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Radical protest movements upsurge - a current challenge on the European intelligence services agenda

Scientific studies and theorizations established two distinct approaches to the Internet: on the one hand, the Internet is a communication and information means and on the other hand, it is an environment for social activities. Together the two dimensions make a complete description of this field and cannot unilaterally sufficient.

The social component of the Internet is an undeniable reality which obviously cannot be narrowed down to communication processes. Initially the Internet was restricted to mediated communication; however it got „out of control" and became a defining trait of our times.

In the global framework of deep technological and society changes, it is crucial to analyze the social actions of individuals in the virtual environment. From this perspective, Internet Sociology is set up as a new branch of scientific investigation aimed at drafting explanatory theories of a phenomenon that is gathering momentum and is generating effects and meanings in the information society that we live in. The mission of Internet Sociology is to study the transformations and peculiarities of interactions and social communication in the virtual environment, the networks, organizations and institutions, the aspects of society and global cultures.

In other words, Internet Sociology is the science that encompasses the transition from industrial capitalism to information capitalism and the new virtual forms of society as well as the society development process enabled by the IT&C networks and technologies.

The Internet through its glocalization[1] ability is a catalyst of central significant connections between individuals found close or far from each other; thus, the Internet becomes a third place[2] for socializing.

The Internet has got a global nature, it is interactive, flexible, dynamic; it has rich resources and offers a large pool of information, and is relatively cheap in comparison to the other means of mass communication. The Internet has set up for users new ways to communicate, cooperate, socialize, interact and coordinate. For all these reasons, more and more Internet applications and services were developed not only in support of the user's actions and needs but also in order to make it accessible to a more diversified audience.

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[1]   A neologism that represents a combination of localization and globalization; its origin goes back to the Japanese business practices of the 80's. The term was rendered popular in the ,90s by the British sociologist, Ronald Robertson. It refers to the ability to communicate by means of the computer and create connections between individuals both locally and worldwide.

[2]   In The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community (New York: Marlowe & Company, 3rd Edition, 1999), besides the family and the professional environment, Ray Oldenburg speaks of a third public place that is extremely important for human community and society. He calls it generically the third place, the agora, the public marketplace where citizens meet in order to discuss issues and take decisions on matters of common interest. The agora of the first democratic society, the Greek one, diversified in time beyond the marketplace and included coffee shops, bookshops, bars and more recently, malls. The Internet, more precisely, the cyberspace turned into a third virtual place where people meet in order to get information, to communicate, to relax, to find support and make personal or group decisions.

In other words, the Internet is evolving into an area of social communication and interaction, a virtual place. It is a place created by technological and cyber means that allows one access to information and possibilities to interact without geographic, social and cultural boundaries.

Social networks - an element of change

The current security environment is characterized by transition towards a world that is constantly changing. This requires clear priorities and security strategies and their adjustment to increasing vulnerabilities. A possible evolution scenario of the postindustrial society envisions a potentially nonstate world[3] under the decisive influence of new technologies, in which nonstate actors take the lead in managing or escalating global challenges. Therefore in a „world" in which new technologies interact with individual responses to change, which in turn generates endless rapid changes, the new media instruments, especially social networks will be able to rally interests, individuals and groups with radical tendencies.

It is not by chance maybe that lately the most important part played by social networks was that they offered people living under authoritarian regimes the chance to make their voices heard, especially in those countries where traditional media was under censorship or was inaccessible. From this we derive a fundamental characteristic of social networks, i.e. they warrant and allow people the freedom of speech. Because of the modern technology, it is almost impossible for a society to remain totally closed and international public opinion to have no indication of what is going on in that society. Moreover, one can notice the role played by social networks in spontaneous protest movements that challenged the official power and which involved large masses of citizens as it was the case in Georgia in November 2003, in Kiev on November 22, 2004, in Kyrgyzstan in March 2005, in Spain on March 11, 2004, in the Republic of Moldova on April 7, 2009[4] in Iran during the elections in June 2009, in Tunisia in December 2010 and in Egypt in January 2011. If we analyze the last two examples, we notice that the role of social networks in the changes that affected the political map of the Middle East raised considerable interest both on the part of researchers in the academia and on the part of intelligence specialists. Social networks contributed to regimes changes and to the rapid political developments in the area by enabling the organization and communcation of protesters, and by carrying out social unrest campaigns and street movements. In this respect, in January 2010, the US State Secretary Hillary Clinton put forward an idea that

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[3]   According to a study of the US National Intelligence Council entitled „Global Trends 2030: An Alternative World" (2013). The latter identifies the tendencies and factors that are able to radically change the world in the next 15-20 years.

[4]   The events that took place between April 6 and 12, 2009 in the Republic of Moldova were called the „Twitter Revolution" because media reports indicate the fact that the organizers of the protests used social network instruments to a large extent in order to fuel the dissatisfaction of the citizens. In the case of the Republic of Moldova, the Twitter network might have had a larger impact, although the number of users is rather small. Thus the number of Twitter users in the Republic of Moldova was important, but not relevant or representative. The fact that such a small number of people managed to generate consistent talks in the virtual space, for almost a week, proves that social networks are more influent than expected. This is the most obvious indication that the public area is becoming democratic. Another essential aspect of the role of the social media in organizing protests, which was left out by the analysts is that the Twitter revolution proved the fact that the agora - the location where the protests take place - might no longer represent the center of organizational efforts, while the virtual space tends to become an important place for the rallying of revolutionary energies.

the State Department adopted and which became the motto of these changes, proving the ability of the Internet to promote freedom and democracy: We want to place these instruments in the hands of people who will use them to promote democracy and human rights. Call it the Agenda for Internet Freedom: the idea that technology can open the world where offline efforts have failed[5].

What all these rapid changes had in common, was access to information and the swiftness with which they spread to all levels of society. In December 2010, in Tunisia, these instruments determined the appearance of a virtual „intifada" that quickly removed from power an authoritarian regime. Unlike the 1978-1979 Iranian revolution that required the presence of a charismatic leader, millions of people in the street and one year of efforts, the events in Tunisia occurred rapidly and became an example for the public opinion in other Arab states. In this context, it was first of all surprising to note the ability of social networks to identify events and engage various locations and perspectives at the same time.

The „crises" of the beginning of the XXI century and the recrudescence of radical movements in the virtual environment

The combination of „crises" (the social - economic crisis of the Euro zone, the crisis of the social insurance systems in EU member states, the crisis of government debts, the crisis of the banking system, the crisis of the rule of law, the crisis of values) and extreme events (the active presence of terrorist networks at the Southern border of the EU, the radical changes of the political framework in the MENA area) that have swiftly taken place in the EU, but also at „glocal" level has generated a number of heterogeneous, non-ideological, claimant, marginal and antisystemic groups in the virtual and public environment.

The fact that the economic crisis is protracted deeply affects highly developed (industrialized) areas which are presumed to benefit from a strong institutional structure. The current society is facing the worst systemic crisis since the Great Depression in the 30's. The crisis has a direct impact not only on the national and international economic situation, but also on the social one. This is mirrored by serious political tensions that question the functioning of the rule of law (blockages in the functioning of the institutions of dialogue/negotiation/political decision making, extremist political protests in advanced democracies, chauvinistic and xenophobic acts). The current financial/economic crisis has an impact equivalent to that of a war during times of peace as it increases public debts substantially. In the EU, the aggregated public debt of governments has increased by around 40% after 2008. The cumulated debts of the private sector are a multiple value of the EU GDP. In the US public debt is over 100% of its 2012 GDP. Potential economic growth is estimated to have been halved by the crisis in industrialized countries[6].

Moreover, the crisis as well as previous developments (including demographic ones) has affected the resources of welfare states, a fact that requires the reform of the welfare system. The capacity of dialogue and compromise of the institutions that carry out the function of „social insurance" against risks was affected by the passing of radical measures, imposed by the worsening of the economic situation.

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[5]   Evgheni Morozov, „Libertate.gov", in the periodical Foreign Policy Romania, no. 20.01.01.2011.

[6]   Daniel Daianu, „The burden of extreme events - the crisis drops the robustness of systems. What is there to do?", the Conference. National security in a knowledge society. Intelligence, strategic knowledge and decision, the Romanian Academy, November 26, 2012.

A similarly obvious phenomenon is that the benefits of the most recent technological inventions have been felt in unequal manner by what we call the middle class. This determined increasing inequalities within the last generation in the US. In 1974, 1% of the top families represented 9% of the GDP; in 2007 the percentage rose to 23.5%[7].

Commercial and fiscal policies might have accelerated this tendency as well but one of the main causes is technology. In the beginnings of industrialization, the benefits of technological changes almost always influenced the rate of employment for the rest of society significantly. Currently, technology can replace to a larger extent the role of human beings, which leads to the loss of jobs in a different area of economy, a tendency that will make itself visible at least on the medium term. Together with the reduction of infrastructure costs (transportation and communications) and the inflow of labor force from developing countries on the global market, the externalization of production/jobs directly influences the middle class in developed countries. At European level, the economic crisis had immediate social effects and led to the appearance of new actors among this type of movements (environmental protection associations, peace movements, anti-globalization movements, anarchist and antagonist groups, social centers, unions) which allowed them to focus on topics in various fields. This „social - claimant" puzzle arose in the framework of the crisis as a direct result of the involution of democratic values; there was particularly a loss of trust in the Western (liberal) type of society and political system.

Unlike the anarchist movements of the ‚70s, the radical, anomic, transnational movements of nowadays, whether individual or in group, promote a type of anarchism that lacks ideology. To this end, they use the instruments of social media and recruit their supporters from extremist, anarchist – autonomous groups; their goal is to destroy the rule of law, by attacking representative government institutions, especially those that ensure public order, the legal system, financial institutions or embassies, institutions representative for the current development model. This type of exposure in the public or virtual space can endanger the social balance of any state affected by economic difficulties as it is different from classical manifestations of violence that invoke an ideology and which can be ascribed to the terrorist phenomenon. This type of movements deny the basic principles of representative democracy, especially with regards to devolving decision making; they do not set up a public agenda of claims for state authorities and, basically, represent a forum for avanguard political talks, which focus on negotiating a new social contract in order to allow a larger participation in the decision making process. Seen as an alternative to representative democracy, these movements aim to enlarge participation in the decision making process by setting up „constituent assemblies" at a (g)local, international level with a view to renegotiating the social contract in a consensual deliberative manner. The „constituent assemblies" have a methodology and ideology of changing the system, while others, such as „Occupy Wall Street" and the sit-ins of the ‚60s represent just a micro-utopic rejection of the existing order. We also discuss of a utopic zone when we associate the TAZ concept (..Temporary autonomous zone") with the ..Occupy Wall Street" type protests. However, the latter is, by nature, limited in time: in case it became permanent, it would be under permanent risk of becoming institutionalized and therefore, lose its free and spontaneous nature[8].

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[7]   Francis Fukuyama, „The Future of History. Can liberal democracy survive the decline of the middle class?", in *Foreign Affairs*, February 13, 2012.

[8]   „L'utopia della primavera araba: il succeso non egarantito", intervista a Lyman Tower- Sargent.di

At the same time, the impact of these movements on the media, including the virtual environment, is significant. This is so because these are not groups found at the margin of the social and political system, but are influential local actors („citizen committees"), groups and associations that have a universalist identity (environmental groups, unions, left-wing parties and parties that are not in the Parliament). The claims of protesters target local, regional or global objectives that have international implications.

The profile of this movement indicates that it is more and more active in the virtual environment, by using social network instruments in order to prepare and organize (non) violent actions[9] (sometimes of a criminal nature) by transferring messages from an area that is more or less limited in space (camps, forums, blogs, social or cultural centers) to a more visible area of the public space - Tahrir Square, Wall Street or Placa del Sol. Social networks are a social phenomenon typical of the IT era. Its technological component is undergoing a continuous evolution which most certainly influences the matrixes in which people make connections and interact by means of the Internet. Social networks facilitate the setting up of „transnational coalitions", the dissemination of messages of protest and alert activities, the planning and coordination of regional and international events. Transnational activism in the virtual environment makes use of social network penetration techniques and methods and focuses the attention of the public on a cause or event. By their nature, these activities carried out on social networks have become a phenomenon that has consequences on the security and stability of the EU, as no European country can claim actual sovereignty over the virtual environment.

Actually, the „netwar" concept is the best example for this type of unconventional activism where all actors or players make use of organizations, doctrines, network strategies and the new technologies, thus becoming a mark of the current IT era. Basically, the actors in these conflicts are large organizations made up of small groups and individuals who communicate with each other in a network like structure. It matters very little whether these structures are organizations, NGOs, social activists (antiglobalization, radicals, anomics) pacifists or terrorist groups, what is more important is that they are transnational in nature. The efficiency of these network-like structures depends on the technological and organizational level, on their doctrine, mission/message and on their integration. Beyond the strictly technological factor, which is undoubtedly of great importance, there is the cooperation level between actors and the manner in which they interact. This can be seen in the chain - like structure (where every subject is connected to the previous and where communication must transit intermediate hubs), in the star-like structure (made up of a core, that converges all other connections thus allowing all nuclei to communicate directly to the core) and lastly, in the network-like structure (where every hub is connected to others in a manner that allows communication which is not subject to hierarchy).

The escalation of this type of activism is indicated by the organization of European events, dedicated to „the fight against police states and the protection of private life". In this respect we should mention the 29th edition of the Congress of the organization

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Marco Lauri, http://termi.republica.it/limes/lutopia-della-primavera-araba-il-succesonon-egarantito/30291, accessed on 22.04.2013.

[9]   See Giuseppe Gagliano, „Les mouvements altermondialistes, nouveau défi des services de reseignement", http://www.cf2r.org/fr/tribune-libre/les-mouvements-aitermondialistes-nouveaudéfi-des-services-de-reseignement, 01-11-2011. Non violent actions can be grouped under at least five categories: protest and non-violent persuasion (public speech, protest letters, supporting public statements, symbolic claims, quiet manifestations, protest assemblies or gatherings).

„Chaos Computer Club" (CCC) that took place in Hamburg between December 27 and 30, 2012 under the motto „Not my department" in which approx. 6000 persons took part. On this occasion, the participants expressed their intention to identify data on illegal surveillance measures and to create alternatives to the current social system by using programs, means and instruments specific to the virtual environment (software, open telecommunication networks)[10].

The current economic crisis and antisystem activism

In the 20th century, during economic or political crises, there was an escalation of anarchist, radical movements[11] which sought to eliminate state authority and social order. Radical movements, anomic and transnational in nature returned to the foreground when the 2008 economic crisis broke out and manifested themselves through the organization of sabotage activities, attacks and acts of hooliganism that caused serious damages, as well as through unauthorized manifestations[12],   which ended in violent clashes with law enforcement forces.

The space targeted by militants (radicals, anarchists, representatives of extreme left trends, environmentalists) is represented by states such as Italy, France, Spain and Greece, but we can also include recent EU member states, and also accession candidates or states in its close proximity. In Western states, antisystem activism took advantage of the fact that left-wing extremism[13] has lost its support after the fall of the USSR. Gradually, mixed ideological „coalitions" were set up and later, transnational organizations dominated by radical environmentalists and anarchist elements without a clearly defined ideological framework. The latter's area is generally circumscribed to antiglobalization, anticapitalist and antimilitarist messages in the public and virtual space. In such cases the

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[10]   Stefan Krempl, „Zwischen Netzpolitik und Spass am GeraT, http://www.nzz.ch/aktuell/digital/zwischen-netzpolitik-und-spass-am-gerat-1.17918424 (Neue Zurcher Zeitung, 03.01.2013).

[11]   Anarchism is a radical theory which claims that anarchy, that is the lack of authority (an arhon = without a master) is the only natural state of the world. In the anarchist view, the state is the main source of all problems of individuals, like any structure and hierarchical authority (government, corporations, armies, political parties, religious organizations); organization under their umbrella is „against nature" and must be overthrown. According to the theoreticians of this trend, violence is the right method for bringing about this change because the state itself employs violence and coercion against citizens, therefore all that anarchists do is respond to this status quo.

[12]   Adrian Dobre, Lack of systemic trust, a cause of system crisis: effects and forms, Geopolitics Magazine, System crisis? From „Arab Spring" to ..Occupy Wall Street", no. 4/2011, Top Form Publishing House, p. 164. The Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement was set up by Canadian protesters who started a protest movement on September 17, 2011. They spoke of social and economic inequalities, high unemployment rates, corruption, and the influence of corporations on government, but did not formulate explicit political demands. The OWS message gave rise to substantial public support, 54% of the Americans having a good opinion of protesters and over a third of them expressing their support of the protesters.

[13]   Francis Fukuyama, „The Future of History. Can liberal democracy survive the decline of the middle class?" in Foreign Affairs, 13.02.2012. The only places where left-wing radicalism is still strong, are the areas with obvious inequalities, such as Latin America, Nepal, the poor regions of East India. The left-wing academia replaced Marxism with postmodernism, multiculturalism, feminism, critic theory and other intellectual trends focused more on culture than on economy. Postmodernism begins by denying the possibility to present a model of history or society that might undermine its own authority as an expression of the majority of the citizens that feel betrayed by the elite. Multiculturalism validates the victimization of almost any group. It is impossible to start a mass progress movement on the basis of a disorganized coalition: most citizens of the working class and of the lower classes, who are victims of the system, are conservative from a cultural point of view and would feel embarrassed in the presence of such allies. Irrespective of the theoretical reasons of the left-wing agenda, its greatest problem is the lack of credibility.

declared enemy are the „hegemonic powers", especially the US and important internatio-
nal organizations, such as the World Bank, the IMF, NATO or G-20. Under this pretext,
the political, military, social, economic or cultural topics – the accession process and
full integration into the Euro - Atlantic structures, military interventions, peace keeping
operations, poverty, illiteracy, the exploitation of underage children, the gay phenome-
non, the globalization of the American culture and values, the financing of economies
undergoing a crisis by the international economic organizations etc.- are ascribed to
a „hidden agenda" of the main international institutions (IMF, WB, G-20, WCO, OECD
and even EU, NATO or UN). Allegedly these aim to instate a „planetary economic dic-
tatorship", by imposing the interests of the US at a global level. After the first violent
protests, environmentalists and anarchists were joined by extreme left elements that were
losing popularity (Stalinist, Maoist and Trotskyist communists, anarchists and so on) and
even extreme right elements whose anti-American, anti-NATO or Euroskeptical stance is
motivated by the exacerbation of the nationalist trend[14].

The antiglobalization protests in Seattle in 1999, on occasion of what was meant as
the start of a new commercial negotiation round, drew attention to the failure of globali-
zation and of the international institutions and agreements that govern it.

Protest movements in December 2010, in Tunisia, affected Egypt, Libya, Yemen,
Bahrain and Syria. The results were conflicting; in some states, there was a brutal change
of the „old regime", while in other states, protest movements did not have the expected
results. They resulted in a new geopolitical situation in the „old Middle East". The pro-
test became global when the demonstrations reached the Southern border of the EU. In
Spain and in Greece groups and organizations were set up which expressed social and
economic discontent publicly. A means to disseminate the ideas of protest movements
was the manifest Indignez-vous! of an active participant in the French resistance move-
ment during World War II, Stephane Hessel. Printed in October 2010, the manifest was
one of the triggering factors of the global protest movements that inspired the „Indi-
gnados" movement, which started at the Puerta del Sol in Madrid, in May 15, 2011 but
also similar movements in Portugal, Greece or Israel. Later, protests reached the US;
the Occupy Wall Street movement became the spearhead of antisystem militants and
a reference point for the World Social Forum that is set up as a non-elitist alternative to
the World Economic Forum in Davos[15]. Globalization and modern technology, especial-
ly the setting up of „networks within networks" that work as link between protests in the
virtual environment, enabled the transformation of these local social movements in tran-
snational protest platforms; their key message is against the system: „We are the 99%."
The motto refers to a famous statement of the notorious economy professor at Columbia

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[14]   Cristian Profirescu, „Pro/antiglobalization movements - public gatherings typical of the contemporary
society," Bulletin no. 1/2009, the Ministry for Administration and Interior, the Institute for Public Order Stu-
dies, p.171.
[15]   The last two reunions focused on the agenda of glocal protests and referred to „systemic crises". The
World Social Forum that took place in Porto Alegre, in January 2012, had as main topic „The crisis of capi-
talism - social justice and the environment". It underlined the aspects that must be taken into consideration in
order to end the crisis and the grounds for setting up a new model of civilization characterized by solidarity. To
this end, four lines of action were identified: Ethics and philosophy: subjectivity, domination and emancipa-
tion; Human rights, populations, territories and defending the Earth; Production, distribution and consumption,
access to welfare, economies in transition; Political subject, the architecture of power and democracy. Ac-
cording to the organizers, the reunion in March 2013, in Tunis, gathered over 50.000 participants from 120
countries, among which representatives of 4500 organizations and networks of alternative world flows, most
in the European - Mediterranean area.

University, Joseph Stiglitz: „From the 1% to the 1%, by the 1%". The protests were aimed at the national and international political elites („the 1%") who ignored the „99%" and imposed the will of the „minority" over that of the „majority". It is not our intention to make a list of dissatisfactions but to explain the mechanism that renders these protests visible and how they influence societies that have different representation values, a different list of claims and different perceptions. At the beginning of the 20th century, Gabriel Tarde, a French sociologist claimed at one point that „behind every „crowd" there is an „audience" that sets it in movement"[16]. The „audience" understood as a „rational crowd" made up of physically separate individuals but whose mental cohesion is generated by an opinion or idea. The „audience" is seen as a group that overlaps and replaces social divisions and political dissensions. Everything is motivated by the unconscious need to associate with the „other". When a critical mass is reached in a shapeless group, the „audience" becomes a „protest movement". This social logic can be best observed in the case of the Occupy Wall Street movement. Inspired, to some extent, by the strikes in Madrid (Indignados), it disseminated swiftly and manifested itself to various degrees in over 2 500 cities in 80 countries. Heterogeneous and lacking ideological coherence, the protesters were united under the idea: „We are the 99%" which expresses the discontent of individuals regarding the fact that „power is held by the perverse and illegitimate elite". Wall Street is the symbol of the system that must be changed (or overthrown). However, the ideas are not new; C. Wright Mills discusses the thesis of the protests in a paper that became a classic in 1956.

Actually the profile of the radical, anomic and antisystemic movement, displayed both in the virtual environment and real life indicates its ability to concentrate frustrations typical of capitalist societies starting from a wide range of themes: political (the system/ party political), economic („crises"), social (unemployment, social differences), environmental (intensive resource exploitation), fear of migration, globalization and multiculturalism. These themes derive from the marginal, non-ideological, non-hegemonic type of discourse to the extent that they run counter to the „SYSTEM", the „CENTER" without turning the list of claims into an organized alternative to the current development model. The „periphery" turns against the „center", without imposing a different power paradigm, the „local" represented by networks, virtual social „hubs" runs counter to the current system of values, (geo)political relations and ideologies. It puts forward a transnational society made up of networks that are both global and local, a society with various non-state actors, that has no hierarchies, no standards, and no relations of force or balances of power. It is a society in which the dissolution / implosion of states and national communities is the rule and not the exception, but where the groups or individuals are free to set their own priorities and „daily agendas" function of transnational interests.

A new security agenda for the intelligence services in the EU

Unprecedented technological development and the creation of virtual communities in a cyberspace without frontiers have determined a new power dimension, a new battlefield where intelligence services must act. The expansion of the virtual world has led to the appearance of a new dimension of state power, „digital power" that has long

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[16]   Vlad Andrei, „OWS and what the protests say about us", weekly magazine Dilema veche, no. 406,24.11.2011.

term effects upon strategic knowledge and upon the national and international actions of the state. Moreover, by getting access to databases and IT networks, the individual has obtained new instruments, which he can use to directly influence the exercise of power domestically or internationally. The recurrence of „Facebook" and Twitter revolutions from Europe to the Middle East proves the impact of these virtual instruments on political regimes, an impact that was unimaginable less than a decade ago. The evolution forms of „digital power" represent both opportunities for development and vulnerabilities and challenges to security; their management will be determined by the capacity to access, select and use information. Thus, we identify a new field of action for intelligence services which changes traditional responsibilities, but also extends the concepts of security by creating a completely new dimension, that of cyber-security[17]. The current difficult economic and social framework feeds this new „field of action", by proliferating black swans[18], extreme events that have become a dominant of the security environment rather than an exception.

In other words, overstretching military and economic (technological) resources due to cascade requests raises the issue of the ability to manage military, economic or social insecurities simultaneously. This overstretching will probably lead to political tensions and blockages, and lastly to the erosion of social cohesion[19]. In certain cases, even the democratic process can be negatively influenced if governments are not able to formulate adequate responses into public policies, especially in order to consolidate the resilience of societies and groups and their capacity to respond to shocks. Sometimes „overstretching" the response capacities and resources is doubled by overestimation. After a black swan, such as the one in September 11, 2001, governments expect the occurrence of a new one; however, the probability that such an event might repeat itself has dropped. Nevertheless, security or defense strategies focus on specific and known black swans. Events that cannot repeat are ignored before they occur and overestimated afterwards[20]. Currently, this mental pattern also works for strategic analysis. The latter tends to focus its observations more on the modus operandi and the organizational structure of terrorism than on the need to highlight the dissemination, appearance and consolidation of radical, anomic and transnational movements on a global scale. This forces the main European intelligence agencies to admit how dangerous these are for the internal security of the EU. They are dangerous be-

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[17]   http://www.sri.ro/categorii/vizlune2011-2015.html.

[18]   The theory of the „black swan" was put forward by Nassim Nicholas Taleb in the work The Black Swan: The impact of the very unlikely, published in 2007. It refers to the appearance of unpredictable phenomena that could not be foreseen by anyone and have no precedent in known history. The difficulty to foresee nonlinear changes (black swan) is doubled by the fact that information processing and interpretation is unavoidably affected by the cognitive and metal limits of the providers of intelligence products. Given the dynamic nature of events, the drafting of scenarios which can include foreseen events has proven erroneous in many cases. Even the best grounded conclusions about how the future will look like can be upturned by the unpredictable. Taleb believes that we should take into account strategic surprises which can topple the forecasts, the rare events which could have a major impact and which lie beyond our expectations. Our progress in shaping (and making forecasts about) the world could be annulled by its growing complexity; this gives the unpredictable a greater role. The more important the role of the „black swans", the more difficult it will be for us to make forecasts.

[19]   George Cristian Maior, Sergei Konoplyov, Strategic knowledge in the wider area of the Black Sea, RAO Publishing House, Bucharest, 2011, p.64.

[20]   Nassim Nicholas Taleb, The Black Swan. The impact of the very unlikely, second edition, Curtea Veche Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010, p. 109.

cause they have explicitly antagonist purposes, more exactly, because they oppose neoliberal institutions, national and transnational military organizations and liberal democracy firmly[21].

European intelligence services monitor and analyze the dissemination phenomenon of radical antisystemic messages in the virtual environment and the multiplication of violent forms in the public space. However, it is necessary to adapt the security agenda in order to limit the phenomenon considering the Internet is the nucleus of new interaction forms for radicalization and it is used for coordination and recruitment activities, but also for acts of extreme violence determined by emotions and not by ideology and carried out by individuals and ad hoc groups and not by organized groups with a hierarchy.

Various initiatives were put forward at the level of the European Commission with a view to controlling and limiting the activity of extremist groups within the community. To this end, in 2011, the European Commission launched the Radicalization Awareness Network - RAN, aimed at countering violent extremism[22].

The initiative supports the efforts of member states to prevent violent radicalization and recruitment of individuals in view of terrorist activities. The network gathers key actors involved in fighting radicalization on the territory of the EU, such as social workers, religious leaders, leaders of youth groups, police officers, researchers and other persons who work on the field in vulnerable communities.

The Radicalization Awareness Network is meant to support member states in their efforts to raise the awareness of the public towards radicalization and to encourage the fight against extremist ideology and propaganda. Efforts against violent extremism must, therefore, take into consideration various models of radicalization. To a certain extent, the threat associated with this phenomenon, including the terrorist one, stems equally from organized groups and individuals, who are harder to detect, whose actions are more difficult to foresee.

According to political scientists, the radicalization of these attitudes is due, among others, to the intensification of social frustrations in a society affected by the economic crisis. This heightens the feeling of „danger", „threat" which are identified with key messages that are focused on controversial themes of (g)local interest, „foreigners, either individuals or communities" or „social, technological or cultural trends". In the last years, SRI included the impact of social networks on radical, anomic and transnational movements on its security agenda. This decision was taken considering the fact that the extremist phenomenon intensified during the crisis even in European countries with solid democratic tradition, becoming a type of anarchism that lacks ideology and is based mainly on the force of the destructive element[23]. This phenomenon was detected in Romania as well and manifested itself through increased radicalization and proselytism activities in the virtual environment as well[24].

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[21]   Besides terms such as radical, anomic, transnational, antiglobalization movements, the term of alter-globalization is also used; the latter questions the basic principles of the neoliberal regime. See Giuseppe Gagliano, The Social Network, the Alter-Globalization and Counterforms, www.isn.ethz.ch.

[22]   Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN) was launched in September 2011 by Cecilia Malmstrom, Internal Affairs Commissioner and will have a budget of over 20 million EUR for four years; it will provide direct assistance to member states and will finance various projects. As it is a network of networks, RAN will include groups, associations and platforms that are engaged in the prevention of radicalization in a practical manner. Their activity will be organized into eight working groups, focused on: police and ensuring the observance of the law; the voice of the victims of terrorism; the Internet and social media; prevention; de-radicalization; prisons and on probation; health; the domestic and foreign dimension.

[23] http://www.adevarul.ro/ui/george_cristian_maior-la_masa_adevaruluigeorge_radulescu_0_621538310.html.

[24]   http://www.realitatea.net/maior-au-aparut-forme-de-radicalizare-a-fenornenului-terorist-darinca-nu

In this framework, according to the Strategic Vision 2011-2015. SRI in the IT era, SRI must face contemporary challenges determined by the IT era and consolidate its operational and analytical performance by employing new cyber instruments. Its purpose is not to generate major restructuring, but to direct the future transformations of the Service towards the assimilation of „digital power'' as an irreplaceable parameter of intelligence work. Such evolutions entail decentralization and rendering the operational decision-making process more flexible, the integration of sources in setting up risk evolution scenarios, the development of intelligence diplomacy and constant investments in education and research, in the continuous training of its own personnel[25].

Instead of conclusions

The act producing content, especially in the case of social networks, creates a situation in which private information becomes public and therefore accessible to everyone who can connect to the Internet. Thoughts, opinions, information about studies or jobs, personal photos and so on, everything becomes available because private information is placed on public sites.

This in itself represents an interesting change in the values of intimacy; the users are willing to offer anyone details about some of the most private information about themselves. This undoubtedly raises a large number of questions on surveillance. Who accesses this information? How is it used? As users take part in generating or producing content, they build an archive of their daily life that can be accessed freely. This type of information about preferences, choices and other personal details is valuable in an era of knowledge capital in which the search for information and forecast technologies are prominent.

The Internet has contributed to the transition from a group society to a network society one that undermines community and geographic proximity and imposes new agreements and operating rules for communities. The accessing frequency, the fact that one may access more networks, their activity online, the prompt feedback, the comments made without fear of liability, the velocity of interaction, the easiness of communication, the rapidity of actions are also characteristic of current social networks. These make up an adequate environment for the increase of radical, anomic and antisystem manifestations carried out by individuals, groups or organizations.

The analysis of an individuals profile indicates his/her preferences, dissatisfactions, needs, professional training, his/her level of access in an environment of interest, his/her frustrations. These allow interested parties to exploit the potential of the user of the social network in view of attracting, handling and manipulating him/her. Function of this, future messages and actions become more relevant and the users can be turned into spokespearsons.

In other words, one can reach people s minds only by watching their actions and the virtual environment offers more possibilities to know somebody than direct interaction. Online voting, manifestos, petitions, protest actions promoted by blogs and social networks as well as online debates have a much stronger impact on society because they are accessible to a larger number of people. In other words, the Internet is becoming more and more a communication and social interaction environment; a virtual environment, created by technological and IT means that allow access to information and countless interactions without geographic, social or cultural boundaries.

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[25]   http://www.sri.ro/categorii/viziune2011-2015.html.

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Abstract

In the context of the current European financial-economic crisis, that has a direct impact on the social structure, we witness - both at national and at European level - the

increasing dissemination, consolidation and repositioning of radical protest movements. Actively present in the social media, these movements promote social disorder and de-structuring of the constitutional order, thus generating a direct threat to the internal security of EU member states. The aim of this article is, first, to highlight the potential incurring risk that public protest democratic mechanisms be altered in the European space. Secondly, the article aims to decode methods by which national intelligence services can adapt their analytical and action capabilities to this type of threat, which comes as a direct consequence of catalytic virtual centers polarizing more and more radical entities.

Abstrakt

W czasie obecnego europejskiego kryzysu finansowo-gospodarczego, który ma bezpośredni wpływ na struktury społeczne, jesteśmy świadkami, zarówno na poziomie krajowym, jak i na poziomie europejskim, zwiększenia siły oddziaływania oraz konsolidacji radykalnych ruchów protestacyjnych. Ruchy te aktywnie promują się w mediach społecznościowych oraz zachęcają do zburzenia istniejącego ładu społecznego i porządku konstytucyjnego, generując tym samym bezpośrednie zagrożenie dla bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego państw członkowskich UE.

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest, po pierwsze, podkreślenie, że istnieje potencjalne ryzyko wypływu obecnych protestów społecznych na zakłócenie mechanizmów demokratycznych w przestrzeni europejskiej. Po drugie, niniejsze opracowanie ma na celu przedstawienie metod, za pomocą których krajowe służby specjalne mogą dostosować swoje możliwości operacyjne i analityczne do przeciwdziałania tego typu zagrożeniom, będącym bezpośrednią konsekwencją oddziaływanie wirtualnych centrów radykalizacji poglądów na rosnącą liczbę zwolenników.