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ABSTRACT

Scientific objective: The aim of the paper is to analyze the communication possibilities discovered and practiced by the Indymedia platform, based on the solutions originally introduced by the Web in the Web 2.0 paradigm (including the formulas of “open publishing” and community information creation). The context for these considerations will be the assumptions of radical democracy. The main hypothesis is that the activists’ and Indymedia users’ use of the strategies and practices of radical direct democracy was effective for short-term and tactical actions, but failed when applied in long-term and strategic actions. Research methods: The article refers to the latest, mixed—methodological trends emerging in media studies focused on the analysis of digital media and Internet platforms, with a particular emphasis on desk research and the opportunities offered by the geography of the Internet. In-depth individual interviews (IDI) conducted by the author with Indymedia activists from the USA, Spain, and Brazil and the model of radical democracy proposed by the British researcher V. Pickard were used. The challenges for the Indymedia after two decades of its operation and the reasons for their transformation and erosion will allow me to develop a critical perspective on the concept of “networked social movements” by M. Castells. Results and conclusions: Practices of radical democracy in everyday activist and media work have highlighted the limitations of the assumptions of this type of democracy when carried out internationally and with a multi-actor perspective. The hypothesis posed in the introduction of the article thus remains positively verified. The development of networks...
was also blocked by different dynamics of the widespread digitalization of societies, which also significantly limited the universally accessible and equitable application of the practices of radical democracy—in the case of centers from the Global South, they became a solution only for a select group of digitally educated people equipped with adequate resources. This situation contradicts the fundamental idea of radical democracy, which is the total extension of equality and freedom of citizens by increasing their level of participation. **Cognitive value:** The analyses presented in the article provide knowledge about the pioneering use of the Internet in the Web 2.0 paradigm by the Indymedia platform long before the emergence of social media in the context of the assumptions of radical democracy. They also allow us to make predictions about the limits to radical democracy in more complex environments.

**KEYWORDS**

Indymedia, alternative media, radical democracy, global justice movement, Web 2.0