explain that for a social movement to be effective, it becomes necessarily to link the frames of individual people together to form frame alignment. Several types of frame alignment are distinguished, and these are used in the case studies to explain how online civil resistance movements effectively carry out their beliefs and ideologies (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 198). These findings will then be related to the subsequent social practices of both citizens and governmental institutions, and ultimately the political consequences of these social practices.

Frame analysis is pertinent to the theoretical framework because this research method involves itself with the Internet's ability to provide ordinary citizens the opportunity to embed a particular point of view in the public domain through bottom-up social empowerment. As with critical discourse analysis, the exact parameters by which framing will be analyzed will be discussed in the analysis chapter itself.

As these research methods reduce real events to linguistic texts, the analysis can't provide for an exact match with reality either. The research is dependent on for example the translation of journalists in determining the social practice evident in the discursive events. Also, these external translators are subjected to the power relations described in this thesis as well, just like the researcher himself. Besides these marginalia, it is important to note that the frames researched are always influenced by other frames which are inherent to present-day preoccupations with social change.

Using these methods, three cases are analyzed which act as discursive events concerned with struggle for power. The first case revolves around the dissatisfaction concerning poor use of the Dutch language and 'being Dutch' surrounding the 'Koningslied' prior to King Willem-Alexander's inauguration in the Netherlands in April 2013. The second case features online discontent in the form of hacking performed by Anonymous and aimed against the impediment of Internet liberties which were threatened by the ACTA treaty. The last case will feature the use of citizen journalism (a concept based upon newsgathering by public citizens) used by Turkish protesters and aimed against violations of freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, and governmental encroachment on secularism.

The cases have been chosen because of their contemporary outlook on the subject, and feature three distinct social groups; those being Dutch citizens, Turkish citizens and members of Anonymous who are best described as netizens (a portmanteau of the English words Internet and citizen). These social groups have in common to display a particular socio-political dissatisfaction in online communication. Their goal is to protect or to advocate particular values and interests which they feel are being threatened by current political conduct. As these social groups use a distinct form of online activism in a distinct socio-political context, it becomes possible to discern to what extent different acts of online civil resistance are capable of embedding and coalescing the political dissatisfactions of citizens into public debate.

Other types of online activism could have chosen for analysis, however analyzing three different forms of activism was the entry point for this thesis is these different angles provide for a comparative outlook on how well acts of online civil resistance intertwine with different types of online activism.

Each case will be analyzed on how a particular social group is able to challenge dominant governmental power by means of framing. This allows for a comparison in frame alignment between three distinct cases. Should similar results among cases be noticeable it becomes possible to make claims on how acts of online civil resistance are able to empower citizens by allowing them to effectively embed their social, economic and cultural concerns in public debate, explaining to what extent such online social practices enhance the notion of democratic citizenship.

Historian Timothy Ash notes the importance of non-violent action as a significant and distinctive form of power, which is "often underrated in political science, political theory, and the study of international relations" (Ash, 2009, p. 374). He says further research on civil resistance "challenges a still wide spread assumption that military or coercive action ('hard power') is the most effective and certain way of achieving change both within and between states" (Ash, 2009, p. 375).

The research methods help to highlight the ability of so called 'civilian power' to act on political affairs at both the national and international levels. Civilian power is defined by historian Adam Roberts as the usage or denial of authority, legitimacy, persuasion, and consent by citizens to reach a desired goal (Roberts, 2009, p. 6). The phenomenon of online civil resistance deserves more study than it has received so far, as online initiatives aimed to improve the connection between political conduct and citizen-conditions are often described within the frame of e-participation (Klaus, 2009, p. 5), and historian Timothy Ash notes how civil resistance theory is usually only applicable to offline acts of civil resistance (Ash, 2009, p. 397).

Research on this topic is relevant as actions of resistance have generated wide media coverage around the world and thus focused attention on subjects like free speech, human rights, and information ethics, affecting the opinion of citizens on these topics. The research connects the aforementioned methods and embeds the results in a framework which combines civil resistance theory with contemporary (Internet) communication studies. The ability to combine information and communication technologies with traditional forms of civil resistance has not received much research in current academic debate yet. The cases provide a relevant outlook as they illustrate how in recent events, citizens attempt to empower themselves in a non-cooperative form of engagement on a national, continental and global scale. Therefore, as a new media research, this thesis is relevant as it presents a fresh outlook on a current phenomenon in which the Internet takes a primary role.

Chapter 1: Framing online civil resistance

This first chapter explains how an online form of civil resistance fits within the tradition of civil resistance as a whole, and also underlines the new possibilities for civil resistance to resist governmental power when performed in an online, decentralized way of communication. This is explained from the outlook of a 'networked public sphere' which shapes the premise for bottom-up online empowerment in today's networked world.

1.1 Offline civil resistance in the public sphere

Historians Carles Feixa, Ines Pereira and Jeffrey Juris explain how over the past hundred years, the reasons for social movements to engage in acts of civil resistance have shifted. Old social movements were tighter, centralized groups of activists, while newer social movements engaged in Internet activities are more loosely coordinated and act more decentralized. These 'new, new social movements' are organized as decentralized groups, with a diverse set of individuals in them. People active in them cross territories and allow people to coalesce across previously unimaginable ideological chasms. They are "structured with a strong but flexible core, a perimeter that is not as active but is very diverse, and they are connected by nodes where information continuously flows" (Juris, Carles & Perreira, 2009, p. 427). For a comparison between offline and online civil resistance, this differentiation of the spatial location of debate is an important conception which the notion of the public sphere further helps to explain.

A public sphere is "an arena, independent of government [and market]… which is dedicated to rational debate and which is both accessible to entry and open to inspection by the citizenry. It is here… that public opinion is formed" (Webster, 1995, p. 101-102). This notion of a public sphere is based on what the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas published in his first work on the public sphere in 1962, called *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* where he described the ideal way of forming a public opinion, aiming to contribute in process of democratic political actions. Habermas' ideal was to create a space without the influence of external forces where citizens were able to form a public opinion next to the state and their own private sphere. The public sphere strived to discuss the dominant power of the state and criticized it when necessary (Habermas, 1989, p. 76).

The notion of a public sphere helps to explain the origin of civil resistance. Yochai Benkler, a scholar in both Law and Cyberspace, illustrates that when views and concerns which are held by a sufficiently large number of citizens are excluded from public debate, resistance is formed as the public sphere fails to provide sustained attention for that particular group of citizens (Benkler, 2006, p. 182). The methods of civil resistance — mass rallies, strikes, boycotts, political non-cooperation,

and civil disobedience — can therefore considered to be a part of the public sphere, as discussing the dominant governmental power is central in their cause. When looking at online civil resistance, the spatial location of debate within the public sphere changes as cyberspace becomes the staging ground for resistance. This spatial transformation of contemporary (online) civil resistance in the public sphere can be explained from the outlook of the so called 'networked public sphere'.

1.2 Online civil resistance in the networked public sphere

In their article *The Networked Public Sphere* Lewis A. Friedland, Thomas Hove and Hernando Rojas (2006) combine the concept of the public sphere with the role of the non-hierarchical characteristics of network technology in the information age. This concept of a 'networked public sphere' still contains the idea that the public sphere is the space where autonomous deliberation is possible between civil society, the functional systems, and administrative, monetary and social powers. The difference lies in the addition of the spatial transformation of public debate associated with the contemporary information age. The information age is characterized by an economy based on information computerization (Friedland, Hove, & Rojas, 2006, p. 11). This spatial transformation is described as 'the space of flows', a concept coined by sociologist Manuel Castells. He explains this concept which combines local geographical spaces with communication flows as "the places where activities (and people enacting them) are located, the material communication networks linking these activities, and the content and geometry of the flows of information that perform the activities in terms of function and meaning" (Castells, 2009, p. 34).

This changes the form of the functional systems in the concept of the public sphere, as through new ICT infrastructures such as the Internet, the social practices of human action in the public sphere are altered. This is because as a global system, networks allow for things like coordinated decision making and decentralized execution. Through new forms of deliberation via networking, the location of communicative power (people's ability to engage in communicative action aimed at mutual understanding) in the public sphere changes (Friedland, Hove, & Rojas, 2006, p. 14). This enables citizens to resist dominant governmental power in a different way than offline forms of resistance.

Benkler illustrates how the spatial transformation in the networked public sphere improves the perception and consideration of citizen's issues in the public sphere. Citizens can inform and mobilize themselves more easily. A good example of this would be the enactment of websites where citizens can congregate and discuss their dissatisfaction towards certain topics, such as on the social news website *Reddit* which gives its users the option to vote on opinions. An important aspect here is what Benkler refers to as the filtering for political reference. The networked public sphere can filter

topics in a very loose way, incorporating the views and concerns of citizens which otherwise wouldn't be considered legitimate topics for discussion by the political system (Benkler, 2006, p. 183). A second factor which prevents just any online statement from affecting political conduct, is the notion of filtering for accreditation. Coined by Benkler, he explains how publically notable organizations and individuals serve as a filter for accreditation by communicating a statement, thereby improving the credibility of the political message (Benker, 2009, p. 183).

Benkler also highlights the networked public sphere's ability to act independently from governmental control. He notes how "the sitting administration must act as a participant in explicit conversation, and not as a platform controller that can tilt the platform in its direction" (Benkler, 2006, p. 185). This thesis therefore focuses on the kind of deliberation which is absent of coercion and able to incorporate the views and concerns of everyone who wants to, as the most important aspects of public opinion. These aspects are essential from the outlook of civil resistance, which is often about expressing a contrary opinion compared to a governmental point of view and performed by a group of people who are not in charge of current political conduct.

The decentralized, non-hierarchical structure of the networked public sphere provides online civil resistance with several assets to effectively resist governmental power. First, the ability to autonomously release an opinion in the networked public sphere is important. Castells explicitly describes this feature as in today's networked world single individuals can form an autonomous opinion absent of coercion and able to reach out to anyone connected through the network. He refers to this ability as 'mass self communication', which is a new form of bottom-up generated communication compared to media organizations that use television and Internet for so called top-down generated 'mass communication'. Castells defines mass self communication as the act of claiming media space by individuals or small groups through Internet and mobile networks which is "self-generated in content, self-directed in emission, and self-selected in reception by many that communicate with many" (Castells, 2007, p. 247).

Online social spaces in particular facilitate mass self communication as it is through these web 2.0 technologies, devices and applications that Internet users can connect to each other in horizontal networks on a global level. Mass self communication therefore has the potential to empower individuals or small groups as they can influence public opinion by intervening in media space and thus public space. Castells argues how "the greater the autonomy of the communicating subjects vis-à-vis the controllers of societal communication nodes, the higher the chances for the introduction of messages challenging dominant values and interests in communication networks" (Castells, 2009, p. 413).

However, this option for autonomous deliberation is not the only asset of today's online communication networks in serving as a potential tool for successful online civil resistance. Castells

also mentions so called 'networking-making power', which he describes as the ability to combine resources between networks which allows for strategic cooperation (Castells, 2009, p. 45). This means information can find its way to particular sources more easily, as for example tweets on the social networking website *Twitter* are often published on mass media news platforms both online and on television. In this sense the concepts of mass self communication and mass communication can both serve to help spread a particular opinion in public debate.

From the specific outlook on how online activist groups use the notion of mass self communication, sociologist Nathan Jurgenson argues that "with social media, people can see the difference they are making. They are not just passively consuming dissent but are more actively involved with creating it. If old media centered on manufacturing consent, then social media allows for the increased possibility of manufacturing dissent." (Jurgenson, 2012, p. 87). However, e-participation initiatives are often credited with autonomous capabilities like these as well (Klaus, 2009, p. 4), so what makes acts of resistance in the networked public sphere possibly stand out?

1.3 Online civil resistance versus more cooperative citizen engagement

In her work on remediating democracy, media scholar Erin Dietel-McLaughlin researches online opinions and statements on web 2.0 platforms that run counter to regular topics of debate. She refers to these counter-opinions as 'irreverent compositions', which are "texts that ignore or mock the authority or character of a person, event, or text, with the effect of offering commentary on those entities, with the goal of disrupting institutionalized conventions … to make a larger political statement" (Dietel-McLaughlin, 2008, 4).

In a case study she explained the usage of irreverent compositions in an e-participation context; citizens were able to submit online questions to government officials which would be answered during an election debate featured on both *CNN* (television) and *Youtube* (Internet) channels. Out of the presented questions, many were deemed inappropriate as they didn't match topics of importance in the agenda of current political conduct, and thus were not debated. Dietel-McLaughlin notes that this is because the goal of contemporary political discourse is to get the candidate elected, not necessarily to invigorate democracy by letting everyone's opinion get heard. Governmental power is often quick to dismiss irreverent compositions in an effort to preserve the norms of discourses of power (Dietel-McLaughlin, 2008, 18).

This case illustrates how online initiatives of citizen engagement which are intertwined with governmental power (like e-participation) are at risk to have their content formatted to the preferred form of political dialogue of governmental power, thus excluding 'unwanted' opinions. Such online

initiatives therefore can't strengthen online democratic citizenship in a way online civil resistance potentially can.

The question remains then how citizens are actually able to utilize the potential of autonomous online deliberation, by effectively releasing their take on political issues in online media space. To answer that, it becomes important to determine how exactly online civil resistance is able to take advantage of the possibilities of the networked public sphere. Therefore, to explain how the decentralized nature of the networked public sphere facilitates effective resistance it becomes important to look at the notion of power within a networked society, as claiming some kind of power is required for online civil resistance activists to reach their desired goal.

Chapter 2: Claiming power in the network society

This chapter explains how citizens can claim communication power in the network society, allowing them to activate certain 'cognitive frames' and use them as means to resist governmental power. This is accomplished by explaining how civil resistance traditionally claims power and how that tradition fits within the notion of a networked public sphere.

2.1 (Online) civil resistance and power politics

Power is generally understood in political and social sciences as the ability to influence people or events (cf. Power, Wikipedia). When relating power specifically to civil resistance, it becomes apparent that such resistance has a specific way to influence other actors. Civil resistance doesn't use traditional military power (wielded by the state) or economic power to reach its goal. Therefore to understand how civil resistance wields power, a historic outlook on civil resistance's ability to influence other actors will be provided. Then by referring to the notion of a networked society these traits will be placed in the concept of the networked public sphere.

Historian April Carter refers to Mahatma Gandhi as the historical turning point for the practice of civil resistance, describing him as the one who pioneered civil resistance against injustice in a non-violent way, aiming to 'convert' the opponent rather than to use force (Carter, 2008, p. 26). Following Gandhi, many instances of citizens peacefully resisting governmental power occurred during the 20th century, such as the aforementioned African-American Civil Rights Movement or the civil resistance groups in Czechoslovakia who aimed for a national reform in socialism between 1969 and 1989 while their nation was part of the Warsaw Pact.

Historian Adam Roberts illustrates when instances of non-violent civil resistance are engaged in a political struggle, it often comes down to the denying of cooperation and legitimacy of their adversaries, that being the government in most cases. He notes that "civil resistance often creates a situation in which a major power is shamed into acting". Even if they're authoritarian, governments need a minimum degree of cooperation from the ruled. If resisters succeed in denying their adversaries cooperation and legitimacy, the struggle is often forced in a stalemate with the governmental actors being forced to discuss their agenda setting, as civil resistance movements still needs the assistance of governmental actors to achieve their goals (Roberts, 2009, p. 7).

2.2 Communication power as determinant for political course

So if the power of civil resistance is to deny governmental power its legitimacy and support, what tools does the networked public sphere offer to reach such goals? This can be explained from the outlook of the network society, as presented by Castells; the network society is a society in which the social structure is forged around digital communication networks. Castells understands social

structure as "the organizational arrangements of humans in relationships of production, consumption, reproduction, experience, and power expressed in meaningful communication coded by culture (Castells, 2009, p. 24).

If social structure is largely determined via network structures which are global in reach, then networked communication power dominates the production and appropriation of value. That is because technology, knowledge and information are key resources for military and economic powers to function and appropriate value accordingly. According to Castells this means that "power relations, that is the relations that constitute the foundation of all societies, as well as the processes challenging institutionalized power relations, are increasingly shaped and decided in the communication field" (Castells, 2007, p. 239). And if power-relations are largely determined by the ability to exercise communicative power in the networked public sphere, then the ability to shape how media stories are selected and interpreted by the public becomes an important tool for political actors to claim power.

Castells argues how the process of communicative power-making therefore is about winning the minds of people over and overlays the democratic procedures. This also means that media politics, which are referred to by Castells as "the conduct of politics in and by the media" (Castells, 2009, p. 193), play a large part in determining the outcome of democratic contests (Castells, 2009, p. 191). So if engaging in media politics is important to claim communication power, how can online civil resistance engage in these media stories as well? Influencing the minds of people and change how they act towards certain political issues can be accomplished through a process called 'framing' (Castells, 2009, p. 157). The next subchapter will elaborate on how framing works and how online civil resistance can use this process to its advantage.

2.3 Framing as a tool to claim power

To explain the importance of public opinion in power making, it's relevant to define how public opinion is formed first. Castells notes how public opinion is formed around three aspects: values, group dispositions and material self-interest. Values and dispositions are the most dominant aspects in determining public opinion as they carry the highest symbolic meaning for a person (Castells, 2009, p. 153). These values and dispositions can be appealed to by media through a process called 'framing'. Framing means activating certain cognitive ideas and convictions within the human brain (Castells, 2009, p. 142).

Media scholar Robert Entman puts framing in relation to how media can activate such ideas and convictions. Framing in media is the process of "selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation and/or solution" (Entman, 2004, p. 5). He explains how media can utilize their

communication power in a way which allows them to influence how people think about certain political issues. Entman defines this as 'content bias' which covers the conception that there exist "consistent patterns in the framing of mediated communication that promote the influence of one side in conflicts over the use of government power" (Entman, 2007, p. 166). This means media both deliberately and unconsciously have the power to tell the audience what to think about, as they serve a specific outlook on a topic which appeals to a certain cognitive frame.

In a society where information power can be considered supreme over military and economic power, and politics are largely determined by how political actors can influence citizens by exercising communication power, then the ability to successfully frame a specific interpretation concerning a political topic in the public sphere becomes an important tool to change political conduct. Convincing the public mind to adhere to specific cultural ideas and values concerning political topics, gives the support necessarily to pursue a policy which is in line with such cultural ideas and values.

For both citizens and institutions to act on the public mind (which is the way society at large thinks about – among other things – political topics), it is crucial to have presence in the media as this allows for framing (Castells, 2009, p. 157). Entman argues how in traditional mass media, news framing is influenced by top-down powers; that being the government and other elites. This is because they are holders of privileged information and their policy choices have the greatest likelihood to have far reaching consequences (Entman, 2004, p. 10). This however changes within the concept of a networked public sphere, as citizens can publish their own outlook on political topics in media space in an attempt to influence other people's considerations towards certain topics. Both governmental power (in the form of mass communication) and citizens (using the concept of mass self communication), have their own way of engaging in media politics with the intent to successfully activate specific cognitive frames within the public mind.

Acts of online civil resistance can therefore benefit from enabling frames in media space as well, however there exists a problem in how people choose to believe particular frames. That is, people are less inclined to connect to a frame which provides an unusual perspective on a certain topic than a frame which provides a more ordinary perspective on the same topic. Castells explains that this is because people have a tendency to believe what they want to believe; people rather stick to their initial assessment based on their current values and dispositions, even if they are confronted with information that contradicts their assessment (Castells, 2009, p. 153).

The goal of online civil resistance is to undermine governmental power by depriving it of its legitimacy and its public support. Therefore persuading other actors through means of framing contrary opinions which run opposite to frames induced by governmental power, is critical for success. So how can online civil resistance successfully activate a certain frame, especially when such

a frame is out of the ordinary range of outlooks provided by media on a topic? Castells explains that "for the counter-opinions to be powerful enough to challenge the dominant frames, they need to be culturally on the same level with the public that is connected to the messages through the networked global sphere" (Castells 2009, p. 164). Information capable of changing a person's attitude towards a certain topic needs an extraordinary level of cognitive dissonance. Entman agrees with this, as he argues how frames that employ the most culturally resonant terms have the greatest potential to influence others in favoring one side's position, while at the same time reducing elements that might be used to construct a counter-frame. He considers words and images that are "highly salient in culture, which is to say *noticeable*, *understandable*, *memorable*, and *emotionally charged*" as culturally resonant terms for framing (Entman, 2004, p. 6). A method for online civil resistance to successfully employ such culturally resonant terms, is through the act of scandal politics. This is because the characteristics of scandal politics suit the goals of civil resistance; which is to deprive governmental power of its support.

2.4 Scandal politics as a means to effectively activate cognitive frames

> *Scandals are struggles over symbolic power in which reputation and trust are at stake.*
>
> (Thompson, 2000, p. 245).

Historian Judith Brown notes how civil resistance needs to put the defect structures of governmental rule to the test, and by doing so cause governmental power to lose public legitimacy and support (Brown, 2009, p. 51). In contemporary media politics, trust and reputation can be considered important aspects in power relations, as without those aspects the legitimacy and public support concerning a political actor can quickly diminish. According to Castells so called 'scandal politics' can therefore act as an important tool for political actors in media politics to deny their adversaries communicative power, as maintaining a trustworthy image in public opinion is essential to exercise effective communicative power. Castells considers the politics of scandal to be a form of political competition which revolves around the struggle over symbolic power in which reputation and trust are at stake (Castells, 2009, p. 242). The most effective messages are negative messages (as people tend to remember them over positive messages), and Castells therefore refers to scandal politics as the most effective tool in political contests as media politics (due to communication power) play a huge role in determining the outcome of a democratic contest (Castells, 2009, p. 250).

This thesis argues that by engaging in acts of scandal politics, acts of online civil resistance can also effectively put culturally resonant terms and images in online space. This ridicules the public

image of a policy or legislation conducted by dominant governmental power, thereby robbing it of its support. This is because the goal of civil resistance is to deprive power-holders of cooperation.

Scandal politics can therefore be considered to be an excellent tool for online resistance to make their cognitive frames carry enough culturally resonant weight, bending the public mind towards the activists cause. The cases to be discussed in the next chapter all feature instances of online civil resistance performing a frame which presents a scandalous outlook on specific governmental policies and legislations. On the other hand, governmental power can engage in scandal politics as well in an effort to disparage efforts made by online civil resistance activists. To examine this interplay between civil resistance and governmental power, and to determine how framing can help to advance citizen interest, three different cases featuring acts of online civil resistance will be discussed now.

Chapter 3: Analysis of different instances of online civil resistance

The cases presented in this chapter provide an analysis to determine if, and how acts of online civil resistance are able to effectively activate cognitive frames, thereby embedding and coalescing the political dissatisfactions among citizens into public debate. As mentioned in the introduction, critical discourse analysis and frame analysis will be used as research methods to structure and analyze these cases. The parameters by which this analysis proceeds are the public linguistic statements of the social groups engaged in the discursive event, and examined within the context of their respective type of mediated activism.

As the cases vary in their type of media activism, the specific type of activism tied to each case will be discussed first in each case. Then the cases will be reviewed on a set of predefined parameters based on social practices and the socio-political context where these practices are engaged in. First, the discursive context is described, explaining the specific socio-political status quo which sets the premise for social unrest and responsible for generating a certain societal dissatisfaction among a group of citizens. This is intertwined with an analysis of social practices which intent to change the socio-political status quo. Second, the nature of the societal dissatisfaction itself is explicitly described, in order to determine what online citizens are protesting against exactly. Third, the principle value or belief behind the group of protesters is described to understand why they resist against a particular political event.

After the nature of resistance has been clarified, the linguistic instances of resistance found on the Internet will be discussed from the perspective of the specific type of activism tied to the case. Here frame analysis is used to clarify how exactly acts of online resistance are able to frame their cause in order to gain foothold in public debate and generate more media attention towards their cause. This is what sociologists David Snow and Robert Benford refer to as 'frame amplification' which means "the clarification and invigoration of an interpretive frame that bears on a particular issue, problem, or set of events" (Snow et al., 1986, p. 469). This means a particular frame strongly appeals to a particular set of social values or beliefs; aforementioned as the most important aspects to determine public opinion according to Castells. Therefore, each case will be reviewed on how frame amplification is applied, thereby analyzing if framing (mainly through scandal politics) has any effect over the course of the discursive event.

Case 1: Controversy over proper use of language in Dutch 'King's Song'

This case explores the kind of online activism in which citizens congregate on popular social media platforms to share their dissatisfaction towards certain topics, for instance by 'liking' a page on *Facebook* or 'retweeting' a message on *Twitter* as a form of online protest. This type of activism can

be considered a form of so called ‘slacktivism’. Slacktivism is a term coined by political science scholar Henrik Serup Christensen, as he combines the words ‘activism‘ and ‘slacker’ (which is a lazy person). Christensen describes slacktivism as an almost effortless way of activism, characterized by the fact that a person shows involvement in a certain cause but does so in a very minor way. Slacktivism enhances the ‘feel-good’ factor for participants in online political engagements, without actually contributing something that could benefit the cause (such as a donation), and as such can be considered a selfish and ineffective online activist method (Christensen, 2011). Slacktivism is criticized by political science and media scholar Evgeny Morozov, as he argues the online actions of protesters have very little influence on political structures because these online actions fail to connect to the offline political structures (2011, p. 184).

For the inauguration of King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands on April 30 2013, the National Committee in charge of the festivities for that day had several well known national artists write a song for the King. Its main purpose was to unite the Dutch citizens leading up to the inauguration day, and to have a choir perform the song live on television during the inauguration day itself. The general public of the Netherlands participated in the creation of the song by submitting texts during the months before the inauguration. The song was called the *Koningslied* (King’s Song) and was released to the public two weeks prior to the inauguration.

After the songs release, a storm of criticism on the song’s text occurred, particularly aimed at the poor usage of Dutch language as the song contained a multitude of both grammar and spelling errors (Telegraaf, 2013). The criticism mostly emanated from social media and was picked up by the mass media on television, and caused John Ewbank (who composed the music for the King’s Song) to withdraw his support for the song that was to be used by the National Committee during the inauguration. With him, many other national artists were startled to see how in their opinion ‘a witch hunt’ to tackle the song had taken place (Volkskrant, 2013).

From the outlook of online civil resistance, citizens protested against the faulty use of the Dutch language in the song. The song text was about various Dutch citizens considering themselves ‘being Dutch’ and welcoming the new king as one nation. Several prominent social practices can be distinguished which characterize the resistance. One of the most notable instances of online resistance against the song was a Facebook-page called ‘Sorry for het Koningslied’ (which translates into ‘Sorry for the King’s Song’), endorsed by over 86.000 people. The Facebook page had many instances of culturally resonant terms, connecting the protester’s message to values and dispositions citizens adhere to. An example of these values and dispositions is proper knowledge and use the Dutch language. This sums up the principle value and reason behind the resistance; that the song

was not an adequate representation of being Dutch. The frame used by citizens on social media can therefore best be described as 'this poorly written song is not representing all Dutch citizens'.

As the song contained numerous instances of faulty grammar, this frame could connect to the interest of people who consider proper use of the Dutch language an important factor if it is to be used as a representation of their nationality. Scandal politics took an important role in influencing others to attach value to that factor. A noticeable social practice and example of scandal politics includes the tweet (a short message) put on the social media platform Twitter by columnist and writer Nico Dijkshoorn, which was re-tweeted (shared by others to others) 1363 times. The tweet said "Ik ben voor een milde steniging van iedereen die aan deze wanstaltige troep heeft meegewerkt", which translates into "I'm for a mild stoning of everyone who contributed to this hideous mess", and became one of the most quoted statements of protest towards the King's Song (Twitter, 19 April 2013).

The online support concerning the Facebook page and Dijkshoorn's message are fine examples of slacktivism; people endorse an online opinion but take no action beside that. As a result, the aforementioned criticism of Morozov is applicable because the acts of slacktivism did not apply enough pressure on governmental power for it to reconsider current political conduct, i.e. revising the content of song. The slacktivist approach in this case did however amplify the frame to gain presence in mass media channels, as it gave a clear indication of the considerable group of people who didn't like the song, thereby invigorating national debate on the song's content.

Following the same criticism (the song's poor content is not an adequate representation of being Dutch), the frame found its way to television and radio shows. There it was picked up by prominent individuals who also voiced their dissatisfaction towards the song, like for instance Nico Dijkshoorn who repeated his tweet on national television (VARA, 19 April 2013). Following Dijkshoorn, linguistics scholar Wim Daniels expanded on all linguistic errors he found in the song in a popular late night television show (Telegraaf, 2013).

Case 2: Anonymous and their resistance against the ACTA treaty

This case focuses on a hacker-activist approach of online civil resistance, and therefore falls in the spectrum of hacktivism. Hacktivism itself is characterized by acts of civil disobedience combined with Internet technologies and hacker techniques, and defined by sociologist Alexandra Samuel as the "nonviolent use of illegal or legally ambiguous digital tools in pursuit of political ends" (Samuel, 2006, p. 32). Samuel's work on hacktivism is incorporated in this case because she is the first researcher to provide for a taxonomy of types of hacktivism, out of which a specific type is chosen to characterize the hacktivism in this case.

Samuel explains in what way the hacker-programmer culture gives rise to a specific form of hacktivism called political cracking. Mentioned in her taxonomy, this type of hacktivism is about changing political conduct by hacking through clear illegal means (as not all forms of hacktivism are necessarily illegal). Examples of this include site defacements, redirects and Denial-of-Service (DOS) attacks (Samuel, 2006, p. 51). This means that contrary to the slacktivist approach of online resistance, users engaged in activities of political cracking take a very active role in protesting. Media scholar Sandor Vegh describes how an important precondition for successful political cracking is to sweep popular public support as the hackings are unlikely to ignite a change in political conduct by themselves. Vegh also notes a downside to this type of engagement as he thinks there exists "a conscious agenda on the part of the elite to construct hacking and hacktivism through the media as an anti-social, criminal activity to contain their subversive power."(Vegh, 2003, p. 104).

The online resistance group which uses political cracking and featured in this case, is the Internet activist group Anonymous (Anon, for short). Anonymous is a congregation of individuals on the Internet who form a distinct web-culture which has its origin on the website '4chan'. The members of the group used the 4chan website mainly for purposes like 'trolling' or 'griefing'; which are best described as acts of annoying and harassing others online for the sake of having fun. However, since 2008 Anon started using both the 4chan website and the Internet Relay Chat platform (a network for chatting) to organize acts against individuals and organizations which Anon deemed to offend the unofficial online code of conduct (or "the rules of the Internet"). In the past recent years, Anon has performed acts of political cracking on organizations who they perceive to carry an incorrect policy on topics like intellectual property, online legislation, and freedom of speech.

The social practice analyzed in this case concerns one of more recent involvements of Anon aimed against the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), a multinational treaty for the purpose of establishing international standards for intellectual property rights enforcement. Poland was one of the last countries on behalf of the European Union to announce it would sign the treaty on 19 January 2012, making the treaty's effective enforcement forthcoming. At this time, there were already widespread concerns on the treaty's threat to freedom of expression and communication privacy, as well as the opaqueness of the negotiations (Free knowledge institute, "ACTA: A Global Threat to Freedoms"). In between 21 and 24 January 2012, Anon shut down many governmental sites of the Polish Government and replaced the content of the webpage of the prime minister by a video where citizens were called to oppose the threats to privacy that were attributed to ACTA (NRC, 2013a). These acts of political cracking gained attention in national mass media, and caused Polish politicians to express their disapproval of the treaty by holding up 'Guy Fawkes' masks during parliamentary proceedings (see Figure 1). The mask is derived from the movie *V for Vendetta* and has

become Anon's iconic symbol. In the movie, the mask is worn by a man who is characterized as a freedom fighter who attempts to ignite a revolution against a brutal fascist regime. By using the mask, Anon attempts to emulate this characterization.

Figure 1: Instances of the use of the 'Guy Fawkes' mask in the Polish Parliament and during Polish ACTA protests on the street.

The policy which is being rejected and protested against in this case is resistance against internet censorship. The values and dispositions which the protesters adhere to can be defined as freedom of expression and communication privacy. The frame as communicated by Anon can best be described as 'a treaty which violates civil liberties'. This is because Anon's online statements on ACTA (such as video's placed at hacked websites) attempt to explain how the treaty leads to privacy violations and threatens freedom of information (NRC, 2013b).

The Guy Fawkes mask is an important tool for Anon to amplify its frame. The mask has become a remarkable symbol to distinguish Anon in cases which feature their involvement. The mask is often shown on Internet-pages claimed to be hacked by Anon, and the mask is worn by protesters on the street to show their affiliation with Anon and its views (Waites, 2011). The mask can therefore be considered to be a culturally resonant term, which appeals to the awareness of citizens concerning their civil rights and their corresponding values and beliefs.

The image of the mask helped Anon in communicating their instance of scandal politics in media space. Their goal was to affect media politics aimed to discredit individuals who were willing to sign the treaty and (according to Anon) thus failed to serve public interest; such as the prime minister of Poland. This particular frame was supported by the Polish politicians who incorporated the frame into their own social practice by holding up the Guy Fawkes masks, as well as the numerous Polish protesters who incorporated the mask in their protests on 25 January, when at least 15,000 citizens demonstrated in Kraków, 5,000 in Wrocław, and minor protests were held in other

cities across the country (Mezzofiore, 2012). These instances of protest featuring the Guy Fawkes mask gained considerable mass media coverage in Poland and other EU countries. This means that for the hacktivist activities of Anon to be effective, it proved vital for them to constitute a political action (in the form of a hacking), which acted as a call to arms with the intent to persuade more people in performing social practices in accordance with the frame Anon communicated. Therefore it can be argued that Anon, which can be considered a group of geographically dispersed individuals, enabled a group of geographically congregated individuals to amplify their frame.

A day after these protests, Kader Arif, the European Parliament's draftsman for ACTA, resigned from his position on 26 January 2012 denouncing the treaty "in the strongest possible manner". Arif referred to the formation of the treaty as a 'masquerade' because it lacked transparency and failed to include civil society organizations (Masnick, 2012).

Following these events, more protests against ACTA were held as on 11 February 2012, people demonstrated in more than 200 European cities (Accesnow, 2013). Arif was replaced by David Martin who followed Arif's recommendation by insisting that the Parliament should reject ACTA, stating: "The intended benefits of this international agreement are far outweighed by the potential threats to civil liberties". Following these protests and recommendations, the European Parliament rejected the treaty with 478 votes to 39, and 165 abstentions (Whittaker, 2012).

Anon's political cracking and subsequent intervention in media politics featuring their mask as a symbol of resistance did appeal to others and motivated them to voice their dissatisfaction against the treaty, leading to its rejection. The resignation of Arif and the rejection of the treaty can't entirely be credited to online civil resistance, however the frame communicated by Anon did highlight the shortcomings of the treaty. As the treaty was rejected on its encroachment on civil rights, the frame communicated by Anon was a success. This is because the frame scandalized the treaty and the people who supported it on the same grounds; that being impediment on civil rights.

Case 3: 2013 protests in Turkey

This third case explores the use of citizen journalism as a way to perform online civil resistance. Citizen journalism (also referred to as grassroots media), is a form of journalism in which citizens are "playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing, and disseminating news and information" (Bowman & Willis, 2003, p. 9). Journalist Courtney Radsch (who is an often cited source for digital activism and social media in the Middle East) defines citizen journalism "as an alternative and activist form of newsgathering and reporting that functions outside mainstream media institutions, often as a repose to shortcoming in the professional journalistic field, that uses similar journalistic practices but is driven by different objectives and ideals … than traditional or mainstream journalism" (Radsch, 2013, p. 16).

Like hacktivism, this type of Internet activism is also characterized by active user involvement as the engagement with media focuses on user generated content. However, rather than using a civil disobedient form of activism, citizen journalism remains within legal borders because social media platforms are used to communicate a frame within their existing frameworks. Although the use of media in terms of citizens journalism has multiple forms (such as entire news websites dedicated to citizen journalism), this case primarily focuses on audience participation such as news stories, personal blogs, photographs and video footage captured from personal mobile cameras. Like slacktivism, Morozov considers instances of citizen journalism and blogging to be forms of political engagement which fail to build sustainable political movements on the ground and therefore hardly help the long-term prospects of the political engagement (2011, p. 200).

This case discusses the 2013 protests in Turkey, featuring the civil unrest which started after the police brutally evicted a sit-in held at the Taksim Gezi Park in Istanbul. The sit-in was held to protest against the park's demolition. Following the eviction, the protests took a broader form by aiming at the country's political elite. The sit-in at the Taksim Gezi Park was restored after police withdrawal, and developed into camping out with thousands of protestors. On 11 June, riot police moved back into the square and cleared the site again using tear gas and water cannons. An Amnesty International report released early October 2013 stated the Turkish police had severely violated human rights during both evictions of the park, leading to at least eight thousand injuries and five people dead. Especially the use of plastic bullets aimed at the upper body and the addition of a chemical load to the water cannons is heavily condemned by the human rights organization (Amnesty International, 2013).

The results of these excesses of police violence were already apparent on social media during the protests themselves. Social networking service *Twitter* and the video-sharing website *Youtube* served as a platform for Turkish protesters to share their videos, texts and images, which also served as a means to scandalize the actions made by governmental power. The online social practices conducted by the protesters were the usage of Twitter to share images and videos of police brutality through the hashtags #OccupyGezi and #DirenGeziParki (which translates into 'Resist Gezi Park'). Hashtags provide a means of grouping messages that contain the same hashtag, as one can search for the hashtag and get the set of messages that contain it. Pictures of the protests carrying these hashtags were gathered at the social networking website *Tumblr*, featuring a single page containing hundreds of photo's made by civilians (Tumblr, 2013).

Contrary to the previous two cases, governmental power actively involved itself in media politics in an effort to frame public opinion in favor of their cause. The Turkish authorities sought to downplay the protests by controlling mass media space; most mainstream media outlets followed

the government's will because their business interests at times relied on government support (Arango & Yeginsu, 2013). At 1am on 2 June the police started clearing the Taksim square for the first time. *CNN Turk* (one of the biggest TV-channels in Turkey), was broadcasting a documentary on penguins while CNN International was showing live coverage of the protests in Turkey, which sparked outrage among protesters (Alfonso, 2013). However, unable to extent governmental power to social media, prime minister Erdogan stated that "there is now a menace which is called Twitter. The best examples of lies can be found there. To me, social media is the worst menace to society" (Costanze, 2013).

Protests were specifically aimed against the authoritarian rule of president Tayyip Erdogan, who citizens consider to be responsible for social issues concerning topics such as freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, and the government's encroachment on Turkey's secularism (Cockburn, 2013). This sums up the principle value and reason behind the resistance, as citizens are concerned with their democratic rights being affected by governmental policies.

The frame which governmental power attempted to communicate can best be described as 'illegal protests intended to destabilize the country', while on the other hand to protesters initial frame can best be described as 'a protest to save the Taksim Park'. When the scope of the protests broadened, the frame changed to 'a protest against the unjust authoritarian rule of Erdogan'. The images and videos of the protesters placed on social media didn't ignite any national outrage, as Erdogan used his own version of scandal politics to discredit the protesters. He repeatedly linked the protestors cause to terrorism, stating; "not only will we end the actions, we will be at the necks of the provocateurs and terrorists" (Becatoros & Fraser, 2013).

As international mass media kept reporting on the Turkish protests, demonstrating the instances of police brutality to the larger global audience, the images and videos made by both citizens and professional journalists did however force international reactions. This is what caused the protesters frame to amplify. German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that she was "shocked, like many other people" by the images of police and protesters clashing in Turkey. The United States voiced concern about reports of excessive use of police force, while the European Parliament warned the government against using harsh measures against peaceful protesters and urged Erdogan to take a "unifying and conciliatory" stance. Here it becomes evident how the protesters frame strongly appealed to a set of social values or beliefs intertwined with western culture; that being the belief democratic principles should be upheld.

Following these international reactions, prime minister Erdogan eventually abandoned his unwillingness to form an arrangement with the protesters, stating he would put redevelopment plans for the Taksim Gezi park on hold until a court rules on them (Erdogan makes conciliatory move,

2013). On July 3, a Turkish court cancelled the Istanbul building project intended to replace the Taksim Park, thereby letting the park and the protesters wish prevail above economic factors (Yackley, 2013).

The cases discussed provide a framework aimed to help understand how non-cooperative online user engagement can lead to a particular societal dissatisfaction which originated online, managed to draw attention in public debate and gain coverage in mass media space. All cases displayed similarities in their effectiveness, despite their differences in type of user engagement and social context. These similarities will be discussed in the next chapter to determine if online civil resistance can invigorate public debate in a unique way, thereby enhancing the notion of democratic citizenship. The preconditions for successful resistance will be discussed first, followed by an analysis concerning the added democratic value of online civil resistance to better reflect contemporary civil society.

Chapter 4: The preconditions and democratic value of online civil resistance

4.1 Preconditions for successful online civil resistance

Although civil resistance in general has the potential to influence political agenda setting, and change political conduct, historian Timothy Ash remarks that civil resistance always has its results "in a larger context, with factors such as the state of the economy and the involvement of external actors contributing to the result" (Ash, 209, p. 374). For instance the behavior of foreign states and governments can play an important role in contributing to the same change in political agenda setting. The soviet propaganda aimed at the racial segregation in the United States helped to advance the Civil Rights Act of 1963. The changes in political conduct described in the cases can't entirely be credited to the online acts of civil resistance either.

Economic factors such as the sharp decline of tourism in Turkey (one of the biggest sources of income for the country) during the protest did affect Erdogan's decision as well when he decided to reach out to the protesters in an effort to stop the protests. Although external factors like these can't be overlooked, the frames described in the cases can be considered precursors in affecting political debate as they illuminated social dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction which otherwise would have had a harder time boiling up the public surface as the people engaged in the resistance were unable or unlikely to either congregate physically or had their demands granted through offline, local protests. The Internet united citizens in their common disapproval against the faulty use of the Dutch language as described in the first case, and united them in their discontent over the impediment of freedom of information in the second case. And although the Turkey protests were locally rooted, the internet served as a platform for them to actively claim media space and put their frame effectively in global public debate. However for the frames to succeed in affecting public opinion, it depended on various external factors as well. These factors prevented just any autonomous online self-made statement from affecting public opinion in the networked public sphere.

The aforementioned notions of Benkler considering the filtering for political relevance and filtering for accreditation are important factors here (Benker, 2009, p. 182). The Internet helped to incorporate the extraordinarily frames into the networked public sphere, but also provided the focus necessarily on a specific frame for it to be supported by enough people to receive sustained attention. An example of this would be the multitude of opinions concerning to King's Song found on Twitter, while the single focus was assembled at the 'sorry for the Koningslied' page on Facebook.

All three cases also showed the necessity of the filtering for accreditation (publically notable organizations and individuals improving the credibility of the political message) for bottom-up generated social empowerment to be effective. The cases proved that for a frame to successfully

penetrate public debate, it needed presence in mass media space where the message was accredited for by notable organizations and individuals. So for a frame to be incorporated in mass media outlets, it needed to suffice to the factors that determine political access to (for instance) regular television. Castells calls these 'gatekeeping' factors, and include journalist choices, editorial choices, and the organizational control of the medium (Castells, 2009, p. 200). The discussed frames were able to pass these factors and claim communication space in mass media, where other actors enhanced the credibility of the message.

The first case concerning the faulty use of the Dutch language explained how Nico Dijkshoorn (as a popular writer) and Wim Daniels (as an authority on linguistics) acted as a filter for accreditation, as their statements (both online and in a national television show) attracted national attention to the frame, while also granting the frame credibility. These culturally resonant terms affected public opinion and (again, in combination with other external factors) in turn sparked national debate, as the controversy surrounding the song occupied national media space until the inauguration two weeks later. For Anon's frame to be accredited, it took the European protests against ACTA (broadcasted on television in many countries) and the subsequent negative recommendations provided by both European Parliament's draftsman to credit the conception that the ACTA treaty could impede several civil rights and convince the European Parliament to reject the treaty. For the Turkish protester's frame to succeed, it took foreign mass media broadcasting of instances of police brutality and subsequent condemnation of these democratic violations by western political leaders to make Erdogan reconsider his political course.

The cases illustrate how the Internet has the potential to act as a place where citizens can voice statements of resistance and where citizens can reach out to likeminded others and construct a frame. For a frame to succeed in achieving a change in political conduct, it still needs exposure in mass media to widen the scope of the message, and requires people who can act as a filter for accreditation to improve the credibility of the message. Therefore claiming communication power in mass media to combine the aforementioned notions of 'mass self communication' and 'mass communication' is important for online civil resistance to be effective. However, the cases illustrate how mass media mostly facilitate the exposure of the frame, which (in all three cases) had clear roots in online media. Aside from these challenges and preconditions for online civil resistance to succeed, the acts of online civil resistance can also be explained as a method to enhance the notion of democratic citizenship.

4.2 Strengthening democratic citizenship

The cases presented in this thesis characterized online resistance as a form of citizen engagement which is non-cooperative with governmental power. Except for the rejection of current political

conduct, the acts of online resistance discussed did not provide for alternative options for political change. If it would be, than the kind of online activism discussed would be more in line with the notion of e-participation. The main focus of civil resistance and so called 'civilian power' is the usage or denial of authority, legitimacy, persuasion, and consent by citizens to reach a desired goal (Roberts, 2009, p. 6). Online civil resistance embeds these characteristics in an online setting, able to enhance the notion of democratic citizenship.

Political science scholar Matt Leighninger summarizes e-democracy as the potential of online tools to make democracy real, and to make it work. He notes how in de past decade e-democracy has had problems to keep people mobilized when it comes to individual instances of online citizen engagement in political processes. The ability of the Internet to connect citizens with each other and compare individual values and experiences considers Leighninger to be a solution for this problem, as it is here where active citizens mobilize their peers and can construct a durable structure for public engagement (Leighninger, 2011, p. 20).

It is here where online civil resistance thrives as well, as it merges online citizen dissent in a unique way with online action. The addition to democratic citizenship lies in the ability to put forward the ideas and values of citizens that otherwise wouldn't have had a hearing. This is because governmental power doesn't consider such values and ideas legitimate topics for discussion, like in the Turkey case. On the other hand the Internet facilitates a virtual staging ground for resistance where people who share no local connection are able to converge their ideas into a single frame of dissatisfaction. Due to the loosely coordinated and decentralized nature of the networked public sphere, citizens have a new and unique way to reflect their values and as such, contribute to a democratization and a moralization of politics, effectively representing civil society.

It should also be noted how critical discourse analysis has specifically been put to use to understand how protesters performed resistance to match their dissatisfaction, while not analyzing the protesters background or the social practices prior to the discursive event, to provide for a more complementary outlook on the socio-political context which motivated the protesters to resist. Also, the frame analysis has specifically been put to use to understand how a particular frame grows, while frame analysis is by itself a much broader method which provides for a more detailed understanding of framing not limited to frame growth but also encompasses e.g. *frame transformation*, which analyzes how a frame changes in order to properly resonate with cultural values and beliefs.

Morozov's criticism shouldn't be overlooked either as online activism often lays outside of political structures and therefore apply very little influence on them, which means for internet activism it becomes hard to foster long-term sustainable political change. This is evidenced in for example the Turkish case, as the democratic situation of Turkish minorities has not improved since the protests as the resistance is not being given voice from within the governmental structure.

Morozov explains that for a real change in political conduct to happen it becomes necessarily to engage oneself in the current offline political constructs (2011, p. 201). Morozov also claims that online activism can erode traditional, more effective forms of activism (p. 203). However, this thesis shows that online activism is also able to supplement traditional forms of activism, as actions of online civil resistance reinvigorate public debate.

In this sense online resistance should be appropriated as a first step in effective resistance. The sharing of dissatisfaction among citizens precedes the capability of online resistance in attracting the opinions of those who do have the power to effectively force governmental power to sway its policies. This would mean that without the Internet, the policies of governmental power described in the cases would have had an easier time to withstand criticism as it would have been able to ignore the ideas and values of citizens communicated in the frame. The evidence presented in the cases indicates that this notion holds true.

It was due to the online smear campaign against the poor use of Dutch language and subsequent disapproval on television shows which demonstrated the existence of the social malice against the King's Song in society. Anon's hacking's reinforced offline resistance as their hacktivist activities reached national news, making many Polish aware of Anon's frame leading up to the offline protests against ACTA. Both these protests and the resignation of Kader Arif exactly one day after these protests raised awareness on the opaqueness and shortcomings of the treaty, two important factors for members of the European Parliament in their decision to decline ACTA. Ultimately, should there have been no instances of citizen journalism during the Turkish protests, the imagery would have solely relied on professional and international journalists as Turkish mass media outlets were mostly on the hand of Erdogan. The international non-profit organization Reporters Without Borders (which promotes and defends freedom of information and freedom of the press), noted on many occasions during the Turkey protests that there were instances of obstruction and arrests of professional journalists (*Reporters Without Borders*, 2013). This makes the media texts provided by Turkish amateurs valuable tools in raising awareness and to produce an effective frame.

All of the cases therefore demonstrate how acts of online civil resistance are able to highlight the values and ideas existent in civil society in a unique fashion, adding to the notion of online democratic citizenship and adding to a better reflection of civil society in public debate.

Conclusion: how online civil resistance contributes to a more pluralistic public debate

The main question this thesis sought to answer was; “how do acts of online civil resistance enable citizens to embed and coalesce their political dissatisfactions into public debate, and are such instances of resistance able to enhance the notion of democratic citizenship?”. Whereas most initiatives concerning citizenship and ICT’s are about collaboration between top-down e-government web projects combined with bottom-up online civil participation, this thesis focused on a kind of engagement which is non-collaborative with governmental power; civil resistance.

Access to Internet technology empowers citizens as it allows them to politically engage in a non-cooperative way if they perceive there is a misfit between current political conduct and their current values and beliefs based on their social, economic and cultural conditions. As power is increasingly being shaped in the communication’s field, ordinary citizens are increasingly able to take advantage of the possibilities of the Internet to perform various kinds of activism. One of the core activities of civil resistance is to give voice to the concerns of a marginalized group of citizens by means of persuasion. To do this, acts of civil resistance have to engage in the act of media politics and claim communication power. It is argued how a political message should connect to the audience by means of culturally resonating terms (ideas and values which stick to the human mind) and more specifically through the act of scandal politics which are directly aimed against the ongoing political practice which fails to resonate with the current cultural values and beliefs of the protesters.

Critical discourse analysis described how online social practices of citizens were able to shape a mediated societal dissatisfaction which subsequently permeated ongoing public debate. The current socio-political status quo described in the cases was affected because of this. The analysis also demonstrated how social movements were able to align individual frames by amplifying them, as citizens were connected by their shared values and beliefs. Frame analysis proved that for permeating into mass media space, the frame needed to be amplified by actors with enough political weight. Each frame had its roots in multiple forms of mediated activism (slacktivism, hacktivism and citizen journalism) and was amplified and extended in boundary when other actors used the frame (and the cultural views and interests associated with it) in mass media space. Although the public debate surrounding the faulty use of the Dutch language was limited to the Dutch public sphere, the scale of public debate did not necessarily overlap with the geographical scale of the discursive event, as the Turkish case showed.

As posited by Morozov, the long-term effects of these acts of online civil resistance will likely prove to be marginal in actually changing political conduct, however the acts of online civil resistance are

able to (at least temporarily) invigorate public debate, adding to the notion of democratic citizenship because these actions contribute to a more pluralistic public debate. This is a unique way of contributing to the notion of democratic citizenship because similar results would unlikely have occurred, if the protesters would have been limited to more cooperative methods of political engagement. This is evidenced in the cases, where for example to decision to ratify the ACTA treaty was a matter between the members of European Parliament, not giving the European population itself a direct chance to cooperatively vote on the treaty. In each case, the Internet provided citizens with the opportunity to voice their concerns in a way cooperative methods were absent or fell short.

In order to prove if this claim holds true in a broader context, further research is needed on other forms of online activism which intent to subvert governmental power by constructing a frame. Also, more extensive research on each case can help to better determine how political change was indeed a consequence of the acts of online civil resistance.

Castells envisioned how the ability of networks like the Internet can create new kinds of global governance which harmonizes human rights, environment, and markets in a global social contract;

> "If citizens can catch their rulers in the act of lying to them, and if they can organize their resistance in an instant insurgent community, governments around the world will have to be on their guard and pay closer attention to the principles of democracy that they have largely disregarded for a long time" (Castells, 2009, p. 413).

The acts of online civil resistance presented in this thesis highlight the ability of citizens to do exactly that, as they demonstrate how certain values and beliefs present in society are at friction with current political conduct. Acts of online civil resistance translate such friction in a unique way.

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