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The online resources of contemporary social revolutions The case of the Romanian #Rezist Revolution

by

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The online resources of contemporary social revolutions

The case of the Romanian #Rezist Revolution

MA Thesis

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Abstract

For a time, social media has been regarded as a space of limited political participation, where individuals are most likely outcomes than active agents (Lovink, 2013). This thought is challenged nowadays, and research about social media as a major organizing tool for social movements has grown over the past decade. Grounded in my heightened academic interest for the interactive features of social media and the ability to quickly disseminate information and rally supporters, as well as my personal taste for exploring social movements, in general, and revolutions, in particular, this dissertation pursues to investigate how the Internet provides both the infrastructure and the technology for social movements to shift the power away from journalists and into the hands of activists (Gerbaudo, 2012) - into the hands of **social media activists**. The questions on point are: *Does it work? Are social media an avenue to create social, cultural and political change? In today's digital era, do social movements need media in order to be successful?*

The recent Romanian online movements managed to determine, in less than three years, the election of an unlikely President, the resignation of the Prime Minister and the dissolution of the entire Government and, most recently, the repealing of a controversial law, under the public's accusations of corruption against the Romanian political class. All of these were requested by the mass protests, both online and offline. And all of these were achieved. Particularly, #Rezist Revolution, the empirical backbone of this thesis, proves one thing: that there is nothing 'virtual' about this particular type of online activism, and that it has the potential for generating and fueling forms of mass politics that are genuinely 'revolutionary'. People can use Twitter or Facebook for a greater purpose, and change can come through an online movement. Finally, the revolution may not be mediatized, but it can be organized online.

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Problem indication

In the present era of globalization, where the speed of information has marked the 21st century in an indisputable manner, the features social media, in their inherent complexity, brought into attention a new effect, one that may have cultural, social and political implications: digital activism. On the other hand, it also represents an environment where, according to Morozov (2011), sometimes people participate in pointless activities as an expedient alternative to concrete actions, with not much or no effect other than making that person feel good about him- or herself. This limited political participatory view, positioning social media as a tool for making individuals outcomes more than active agents (Lovink, 2013) is, nevertheless, contradicted by the worldwide contemporary social revolutions which notoriously shaped the last decades due to their compelling outcomes.

Castells (2013) deems the Internet as the birthplace of the new networked social movements. Following the same reasoning, Blommaert (2001) considers that the neoliberal hegemony, the commercialization of the media landscape, and the impact, scale and intensity of this latest phase of globalization nurtured a new kind of *vox populism*, identified in the latest social movements, such as the prominent Arab Spring, the controversial Black Lives Matter, or the thunderous Zapatistas. Moving the focus point transatlantically, in the present-day Southeastern Europe, a quick glimpse at the last three years of the Romanian political environment will bring major social protests into the light. In terms of activism, Romania has indicated to be a verbose country, starting with the '89 revolution, which pulled the country out of the communist regime. The current President, Klaus Iohannis, was elected in November 2014 as a consequence of a massive social movement, where diaspora-based Romanians inundated the voting stations in European cities, ensuring Iohannis a *surprise presidential victory* (Rodina, 2014) against the favourite opponent, Victor Ponta. Further, a little over one year from the elections, a deadly fire erupted in Bucharest's Colectiv nightclub on October 30th, 2015, killing 64 people and injuring another 147 (Rosioru, 2016). The investigation showed that the completely unfit for any public events building had an operating permit nevertheless, causing the already shocked and grieving public to use social media as an avenue to blame the Government's negligence and corruption (Cojocariu, 2015). The online movement generated nationwide offline protests which ultimately determined the Prime Minister Ponta to resign and hence dissolve the Government, following the street's request. Finally, in January 2017, after the new Government passed an emergency ordinance which would only sanction fraud if the sum involved was higher than €44.000 (Abaseaca, 2017), the Romanians took another step: after six nights of what has become the biggest Romanian offline protest since the fall of communism (Gotev, 2017), the protesters appeared to have won another battle against the Government: as a consequence of the movement started on social media, known as the *#Rezist*

Revolution due to its message of resistance against the Government, the emergency ordinance 13/2017 was repealed.

As the communications landscape gets thicker, the networked population is gaining wider access to information and an enhanced ability to engender collective action. The goal of this thesis will focus on the #Rezist Revolution, as the main empirical investigation on whether online activism is only virtual, or if it has the potential for generating and fueling forms of mass politics that are genuinely revolutionary. It will endeavor to investigate the recent Romanian networks of protest and determine to what extent platforms such as Facebook or Twitter have come to matter to new networks of political engagement (Newlands, 2013). The current research will pursue to investigate how the Internet provides both the infrastructure and the technology for social movements to shift power away from journalists and into the hands of activists (Gerbaudo, 2012) - into the hands of social media activists.

1.2 Problem statement

This thesis will focus on the effects that the digital media have on the development of offline social revolutions, leading to the following problem statement:

How did the online dimension of #Rezist Revolution influence its offline revolutionary outcome?

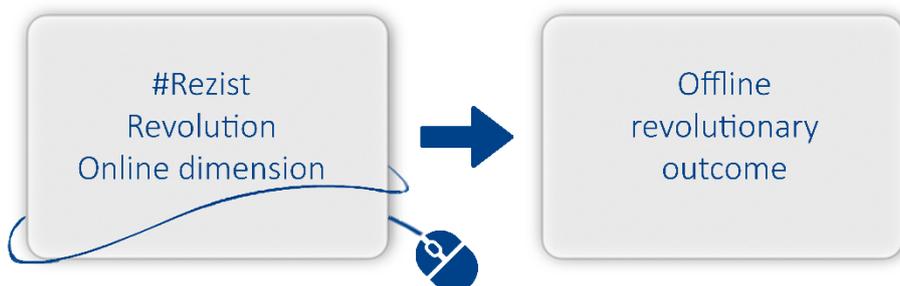


Figure 1. Conceptual framework created by the author.

1.3 Research questions

To answer the central question, various research questions are formulated:

1. *What are the characteristics of a revolution?*
2. *What are the online features of a neoliberal revolution?*

The first and second question will attempt to provide some background information which is needed first in order to establish a conceptual framework.

3. *Within the context of the Romanian #Rezist Revolution, what is the relationship between its online dimension and the offline outcome?*

1.4 Research design and data collection

This thesis will attempt to explore the concepts that cover the questions through both a theoretical and an empirical approach. The research will begin with a literature review, enclosing current knowledge, substantive findings, as well as related study cases. In order to identify relevant contributions that would support the purpose of this paper, Tilburg University Library was used as a research mechanism. The academic references used in this paper come from various high-quality publications and journals on topics such as social media and its social implications, social movements, new media and political participation, collective action, as well as traditional revolution theories. Having defined the theoretical background, the thesis will move on to analyzing the #Rezist Revolution, especially its online - offline development, the empirical backbone of the dissertation. The research method used for anatomizing the #Rezist Revolution is *critical discourse analysis*, a qualitative research method used to study “real, and often extended, instances of social interaction which take (partially) linguistic form” (Wodak, 1997, p. 173, as cited in Blommaert, 2005, p. 25). Further, both the online and offline progress of the events were monitored while the protests were developing, as well as the post-developments. A detailed description of the research design and data collection can be found in the designated section of Chapter 4.

1.5 Contribution

To date, a considerable body of research yielded mixed findings as to whether social media can encourage and ultimately influence digital activism. This dissertation proposes a number of important insights on social movements, bridging both traditional and neoliberal models, and focusing on the resources that social media users deploy in order to create social movements which will develop both online and offline. Particularly, it shows how nonlinear online communication structures will move the activist from Facebook and Twitter into the streets, by using rather decentralized techniques. Finally, by devoting a close attention to the process of moving protests from the online sphere to the offline city squares, this thesis will endeavour to fill the gap between online and offline, and it can potentially be a useful addition to the existing academic knowledge about online activism and the political implications of social media, on one side, and to the organizations who rely on social media and mass participation in order to achieve a political change, on the other.

1.6 Structure

The structure of this dissertation is based on the three research questions, which will eventually lead to answering the problem statement. After the current introductory chapter, which describes the problem indication, problem statement and the research questions, as well as briefly introducing the research methods, each consequent chapter will address one research question. While Chapter 2 will focus on traditional models of revolutions, Chapter 3 will attempt to identify the online features of social movements. Further, in Chapter 4, the relationship between the #Rezist Revolution’s online

development and its offline outcomes is investigated, followed by the results-dedicated Chapter 5. The sixth Chapter provides the conclusion of this thesis, in which the problem statement will be given an answer to, as well as the limitations of this study and recommendations for future research. Finally, the references list will be presented, followed by the Annexes section.

Chapter 2. Revolutionary vox populi: from traditional theories to today's new social movements

Initiating the literature review of this thesis, upon which the conceptual framework will be based, Chapter 2 attempts to provide a synthesis and evaluation of the revolutionary theories and historical developments that lead, preceded and consequently influenced today's social movements and, thereupon, digital activism. Outsetting with the assumption that new social movements draw the heritage of the ones that preceded them, rooting itself in the memory and the symbols of the past (Melucci, 1996), understanding traditional movements, precursor to the neoliberal ones, is eminently necessary not only for the enormous importance that they impose for the societies in which they occurred, but also for their effects on the configuration of power and beliefs in other societies (Goodwin, 2001). Along these lines, Chapter 2 will explore the traditional model of social movements, what it means, and what are the implications that it forsooth father - the movement understood in its context and thus as a cultural phenomenon (Maly, forthcoming). Therefore, in order to understand the rising of the new forms of social revolutions, the historical context should first be determined. Thus and so, what follows is an account of theories and events which will contour the trans-local and historical context in which these movements operate.

Chiefest of all, it is mandatory to situate the theoretical background into a specific conceptual framework. A general definition is offered by Goodwin (2001):

“Revolution (or political revolution) refers to any and all instances in which a state or political regime is overthrown and thereby transformed by a popular movement in an irregular, extraconstitutional, and/or violent fashion. [...] [It] necessarily requires the mobilization of large numbers of people against the existing state” (Goodwin, 2001, p. 9).

Some other definitions require that a revolution must oppose an elite, authoritative, or powerful force (Gordon, 2017, p. 16). However, considering the topic of this thesis, it will be assumed that not all social movements are necessarily radical, and that they seek directly or indirectly to reform existing economic, social, and cultural aspects of a society, ergo not attempting to restructure national societies in uprightly fundamental ways (Goodwin, 2001). A change in a certain direction can be considered the fundamental premise of social movements and, consequently, the catalyst for revolutions. Next, two main theoretical approaches on revolution will be further discussed: the traditional revolution from a Marxist-Leninist perspective, and secondly, the modern neoliberal approach.

2.1 The traditional revolution

Either preceded and accompanied by a war of liberation such as the American Revolution, lead into wars of defense, as the French Revolution, or even considered a cause of a war widen worldwide, as the Second World War (Arendt, 1963), revolutions have far determined the physiognomy of the

twentieth century (Arendt, 1963). The same author indicates that the modern concept of revolution is grounded in past theories: “*Crucial, then to any understanding of revolutions in the modern age is that the idea of freedom and the experience of a new beginning should coincide*” (p. 21). This freedom, in the traditional revolution model, can be achieved, through violence:

“*Only where change occurs in the sense of a new beginning, where violence is used to constitute an altogether different form of government, to bring about the formation of a new body politic, where the liberation from oppression aims at least at the constitution of freedom can we speak of revolution*” (Arendt, 1963, pp. 27-28).

Thus, from Arendt’s perspective, from the ancient Greeks until recent times, revolutions follow a rather simple logic: they need a *purpose* (in this case, freedom), which can be achieved through certain *acts* (in this case, violence), that will, ultimately, lead to the *change (the new beginning)* required to reach the main aim¹.

Notwithstanding its criticism, Marxism-Leninism, one of the world’s marking models of revolution, aimed at the *shattering* of the machinery of the state, but only within a suitable international situation, with the cooperation of the *revolutionary vanguard* consisting of professional revolutionaries, as part of the working class (Albert & Hahnel, 1981). The *mass participation of the population* is, therefore, another key element of revolutions. Moreover, this model is classified by Johnson (1964, as referenced in Stone, 1966) as the *Militarized Mass Insurrection*, a deliberately planned mass revolutionary war, guided by a dedicated elite, where the rebels are wholly dependent on *broad popular support*. However, in terms of organizing efforts, Marxism-Leninism offered more than just a common goal. It also provided a way in which the revolution should develop: First of all, the revolutionary party must have a majority in the *vanguard* of the revolutionary classes; second, a cumulative growth of revolution must be well spread on a national scale; further, the old regime must have suffered moral and political disintegration; finally, the moderate elements of the population must be in hesitant mood (Becker, 1937, p. 358).

In this traditional revolutionary model, the power is transferred from government to the working class, hence providing the working class with political consciousness and revolutionary leadership necessary to depose capitalism. Although applied in Imperial Russia, and originally designed as and for revolutionary praxis, the effects of Marxism-Leninism cannot be limited to a certain geographical area, as it set the backbone for the future regime in Southern-Eastern Europe (Goodwin, 2001). Not coincidentally, this context is also historically related to the Romanian ‘89 revolution against the

¹ These main elements of traditional revolution (purpose -> acts -> chance) will prove to be maintained in the neoliberal models, as it will be established in Chapter 3.

communist regime, gaining its statute of the beginning of the Romanians' mass political participation². An argument which would support this claim is given by Anghel (2015), who explains that the fall of communism, directly connected to the dynamic of modernization, "*can be connected with a set of essential features, which tend to act in a correlative logic: urbanization, secularization, increasing literacy and growing political participation*" (Lerner, 1958, as referenced in Anghel, 2015, p. 228). Therefore, it can be indicated that one of the main consequences of modernization is located in the sphere of political participation. Additionally, considering modernization as a *syndrome of social change*, the changing mechanism becomes a catalyst for social instability and even successive revolution (Anghel, 2015, p. 229). The following section will endeavor to explore and determine whether modern revolutionary models follow the same directions.

2.2 The bridge between traditional and neoliberal revolutions

Although, indeed, modern revolutions may not have everything in common with their antique precursory models, one particular feature cannot be denied: the enormous role the social question that has come to play in all revolutions, and the importance of the economic motivation - the overthrow of government by the rich and the establishment of an oligarchy, or the overthrow of government by the poor and the establishment of a democracy (Arendt, 1963). This view, which creates the very ground for modern revolutions, emphasizes a need for a *change* of society, as the factor who triggers the movements, whether they are contemporary or not. In this regard, Arendt (1963) indicates that:

"The social question began to play a revolutionary role only when, in the modern age and not before, men began to doubt that poverty is inherent in the human condition, to doubt that the distinction between the few, who through circumstances or strength or fraud had succeeded in liberating themselves from the shackles of poverty, and the labouring poverty-stricken multitude was inevitable and eternal" (Arendt, 1963, p. 22).

Further, according to Goodwin (2001), modernization theories fundamentally link revolutions to the transition from *traditional societies*, defined as fixed structures, with social relations regulated by custom, simple divisions of labor, therefore limited and localized forms of political participation, to *modern societies*, characterized by social mobility, social relations regulated by legally enacted rules, complex division of labor, and, essentially, mass political participation. Thus, the people's wish to

² The violent mechanism of change was a decisive aspect of the Romanian '89 revolution's development, used by both the protesters and the Ceausescu regime, which ultimately also put an end to it through the execution of Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, marking the end of the communist regime in Romania, and the instauration of democracy - the end goal of the movement. During the revolution, according to the 2005 records released by the State Secretariat for Revolutionary Affairs (*Secretariatul de Stat pentru Problemele Revoluționarilor*), an institution under the authority of the Romanian Government, the total number of deaths by shooting was 1142, while the number wounded people was 3138.

change a certain aspect of their society represents a key factor in igniting social movements, from rebellions aimed at liberation of certain classes, such as the American Revolution, to protests like Britain's 1908 Women's Sunday movement³. By following this logic, it can be asserted that, indeed, revolutions are linked to modernization, by pushing forward the process. Moreover, *"revolution will not occur in highly traditional societies with very low levels of social and economic complexity. Nor will it occur in highly modern societies"* (Huntington, 1968, p. 265). A vital aspect of Arendt's (1963), Huntington's (1968), and Goodwin's (2001) theories is the access to information that made these doubts possible. Another key point of Huntington's theory is that revolutions are *"more likely to occur in societies which have experienced some social and economic development, but where the processes of political modernization and development have lagged behind the process of social and economic change"* (Huntington, 1968, p. 265). Consequently, these modern revolutionary movements have an influential effect in transitional societies, aspect which precisely describes the current Romanian post-communist society: the lack of political and public consensus and the presence of contradictory social reactions, also stimulated by the reactivations of strong cultural vectors such as nationalism, transform the Romanian transitional society in a space dominated by strong economic and social cleavages (Anghel, 2015).

2.3 Conclusion

This first theoretical chapter has reviewed the key aspects of traditional models of revolution, as well as the transition from them to modernization, which, in accordance with its features, brought to light a new type of social movement: the neoliberal one. In summary, it has been shown from this review that, according to Arendt (1963), revolutions follow a rather simple logic: they need a purpose, which can be achieved through certain acts that will, ultimately, lead to the change required to reach the main aim, hence positioning change as a fundamental premise of social movements and, consequently, the catalyst for revolutions.



Figure 2. A revolution's logic (created by the author)

Further, in terms of pivotal features of traditional revolutions, this chapter has suggested that the mass participation of the population cannot be bypassed, as the *rebels* are wholly dependent on broad popular support. Next, the old regime must have suffered moral and political disintegration (Becker,

³ On 21st of June 1908, in Hyde Park London, the Women's Social and Political Union organized Britain's first major political rally, Women's Sunday protest, against the Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith's opposition to the right of enfranchisement for women, where an estimated figure between 300,000 and 500,000 people participated (Rosen, 2014).

1937). In terms of leadership, Johnson (1964, as referenced in Stone, 1966) points out to the dedicated elite which planned and supported the revolutionary movements. Consequently, these complex social movements made it possible to transfer the power from the government to the working class. Later on, once the modernization became a vivid reality of the last decades, the newly arisen movements were possible due to the access to information, and the enormous role the social question that has come to play in all revolutions.

Chapter 3. Revolution 2.0

If the second chapter presented the characteristics of a traditional revolution, Chapter 3 will approach the neoliberal model of revolution, which introduces new media as an expansive mobilization power. Commencing with the idea that the online cannot be isolated from the offline, and that the impact of new media can only be understood in relation to all the actors in the media and political fields (Maly, forthcoming), the current chapter will firstly offer a perspective on the neoliberal hegemony which, along with the scale and intensity of the latest phase of globalization called into being, as Blommaert (2001) points out, a new kind of *vox populism*. What follows is an analysis of these social movements and their defining online features. It will further proceed to offer a relevant instance of neoliberal social movement, where, as established in the Introduction, online collective actions translate into in-the-streets movements: the Egypt's Facebook Revolution, a material series of events for the well-known Arab Spring, where social networks played an essential part in the rapid and peaceful dissolution of a political regime⁴.

3.1 The neoliberal hegemony - *a natural law of society*

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, digitalization offered civil society and left-wing activists an alternative space of mobilization and information (Blommaert 2011; Wolfson, 2014, as referenced in Maly, forthcoming). In the digital media era, social media enhanced an emotional choreography, which enforced a deep transformation of the experience of solidarity and cooperation constructed among an online public, and the symbolic and physical harvesting of individual indignation (Gerbaudo, 2012, p. 96). However, since online-offline social movements represent the object of this thesis, it is mandatory to initially offer a brief background on how the neoliberal wave of social actions has shaped today's online activism, a politically motivated movement relying on the Internet (Ayers & McCaughey, 2014, p. 71).

When it comes to neoliberalism and social movements, the arguments frequently present the latter in curiously apolitical terms, whether as some kind of *natural law of society* or as some kind of omnipotent juggernaut, while, from a historical and political perspective, it is considered an outcome of *collective human agency* (Cox & Nilsen, 2014). Started as a marginal and eccentric movement, neoliberalism emerged from the nineteenth century's political and economic crises⁵, when the working

⁴ According to the Dubai School of Government (2011), social media played a significant part during the Arab Spring events, by facilitating the communication amongst the participants of the offline political protests. Protesters used social media platforms to organize demonstrations, disseminate information, and raise local and global awareness of ongoing events. Howard et al (2015) found that online revolutionary conversations often preceded offline mass protests, and that social media played a central role in shaping political debates in the Arab Spring. In the Egypt's Facebook revolution case, nine out of ten Egyptians responded to a survey that they used Facebook to organize protests and spread awareness (The National, 2011).

⁵ Gerbaudo (2012, p. 105) indicates that the absence of an established public space in which people would voice their public grievances has become particularly apparent since the inception of the global economic crisis.

classes and colonized societies started to oppose the major state involvement in the economy, as well as the capitalist elites (Cox & Nilsen, 2014). This backbone of neoliberal movements, *opposing the ruling class*, is backed by more authors, who agree that a social movement must oppose an elite, authoritative, or powerful “top-down” force (Gordon, 2017, p. 16), and that neoliberalism needs the idea of state and perhaps even nationalism (Maly, forthcoming).

3.2 Characteristics

3.2.1 A collective identity

In the globally dominant neoliberalism, only a theory of collective action can provide a considerable basis of analysis of social movements (Melucci, 1996, p.14). When anatomizing the process of constructing an action system, the notion of *identity* used here approaches the continuity over time of a subject of action, implying the concept of unity, which, as it will be discussed further on, it establishes a relationship between two or more actors, one that will adapt to different circumstances imposed by the environment, and that, concurrently, will shape the environment. Melucci (1996) sees the collective identity as “*an interactive and shared⁶ definition produced by a number of individuals (or groups as a more complex level) concerning the orientations of their action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which such action is to take place*” (p. 70), therefore positioning collective identity as a process that entails the means, ends, and fields of action. Thus, collective identity, the self-definition of the movement of what it is (Castells, 1997, p. 71), refers to:

“a network of active relationships between actors who interact, communicate, influence each other, negotiate, and make decisions. Forms of organization and models of leadership, communicative channels and technologies of communication are constructive parts of this network relationship [where] a certain degree of emotional investment is required, which enables individuals to feel themselves part of a common unity” (Melucci, 1996, p. 70-73).

Furthermore, setting off with the idea that new social movements draw the heritage of the ones that preceded them, rooting itself in the memory and the symbols of the past, Melucci (1996, p. 101) offers a series of prominent features that characterize the metamorphosis of collective action. Notwithstanding the year that Melucci published his theory, when the Internet and especially social media had a significantly less social impact, the following features eloquently serve the understanding of how these social movements are created and lead from awareness to mobilization, and eventually offline action. Therefore, *the heterogeneity and low negotiability of the goals* posted for the action, as social phenomena not entirely reducible to political mediation, enable the demands of the activists to

⁶ By *interactive and shared*, the author refers to the elements which are constructed and negotiated through a recurrent process of activation of the relations that bind actors together.

survive in non-negotiable forms and reappear during another wave of mobilization. Simply put, if the goal is a corruption-free political class, this desired outcome will not be exhausted within a single movement, where the people's request may or may not be fulfilled by the Government or any other social actor targeted by the movement. The message, hence, will have a recurrent status in the following movements. Another notable feature is the *solidarity as an objective* for action, where, as emphasized above, the search for a communal identity builds a common resistance either against the possible changes instituted by the Government, as it will be particularized by the Romanian social movement in Chapter 4⁷, or supporting the change, as it will be indicated later in this chapter by Egypt's Facebook revolution⁸. This brings the characterization to a third feature - the *quest for participation and direct action*, which, if genuine, changes both the environment and identities. Contemporary movements are distinguished by a *determined opposition to resolutions imposed by the political machinery*, where, according to the same author, anti-authoritarianism, anti-hierarchism, and spontaneity seem to be common to recent social movements (pp. 101-107). Furthermore, contemporary movements are temporary and of a *short-term*, provoked by specific issues and mobilizing variable actors (Melucci, 1996, pp. 97-107).

Moreover, the *role of the individual* represents a key aspect in the context of collective action. Accordingly, *"the problems of the individual have become collective problems precisely because they involve, on the one hand, the manipulation of individual identity by the power structure, and the cultural representation of needs as an individual concern on the other"* (Melucci, 1996, p. 104). Strengthening the individual variable in an inseparable position from the collective dimension, social movements hence become machinery for making social choices from individual tastes (Arrow, 1951, p. 7). Although the topic of this paper won't allow further in-depth analysis on the role of individualism vs collective perspectives in social movements, it is essential to establish that collective actors will be able to identify with the *common identity* when they have learned to distinguish between themselves and the environment (Melucci, 1996, p. 73). In order to create a collective identity, a minimal degree of reciprocity in social recognition is required between the actors⁹, as an actor cannot construct its identity independent of its recognition. In addition, although briefly presented, people's emotions play a central role in the process of mobilization within contemporary popular movements, as a *"reflection of their 'personal' orientation, and of the importance of sustaining an imaginary of 'friendship' and 'sharing' in their use"* (Gerbaudo, 2012, p. 9). Further, in terms of how emotions influence

⁷ The recent 2017 Romanian protests were ignited by the Government's Emergency Ordinance 13/2017, which would only punish fraud if the sum involved was higher than €44.000 (200.000 RON).

⁸ The 2011 Egyptian revolution, also known as the Egyptian Facebook revolution, initially focused on demanding a cease of the increasing police brutality during President Mubarak's presidency.

⁹ This reciprocity can then involve different forms: consent, denial, or opposition between actors which can also involve different types: the movement, opposite movements, governmental entities, authorities, third parties and so on (Melucci, 1996).

contemporary movements, Melucci (1996) points out that “*passions and feelings, love and hate, faith and fear are all part of a body acting collectively, particularly in those areas of social life that are less institutionalized, such as the social movements*” (p. 71).

3.2.2 Mobilizing factors and the organizational dimension

In order for the **mobilization** to take place, a couple of key factors/mobilizing agents must be in place: a collective identity, the identification of the adversary, a purpose and, lastly, an object considered at stake in the conflict (Melucci, 1996): the *solidarity*, the ‘we’ dimension, must be alleged by all participants. Secondly, since a generic social dissatisfaction is not enough to spring the mobilization necessary for a social movement, the identification of an adversary as a social actor is crucial, as the same author indicates, for the ideological language of the movement. Regardless if it has a great or low precision in terms of identification, the adversary will refer to the system of which this social actor is part of¹⁰. The definition of the *purpose* highlights the desirable outcome by the protesters, and it is “*the movement’s vision of the kind of social order, or social organization, it would wish to attain in the historical horizon of its collective action*” (Castells, 1997, p. 71), while the *object at stake* is aimed at the object/s which the protesters consider to having been deprived of. Thus, it can be either a specific object (such as the Egyptians’ request to raise the new minimum and maximum wages, or the Romanian’s demand to repeal the Emergency Ordinance 13/2017) or an indefinite object (the Egyptians’ demand against poverty, corruption, police brutality, lack of free elections, or the Romanians’ requisition against corruption). All in all, the “*adversary refers to the movement’s principal enemy, as explicitly identified by the movement*” (Castells, 1997, p. 71)¹¹.

Although fluctuating depending on the socio-political environment that the movements develop within, a collective revolt can translate into a social movement provided that it develops a relatively stable organization and leadership (Melucci, 1996, p. 313). This **organizational structure** of a social movement, which ultimately consolidates all the components previously discussed, reproduces, according to the author, the dynamics of a complex organization. Needless to say, comparing to companies producing goods and services, a social movement is inherently oriented towards building a conflictual collective identity, and it cannot be defined by a regular organizational system of roles and network of exchanges, hence dealing with resistance and developing in specific conditions, both internally and externally. Taking into consideration the mobilization factors presented above, it can be concluded that the organization of a social movement entails multidisciplinary groups of interest, which will also constitute the cornerstone of the movement, a central direction (the definition of the

¹⁰ In the Egyptian revolution case, the adversary was, generically, the leading political class represented by its President Mubarak. However, other social actors were included in this adversary category, e.g. the State Security Investigations Service, and the Parliament.

¹¹ See Castells (1997), especially chapters 2, 3, 4, and 6, for an insightful analysis of neoliberal social movements.

purpose), an agenda of shared objectives, and also a series of stimulus which will both build and secure the consensus, identification and participation of the activists.

Accordingly, this requires the existence of an authority structure characterized, in line with Melucci (1996), by a distribution of power, which depends on each movement's specifics: more or less centralized **leadership**, the overlapping of influence, the degree of autonomy of different components and so on.

“The complex of figuration of meetings arenas in a social movement or protest mobilization constitutes an infrastructure that synchronizes the dispersed activities of moving actions in time and space. This infrastructure is not an entirely emergent phenomenon but is also the result of conscious decisions by organizers” (Haug, 2013, p.1, as cited in Gordon, 2017, p.11).

In consonance with Castells (2004, pp. 341-349), decentralized network forms are out-competing working-class movements' more traditional vertical hierarchies shown in Chapter 2. The new information technologies bring greater speed, lower costs, adaptability, dispersion, and flexibility in both disseminating the information, and communicating between activists, thus creating horizontal networks, where leadership is used to promote the pursuit of goals, develop strategies and formulate an ideology. Nevertheless, in the case of network leaders, which serve the purpose of this thesis, the formal role of leadership in modern movements can be considered delegitimized, since, according to Melucci (1996, p. 344), it is difficult to identify a set of stable leadership functions that would apply to all social movements. Within these movements, individual leaders do not perform these functions, but, de facto, each specific relational context has its own structuration and operational mechanisms. Therefore, in both the Egyptian and, nonetheless, the Romanian cases presented later in this thesis, different relational contexts have different leaders (Facebook groups admins¹², which constantly try to keep the public's interest vivid), without suggesting that an individual could or does lead the movement. Instead, the power is horizontal, and a substantial part of it is oriented towards disseminating information and encouraging participation. Finally, as Gerbaudo (2012, p. 5) points out, these *“influential Facebook admins become ‘soft leaders’ or choreographers, involved in setting the scene, and constructing an emotional space within which collective action can unfold”*.

Referring to the digital media dimension of social movements, Castells (2004) asserts that the Internet does not only provide the technological infrastructure for *computer-supported social movements*, but also reinforces their entire organizational logic - *“decentralized, flexible, local/global activist network constitute the dominant organizational forms within global justice movements, reflecting the broader*

¹² According to Digital Activism Survey Report 2009 (Brodock et al., 2009), when asked how activists were using technologies, the four most common responses from a list of tool uses were to *“send news to supporters”* with 84%, *“post information in a static location”* with 82%, *“create groups”* with 78%, and *“mobilize supporters”* with 70%. These numbers do point out, however, a prominence of broadcast over interactive communication.

logic of informational capitalism” (p. 349). Further, in his iconic book about the influence of the Internet and social media in social movements, Gerbaudo (2012) upholds that the Internet provides the platform for social movements to **shift power away from journalists and into the hands of activists**, by also facilitating the organization of each protest. According to Maly (forthcoming), new media expand the mobilization power and make it possible to recruit new people and to elicit external attention for their alternative discourse and their offline activism. Returning briefly to the subject of organization, pursuant to the same author, digital media represent only one infrastructure of the movement, deployed for both internal and external use. Internally, they function as a decisive infrastructure, allowing the fast organization of the network. Digital media, however, do not fully replace offline meetings. They have a complementary role - activists do not necessarily need to meet in real life to organize a movement, a lot of what they do being done online. Figure 3 below summarizes the main mobilization agents.



Figure 3. Mobilization agents (created by the author)

3.2.3 The social media power and digital activism

In the era of digital media, as Lee & Hsieh (2013) point out, “*social technology such as social network sites (e.g., Facebook) and content-sharing websites (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo) are allowing online interaction between people at unprecedented large scales. These technologies hold great potential for supporting activism and civic engagement*”. One of the key factors that connect social media to in-the-streets social movements, **online activism**, as the same authors indicate, shares a great deal of similarities with more traditional civic actions: the actions impose costs and risks for participating individuals, the goals cannot be obtained by an individual alone, hence the actions require a certain number of participants in order to succeed. Finally, as presented above, like most civic actions, the

action is aimed towards collective goals, from a reduced air pollution to a social and political change. The perceived values of digital technology for digital activism, such as ease, efficiency, and effectiveness, represent, de facto, the perceived importance of reaching people, which reflects an implicit understanding of the necessity of mass communication to achieve collective action (Brodock et al., 2009). The act of mobilizing discussed above is centralized - the action is determined at the center and then pushed out to participants through the network. Thus, *“given the divided functionality of group creation and the centralized broadcast nature of news, posting, and mobilization, the responses to this question are consistent with a broadcast theory of social media for social change”* (Brodock et al., 2009, p. 19). According to the same report, the prominence of social networks as the *gateway drug* of digital activism is by far *the most common first tool of activists*¹³. In addition, the number of worldwide social media users¹⁴, and the low barrier to entry a Facebook group, for instance, makes it easy for activists to become nominally engaged in a cause. Consequently, the ecology of social media becomes the most important enabling tool for social and political participation, engendering notions such as *e-mobilizations*, *e-tactics* and *e-movements* (Kimport, 2011, as referenced in Mora, 2014).

Connecting the mobilization and organizational dimensions discussed above, the new digital media instruments, and the social movements, Gordon (2017, p. 12) uses the notion of *nodes of convergence* to explain the entire idea behind it, where the interplay between actual mobilizing actors, general grievances/demands, and the means/platforms to interact with others and mobilize them through social media takes place. The end product is a type of convergence on the public demands and the *call for protests*. As seen by Castells (2013, p. 38), the Internet is the birthplace of the new networked social movements. In the neoliberal hegemony, social movements use media in order to mobilize, transmit the message and call for action of impact (Castells, 1996). Thompson (1995, pp. 136-137, as referenced in Maly, forthcoming) asserts that, in modern societies, mass media opened a space for critiquing the rulers, and the mass access to information that media introduced was a *sine qua non* condition of social movements, which enabled different groups to have an influential voice in mediatised modern societies. The key difference between social media and conventional media is allowing horizontal communication, back and forth. Social media are interactive and therefore ideal for socializing (Gordon, 2017, p. 10). Further, social movements are not simply an opposition to the way things are, but are powerfully shaped by it. Indeed, significant elements of almost all neoliberal movements have been constrained within the logics of identity politics, branding, and the politics of opinion, which fit well with the wider world of neoliberalism (Cox & Nilsen, 2014). Additionally, the identity created is

¹³ As stated in the Digital Activism Survey Report 2009 (Brodock et al., 2009), when asked what was the first tool the respondents used for digital activism, the most common first tool was the online social network, with 68% of respondents saying this was the first tool they started using in their activism or advocacy work.

¹⁴ According to a TechCrunch report, as of June 2017, Facebook alone had 2 billion monthly active users, securing its position as the largest social app in terms of logged-in users, above YouTube's 1.5 billion, WeChat's 889 million, Twitter's 328 million and Snapchat's estimated 255 million.

central to the message of the movement (Lempert and Silverstein, 2012, as cited in Maly, forthcoming) and facilitates the redistribution of its message in the mass media. Therefore, in organizing resistance,

“social movements and protests can be conceptualized as people’s networks united by shared goals or interests. Social movements indicate a failure in the present societal interactions. It is a boiling point for mobilization. The protest becomes the Sign. The medium of protesting becomes the message. A social mobilization becomes the communicated symbol to society that there has been a system failure” (Gordon, 2017, pp. 8-9).

The social media role in social movements is backed by other researchers, who believe that online communities can represent agents of change, by accelerating the movement’s development and making its successful outcome more likely. As Gordon (2017) summarizes:

“online communities are effective in organizing and coordinating protests (Segeberg & Bennett, 2011), creating collective sense of identity (Oh et al., 2015), generating a persuasive call to action (Haug, 2013), obtaining the attention of mass media (Parmelee, 2014), creating awareness in the external community (Reuter & Szakonyi, 2015), and obtaining resources, especially funding (Hara & Huang, 2011)” (Gordon, 2017, p. 17).

Thus, when trying to define the relationship between social media and social media activists, *“social media may be viewed both as technology and space for expanding and sustaining the networks upon which social movements depend”* (Lim, 2012, p. 234), where the media themselves influence how the social movements are shaped and performed (Gordon, 2017, p. 10). All in all, Castells (1997) opines, when discussing the effects of the digital media on a society:

“what the power of technology does is to extraordinarily amplify the trends rooted in social structure and institutions: oppressive societies may be more so with the new surveillance tools, while democratic participatory societies may enhance their openness and representativeness by further distributing political power with the power of society” (Castells, 1997, p. 300).

3.2.4 The spatial dimension

The **spatial dimension** is another key aspect of the neoliberal social movements. If in the Marxist traditional model discussed in the previous chapter, the industrial factory established a condition of spatial concentration in which workers were isolated from broader society but shared a common everyday experience which came to form the basis for their political organisation (Kohn, 2003, as referenced in Gerbaudo, 2012, p. 30), neoliberalism greatly reduced the reliance on local face-to-face networks as a channel or mobilization, and introduced contemporary technologies of communication which offer people a *redemptive promise of ‘connection’*. Bauman (2003, p. 62, as cited in Gerbaudo, 2012, p. 33) observes how the Internet, digital media, and mobile phones offer a *virtual*

proximity which no longer requires physical closeness, where the media become a space of social aggregation. Following a similar line of reasoning, “*the neoliberal hegemony not only restructured the political and economic landscape, it also restructured the global media landscape*” (Blommaert, 2001; Bourdieu, 1996; Thompson 1995, as referenced in Maly, forthcoming).

When demonstrations based on a collective identity and a common purpose transcend the cyberspace and move on the streets, the mass sit-in translates into the physical occupation of public space, which often evolves into a semi-permanent protest camp (Gerbaudo, 2012, p. 11). These ‘take the squares movements’ or ‘occupy movements’ have been a part of the social endeavor for the ‘appropriation of public space’ (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, as referenced in Gerbaudo, 2012, p. 29), reclaiming the streets and squares for public use and political organizing¹⁵. When talking either about the Arab Spring and its Egyptian revolution, or the Romanian recent protests, the movements caught both the national and the international attention not only for the people’s online activism through platforms like Facebook or Twitter, but due to the massive offline demonstrations and, ultimately, the physical occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo, respectively the Victoria Square in Bucharest. Social media and especially Facebook pages such as *Kullena Khaled Said (We are all Khaled Said)* and *600.000 pentru Romania (600.000 for Romania)* proved to be of a fundamental importance for raising awareness about the issues and rallying supporters into coming together in the public space, by facilitating an emotional condensation of people’s anger at the regimes, and acting as a springboard for street-level agitation (Gerbaudo, 2012, p. 11).

3.3 Egypt’s Facebook revolution

An outstanding instance of online activism and, needless to say, of online movements transformed into offline protests, is the 2011 Egyptian revolution, which culminated with the unseating of the president Hosni Mubarak, after 30 years of holding the Egyptian power (Shearlaw, 2016). Youth has called for protests against poverty, corruption, police brutality, the lack of free elections and freedom of speech (Gordon, 2017). Nevertheless, before the offline uprising in the Tahrir Square, avenues towards change were created using a defining infrastructure: social media, where Facebook and Twitter provided the opportunities for organizing and protest that traditional methods couldn’t (Shearlaw, 2016). Before

¹⁵ However, even in a democratic system, different economic system and ideologies can influence the general proclivity of people to develop on-the-ground social movements. According to Davis (1992, as referenced in Gerbaudo, 2012, p. 31), contemporary capitalism implicates a ‘privatization of the physical public sphere’ whose consequence is ‘the destruction of any truly democratic space’ whereby constitutional rights to public assembly are de facto curtailed and social encounter is frowned upon. Therefore, the spatial logic of this kind of economic ideology can be driven by a *fear of crowds* in which public gatherings are criminalized (Gerbaudo, 2012). In this context, the contemporary capitalism’s *fear of crowds* is debated in *the realm of collective action*, where translational social movements, such as the Arab Spring, “*reflect the broad decentred networking logic of informationalism, even as they attack the roots of informational capitalism*” (Castells, 2004, p. 341).

particularizing the notoriously offline events of the Egyptian revolution and its outcomes, it is mandatory to get to the bottom of the movement: a social media initiative.

3.3.1 Background

On June 8th, 2010, Wael Ghonim, a 29-year-old Google marketing executive, created a Facebook page called *Kullena Khaled Said (We are all Khaled Said)*, after finding a Facebook picture of 28-year-old Said's disfigured body, who had been beaten to death by the Egyptian police. Angered by the brutal act, he wrote *"Today they killed Khaled. If I don't act for his sake, tomorrow they will kill me"* (Vargas, 2012). According to the same source, two minutes after starting his Facebook page, 300 people had joined, followed by other 250.000 Facebook users three months later. People used social media to express their grievances online, and what grew online unavoidably outpoured in the streets, culminating in a massive and epoch-making protest in Tahrir Square, Cairo. The main message, *We Are All Khaled Said*, enforced a rally which led to the resignation of the incumbent president and the disbandment of the National Democratic Party. Ghonim, arrested by the police during the movement¹⁶, became one of the leading voices of the Egyptian revolution, believing that his online activism should be seen in the *"hundreds of other pages, Facebook accounts and Twitter profiles"* devoted to organize and inform people that took part of the movement (Vargas, 2012). In a CNN interview, he declared that the Internet and Facebook made the Egyptian uprising possible:

"I want to meet Mark Zuckerberg one day and thank him [...] I'm talking on behalf of Egypt. [...] This revolution started online. This revolution started on Facebook. This revolution started [...] in June 2010 when hundreds of thousands of Egyptians started collaborating content. We would post a video on Facebook that would be shared by 60,000 people on their walls within a few hours. I've always said that if you want to liberate a society just give them the Internet" (Smith, 2011).

3.3.2 A chain reaction

As previously mentioned, after Ghonim's initiative, thousands of people joined the Facebook page and further shared their position regarding the current leaders. Below are just a couple of protesters' social media posts:

¹⁶ After the protests, he wrote a memoir aimed at analyzing the social media's impact, written for people who don't think they care about social media, but which should consider its ability to disrupt powerful institutions such as the one that the Egyptian revolution succeeded in overthrowing (Smith, 2011).

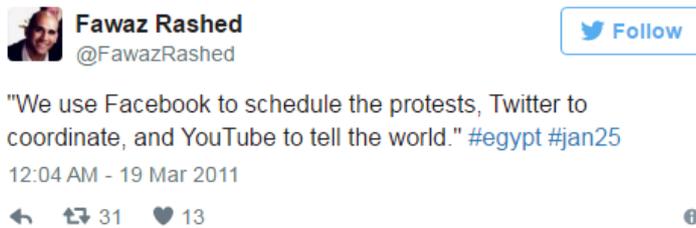


Figure 4. Egyptian revolution activist post (Twitter, 2011)

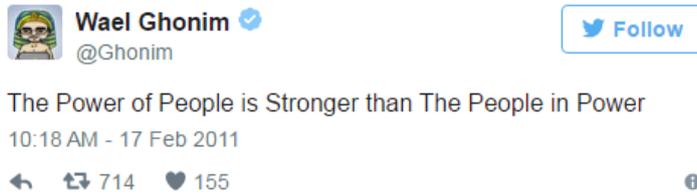


Figure 5. Egyptian revolution activist post (Twitter, 2011)



Figure 6. Man holding a poster reading "Facebook, #jan25, The Egyptian Social Network" during the 2011 protests (Wikipedia, 2011)

Following the notorious events, the revolutionary spirit was emphasized in social media posts, where, according to the *Project on Information Technology and Political Islam*, the number of tweets (such as #Jan25, #egypt), posted about the Egyptian revolution went from 2.300 to 230.000 daily days before President Mubarak resigned office on February 11th (Friedman, 2011). Further, according to a BBC report, the hashtag #I_participated_in_January_Revolution became an online battle symbol between

the protesters of the revolution and the ones who opposed the movement (BBC, 2016). Figure 7 below illustrates the 18th day of protest in Cairo, when more than 100.000 people turned Tahrir Square into a carnival of freedom after the resignation of Mubarak (BBC, 2012).



Figure 7. Day 18h of protests (AFP/BBC, 2012)

3.3.3. Outcomes

As a consequence of the massive population movement in the streets, most of the people's demands (Al Hussaini, 2011) were met, as follows: the resignation of President Mubarak, dissolving the Parliament, new minimum and maximum wages (Samir, 2015), dismantling the State Security Investigations Service (BBC, 2011), removing the SSI-controlled university police, the transfer of power from SCAF to civilian council (BBC, 2012).

Further, according to a Twitter report, the top hashtag used in 2011 was *#egypt*, which Twitter users used in order to relate to the Egyptian revolution. Another main hashtag of the events, *#jan25*, a reference to the spring of the uprising, was the eighth-most-popular hashtag. Also a consequence of the movement, Egypt and Cairo were the two most talked about countries, respectively cities in 2011, while President Mubarak's stepping down event was the most-discussed world news event, after the killing of Osama bin Laden (Friedman, 2011).

All-time Top 10 Hashtags related to #25jan

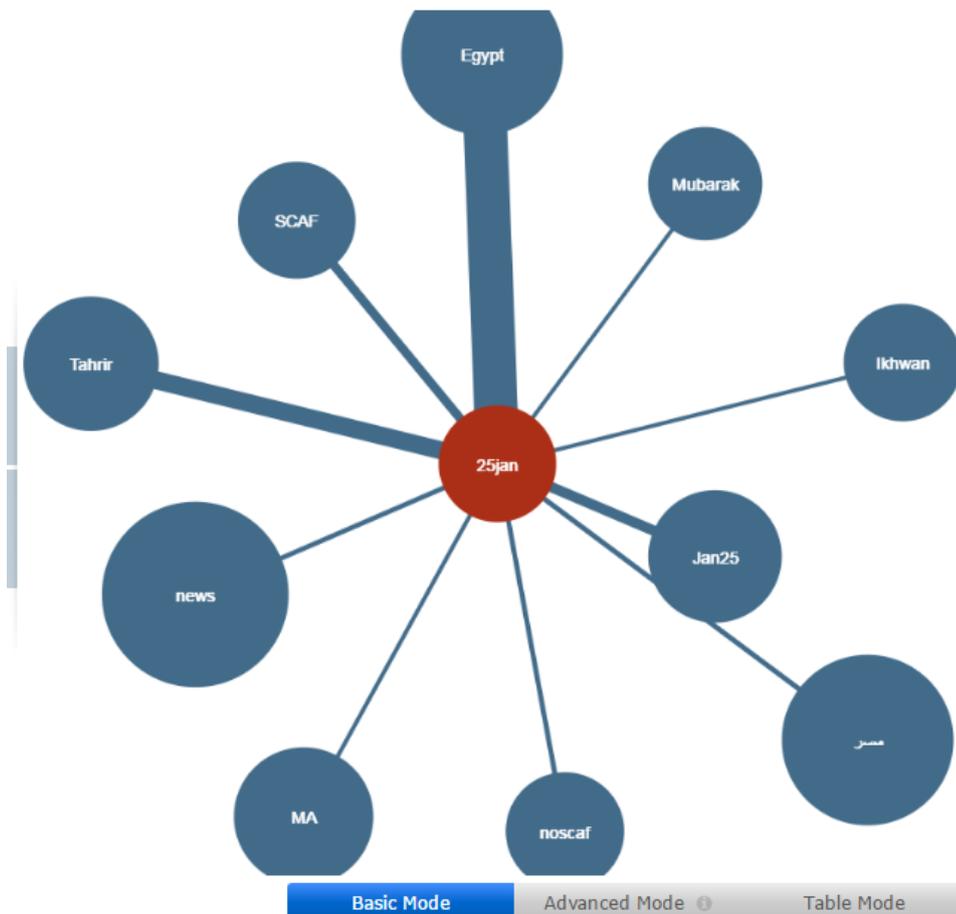


Figure 8. The hashtags connected to #25jan (Hashtagify, 2017)

Figure 8 above shows the connections that #25jan has on Twitter: #Egypt, #Mubarak, #Ikhwan (the Islamic militia), #Jan 25, #SCAF and #noscaf (a reference to the oppression of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces), #news, #Tahir.

The Egyptian revolution's unfolding and outcomes bring a couple of certainties to the table:

1. The revolution started online with Ghonim's *We are all Khaled Said* Facebook page.
2. The revolution used the dissemination of online messages through Facebook and Twitter in order to inform people about the current situation, and to encourage them to come and protest in the streets. Here, Facebook and Twitter provided the opportunities for organizing and protest that traditional methods couldn't (Shearlaw, 2016).
3. Ghonim became one of the leaders of the movement as a consequence.
4. The online-offline audiences were connected by the same purpose, and the same object, as presented in the first part of this Chapter, but they were not identical.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to provide a summary of the literature concepts relating to neoliberal online-offline social movements, focusing on the decisive new media features, particularly those representing social media, followed by the brief analysis of the Egyptian Facebook Revolution, as a relevant empirical instance.

To conclude this section, the literature identifies that the introduction of social media in social movements does not represent a case of spontaneity and unrestrained participation, but, in fact, it is defined by common mobilization factors and organizational structures: a collective identity, heterogeneous goals, a quest for participation and direct action, the identification of the adversary, an object considered at stake in the conflict, as well as the 'soft leaders' (Gerbaudo, 2012) who promote the pursuit of goals, develop strategies and help formulating the movement's ideology. The concept also implies a certain degree of emotional investment. With the mass media constituting a very important battleground for activists, the Internet is more and more integrated into resistance, since digital networks granted people and easier access to public speech, increased the speed and scale of group coordination, brought greater speed at a lower cost, adaptability, dispersion, and flexibility in both disseminating the information, and communicating between activists (Castells, 2004). These horizontal networks created a space for critiquing the rulers (Thompson, 1995, pp. 136-137, as referenced in Maly, forthcoming), therefore opposing them, and online communities can represent agents of change, by accelerating the movement's development and making its successful outcome more likely. Although the digital media do not fully replace offline meetings, social media platforms greatly reduce the reliance on local face-to-face networks as a channel or mobilization and offers people "*both a technology and space for expanding and sustaining the networks upon which social movements depend*" (Lim, 2012, p. 234). Resultantly, by providing a platform for social movements that allows the power to be shifted away from journalists and into the hands of activists (Gerbaudo, 2012), therefore enabling a tool for social and political participation, digital activism became the most common first tool of activists (Brodock et al., 2009). Lastly, although the modern concept of revolution is grounded in past theories, by comparing neoliberal movements with the traditional ones discussed in Chapter 2, it can be observed that violence, which absolutely ruled the traditional revolutions' events in order to unmistakably emerge freedom, does not apply to modern movements, while the mass political participation of the population, and especially offline mass participation, is a common aspect, as well as the core of the two types of movements: the change desired by the people. Having defined the conceptual framework, the following chapter moves on to consider the methodology of this research.

Chapter 4. #Rezist Revolution: How online activism succeeded in overthrowing the Romanian Government

Having defined the theoretical background, this chapter will describe and analyze how the #Rezist Revolution was constructed, how it was organized and how it developed, the actors that were involved in its unfolding, aiming to determine the relationship between its online development and the offline outcome. The mobilization of power that created the movement (Maly forthcoming) will establish the focus of the current chapter, by emphasizing how, in the context of a new political trend, the movement used new media “*to choreograph offline assembly*” (Gerbaudo, 2012, pp. 12-15). The manner that the national and international media perceived the movement will also be particularized, conjugated, needless to say, by its effects. This multifocal analysis – on- and offline, new media and mainstream media – will offer a description and understanding of how this movement uses new media, by sketching the relation between the different spaces of mobilization and political action (Maly, forthcoming).

4.1 Design and method

Using the information collected from social media, researchers can gain valuable insights into the beliefs, values, attitudes, and perceptions of social media users with regard to the utility of user-generated content and trust formation (Lai & To, 2015, pp. 138-152). Through Internet- and web-based technologies, “*social media transform broadcast media monologues (i.e., one-to-many) into social media dialogues (i.e., many-to-many)*” (Lai & To, 2015, p. 139).

The method used to analyze the events is *critical discourse analysis (CDA)*, a qualitative research method utilized to study how ideas are socially constructed through the way people think, speak and experience the social world around them (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 391), where *discourse*¹⁷ will be defined as a text, written or spoken, a language-in-action (Blommaert, 2005). Starting with the idea that discourse is an instrument of power, of increasing importance in contemporary societies (Blommaert, 2005, p. 25), and that individuals are products of their society, carrying with them the ‘social baggage’ in the forms of norms and assumptions (Matthews & Ross, 2010),

“CDA focuses its critique on the intersection of language/discourse/speech and social structure. It is in uncovering ways in which social structure relates to discourse patterns (in the form of power relations, ideological effects, and so forth), and in treating these relations as problematic”

¹⁷ According to Matthews & Ross (2010), “*trying to define discourse is problematic because it is a controversial and contested term, capable of many definitions, interpretations and usages*” (p. 391): either speech units larger than a sentence, literature or a conversation between two or more people. Familiar examples of discourse are, according to Blommaert (2005): political discourse, ideology, the discourse of economics, media language, institutional discourse, education and so on.

(Blommaert, 2005, p. 25).

Further, seen as a *social construction of reality*, where texts are communicative units which are embedded in social and cultural practices, discourses involve the *socially situated identities* that people use in order to enact and recognize in certain settings that they interact in (Paltridge, 2006, pp. 9-12). CDA analysis “*does not, therefore, understand itself as politically neutral [...], but as a critical approach which is politically committed to social change*” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 64). Discourse, therefore, will be regarded in this research as being socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned (Blommaert, 2005, p. 25).

The data collected comes from social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, from both individual pages and groups, as well as online media publications. The data collection has been effectuated between January 2017 and July 2017, both during and after the protests ended, and it has been performed without using any computer-aided lexical analysis. The units of analysis used in order to answer the problem statement will be written narrative units, in the form of social media posts, and news articles, accompanied by the afferent photos, due to the specifics of the digital media analyzed. The texts representing the social media posts/placards/news articles will be further regarded as *excerpts*. All the textual messages will be translated from Romanian into English.

Additionally, considering the nonlinear forms of communication that the social media implies as a participatory web, Unger et al. (2016) indicate the usefulness of more observational research approaches. Consequently, during the entire process of data collection, instead of treating the communicative data as isolated texts, I used passive observation in order to establish how social media features influence the interconnectivity between users, the organizational dimension of groups and so on¹⁸. Aiming to make sense of the data collected and to highlight the important messages and findings, the outcomes of the research will represent a comparison between the conclusions reached in the theoretical review (thus Chapters 2 and 3) and the empirical research performed in this chapter. Considering that “*perhaps the most basic principle we have to use is that we cannot do without context, that we absolutely need it in any kind of analysis*” (Blommaert, 2005, pp. 40-41), what follows is a brief presentation of the movement’s context, in order to create a comprehensive perspective on the matter.

¹⁸ Note: I joined all the Facebook groups which will be discussed in this chapter. However, knowing that online activism will be my thesis topic since before the Romanian protests were ignited in January 2017, I did not participate in the online conversations of the mentioned groups due to objectivity reasons. My research activity there was based almost exclusively on the observation of the message transmitted. Needless to say, as the topic represents a vivid interest for me, I will mention that I did use my personal social media pages a couple of times in order to comment, share, or post messages regarding the ongoing Romanian events, and I’ve also published a column about it in Tilburg University’s *Diggit* magazine. However, in order to avoid any interference with the validity of this thesis outcomes, I did not include any of my personal opinions neither in the data collection or its analysis, nor in the results reporting of the current dissertation.

4.2 The rise of the Romanian online activism

Since the 1989 revolution, which pulled the country out of the communist regime, Romanians have shown several instances of mass protests. I remember being a student in Bucharest during 2011-2014: different associations were trying to get people to participate in protests through social media campaigns, such as the Rosia Montana movement, when thousands of people went out in the streets of several Romanian cities to protest against the exploitation of Rosia Montana and the rich mineral resources of the area. After the draft legislation poised to give the green light for working on the gold mine was enforced in August 2013, the Rosia Montana campaign was initially organized by locals who would have been affected by the mining pollution. The campaign messages were spread through social media, and a mass of protesters went into the streets as an opposition movement to the legislation (Banos Ruiz, 2016). The movement captured the international attention, and solidarity protests took place in other European cities. Oana Mondoc, a Romanian London-based campaigner, declared during a protest at the Romanian Embassy in London:

"It is the symbolic fight of our generation. It's one of the biggest things happening at home and we found out about it through Facebook and Twitter. Romanians are not known to protest and to question, so the turnout back home was huge" (Wong, 2013).



Figure 9. Demonstrations against the Rosia Montana Gold Corporation (AFP/Getty Images, 2013)

Excerpt 1. *Participation revives the country.*

As a consequence of the extensive nationwide protests and social pressure, the Romanian Prime

Minister, Victor Ponta, has conceded that the decision to open Europe's biggest gold mine was likely to fail - "Basically, today we must rapidly begin the rejection proceedings in the Senate, then in the Lower House, and that's it", Ponta said after a coalition partner earlier announced that they could not support the project (McDonald-Gibson, 2013). Not unexpectedly, the Rosia Montana movement was only the beginning of the Romanian offline movements generated as an aftermath of online assembly. The current President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis, was elected in November 2014 after a massive social media movement, resulted in the Romanians living in diaspora inundating the voting stations in European cities. Consequently, Iohannis won the elections in a *surprise presidential victory* (Rodina, 2014).

A final major social movement before the #RezistRevolution set the grounds for its development - the #Colectiv Revolution. Briefly offering a storyboard of the events, on October 30th, 2015, a deadly fire erupted in Bucharest's Colectiv nightclub, killed 64 people and injured 147 (Rosioru, 2016). After the investigation showed that the building was completely unfit for public events, but had an operating permit nevertheless, the already shocked and grieved public used social media to blame the current Government and the Prime Minister, Victor Ponta (Cojocariu, 2015). On November 3rd, 15.000 people protested in the University Square in Bucharest (Agerpres, 2015)¹⁹. The Romanian President, Klaus Iohannis, supported the masses' idea that the Government should pay the price. His position is exemplified in the below Figure 10/Excerpt 2 representing two Facebook statements following the major protests. Another relevant post can be found in Appendix B.

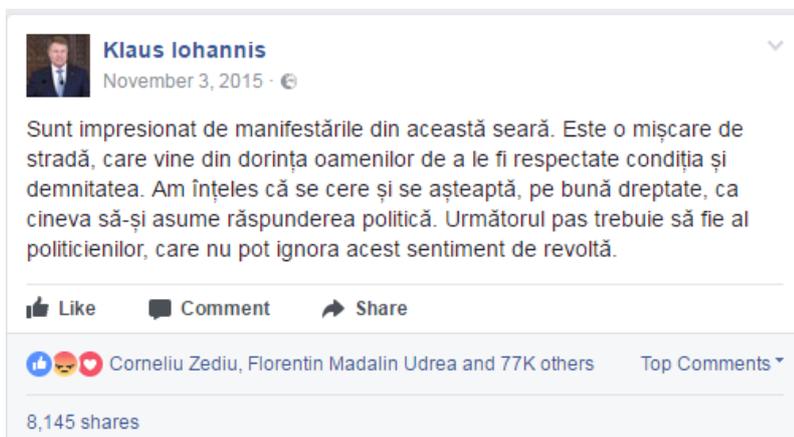


Figure 10. President Iohannis #colectiv protests-related Facebook post (Facebook, 2015)

Excerpt 2. *I am impressed by this evening's manifestations. It is a street movement that comes from people's desire to have their condition and dignity respected. I understand that action is required and it is rightly expected that someone will assume the political responsibility. The next step must come from the politicians, who cannot ignore this feeling of rebellion.*

4.2.1 From indignation to networked social movements

¹⁹ Note: see Appendix A for a picture of the protests.

As a consequence, on the morning of November 4th, Prime Minister Ponta resigned, along with the entire cabinet - *"As the Prime Minister, [...] I have an obligation to see the legitimate anger in society and to have greater responsibilities than the owners [of the club]. [...] I can handle any battle with political opponents, but I simply cannot battle the people of this country. [...] I hope the Government's resignation will satisfy the people who came out in the streets"*, Ponta said in a statement (Covrig, 2015). Despite the resignation, protests continued for six more consecutive nights, while protests in solidarity with those in the country took place in London, Paris, and Madrid. As a result, not only the government resigned, but, as requested by the public, it changed to a technocrat one. #Colectiv was the hashtag used by protesters on social media, which eventually became the name of the movement.

4.3 #Rezist Revolution unfolded

As previously introduced in the conceptual framework, Castells (2013, p. 38) sees the Internet as the birthplace of the new networked social movements - *"usually triggered by a spark of indignation either related to a specific event or to a peak of disgust with the actions of rulers. In all cases, they are originated by a call to action from the space of flows that aims to create an instant community of insurgent practice in the space of places* (Castells, 2013, p. 11). The spark of indignation mentioned by Castells was, in this case, the Emergency Ordinance 13/2017 (OUG 13/2017), which would only punish fraud if the sum involved was higher than 200.000 RON (44.000 EUR). In January 2017, only a couple of days after the Government lead by the Prime Minister Sorin Grindeanu was inaugurated, street protests began in Romania against the Government's pledges and the amendment of the Criminal Code²⁰. On the first day, January 18, about 5,000 people protested in Romania, of which nearly 4,000 were in Bucharest. In the following days, the protests have escalated, rising in 55 Romanian cities (Gandul.info, 2017).

Started online as a wave of resistance against the Emergency Ordinance 13, the offline protests peaked on Sunday, February 5, when more than 500,000 demonstrators protested in Bucharest alone, plus another half million in other major Romanian cities, as well as diaspora cities, despite the fact that, earlier that day, the Government had announced the repealing of the ordinance, breaking under the

²⁰ Although the Grindeanu Government repeatedly denied the existence of emergency ordinances on pardoning and amnesty for the committed crimes, there were strong rumors in the media about the government's intention to pass these normative acts on January 18, 2017 (Tapalaga, 2017). Since the Government did not publish the agenda of the government meeting for that day, President Iohannis made the decision to attend and chair the meeting (Hotnews, 2017), in accordance with Article 87 of the Constitution (The Romanian Constitution, 2003). Despite the Prime Minister's initial attempt to block the press, the media announced that there were, in fact, two draft normative acts, a draft law on pardon and amnesty, and an emergency ordinance of the Government to amend the Criminal Code. Iohannis also announced that the Prime Minister has assured him that these normative acts will not be transmitted without a transparent process, including consultation with competent judicial institutions, as well as public opinion (Mediafax, 2017). Regardless, after the Minister of Justice, Florin Iordache, announced in the media, on January 31st, around midnight, the publication of the emergency ordinance 13/2017, which would have amended the Penal Code by decriminalizing acts of abuse in office (Gandul.info, 2017), the protests were ignited.

undisputable pressure of the public (Stirile TVR, 2017). On February 8th, only three days after the law was repealed as a response to the overwhelming street protests, the Minister of Justice, Florin Iordache, resigned. Protests became known unofficially under the name #rezist revolution, the hashtag with which many Facebook users have identified themselves with (Sputniknews.com, 2017).

4.4 #Rezist Revolution - the online infrastructure

Being described the context in which #Rezist Revolution developed, the further section will analyze the entire movement, by applying some concepts discussed in the conceptual framework of this thesis, concepts that will emphasize how, according to Gerbaudo (2012, p. 96), social media involved an *emotional choreography*, which impacted a deep transformation of the experience of solidarity and cooperation constructed among an online public, and the symbolic and physical harvesting of individual indignation.

As established, a revolution requires a certain infrastructure that will represent the organizational ground of the entire movement. #Rezist Revolution's online development relied on an integrated infrastructure, consisting of popular messages (such as *#rezist*, *#corruptionkills*), both online and offline, 'soft leaders' (Gerbaudo, 2012), and the online communities which engaged in collective actions with a certain purpose (Elliot & Kraemer, 2008, p. 239). These communities were created through Facebook groups, which people joined in order to exchange ideas about the events without having to meet in person (Gordon, 2017, p. 17). Building further on the concept of the movement infrastructure, this section will approach different constitutive elements, which will ultimately outline its structure.

One of the movement's most notorious Facebook groups which served as an online meeting place for the protesters during the #Rezist Revolution was *600.000 pentru Romania (600.000 for Romania)*, currently²¹ still active, although the name has suffered a modification, now being called *600.000 for the resistance*. The name of the group, which in August 2017 had more than 18.500 members, was a reference to the peak-night of the demonstrations, when more than 500.000 people gathered in the Victoria Square and other Romanian and diaspora cities in order to express their protest against the Government, even after the Emergency Ordinance 13/2017 was repealed. Figure 11 below illustrates the cover photo of the group, making reference to the aim of 600.000 protesters encouraged to get out in the streets, and the 64 people who died in the Colectiv fire, hence linked to the movement. Further, Excerpts 3 and 4²² represent two instances of posts encouraging people to keep the offline protests going, believed to be able to *bring the change*.

²¹ Last checked on August 3rd, 2017.

²² The original posts can be found in Appendices 3 and 4.



Figure 11. 600.000 for Romania Facebook page cover, making reference to the goal of 600.000 protesters encouraged to protest in the streets, and the 64 people who died in the Colectiv fire (Facebook, 2017)

Excerpt 3: *Day 48 update: The 21st hour is the hour of the national anthem. It has been, it is and it will be tomorrow as well, and the day after that...it will be... we #resist, we #willnotstop, we #willnotleave. We are the #chinezedrop, #slowbutcertain, #wewillcontinue, #let's put pressure on them. See you tomorrow in the Square [a reference to Victoria Square]. Now I bid you good night!*

In Excerpt 3, the social actor *we* (identified in the Romanian version in the first-person plural form of the verbs) is used six times, positioning *we* as the subject, while the object is *them*. It can be observed that the grammar features of this posts show the two main roles of this revolution: the protagonists (*we*) and the antagonists (*them*), which are being put *pressure* on. Further, the idea of resistance is iterated through the hashtags used: *we resist, we will not stop, we will not leave, we will continue*.

Excerpt 4. *Respect, you beautiful, dignified, and free people! We'll see each other in the streets, on Sunday! We fight, resist, united we shall save, united we shall bring the change!*

In Excerpt 4, besides the usage of “*we*” as a unifying term, which also points the solidarity discussed in Chapter 3, the colourful, descriptive language, as well as terms such as *united, save, change* indicate the protesters’ view on the movement’s identity and their goal for achieving change. Both Excerpts 3 and 4 include a clear call for protest, addressing the readers of this post, one of the key features of collective action²³.

Excerpt 5²⁴. *We are the #REZISTANCE*

WHAT WE WANT: Together we save the entire Romania!

WHO: All Romanians who want the anti-corruption fight to be a success, the true values to be promoted in Romania, the ones who want Romania to be a country of common sense, civic spirit, a rich country, with people who live in good conditions, a country in which the Romanians who were forced to work abroad come back home, a country where the children are respected and raised with great care, a

²³ See Figure 3 (Chapter 3).

²⁴ The complete version can be found in Appendix 5.

Romania belonging to the Romanians.

HOW: If you want to join this group, it means you want to contribute to the above, by:

- positive attitude and civic spirit*
- proposing solutions [...]*
- active participation in events and events organized by the group*
- informing the group's administrators of serious issues that may affect Romania by sending an email to rezistent@rezist.ro*

WHY?

- because we are tired*
- because we want a beautiful country, with intact forests, not illegally defrauded*
- because we want a country with healthy people, not going to hospitals and getting even sicker*
- because we want a country based on meritocracy*
- because we want a transparent state system*
- because we want a country without corruption*

The solidarity *we* (used 10 times in the complete version found in Appendix E), the call for participation (further exemplified in Appendix F) and civic spirit is reiterated in Excerpt 5, representing a part of #REZISTENTA Facebook group²⁵'s description. The Excerpt also indicates the main goals of the movement (however, as decided by the admins): a transparent, corruption-free country.

4.5 The #Rezist Revolution messages - a call for protests

In terms of messages, the #rezist (*resist*) hashtag used on social media was the *leitmotiv* of the entire process, referring to the resistance that the protesters were showing against the authorities. People were encouraged on social media to get in the streets and protest against the Government's corruption. This linked #rezist to other hashtags, such as: #coruptiaucide (*the corruption kills*), #democracy, #romanianprotests, #RuleOfLaw, #neamsaturat (*we had enough*), #rezidenta (*the resistance*). The below Figure 12, a Hashtagify diagram, checked on May 2017, shows the connections between the hashtags.

²⁵ #REZISTENTA (*the RESISTANCE*) Facebook group's name is a reference to the #rezist hashtag used during #rezist revolution. On 25th of July 2017, the closed group had more than 58.000 members.

All-time Top 10 Hashtags related to #rezist

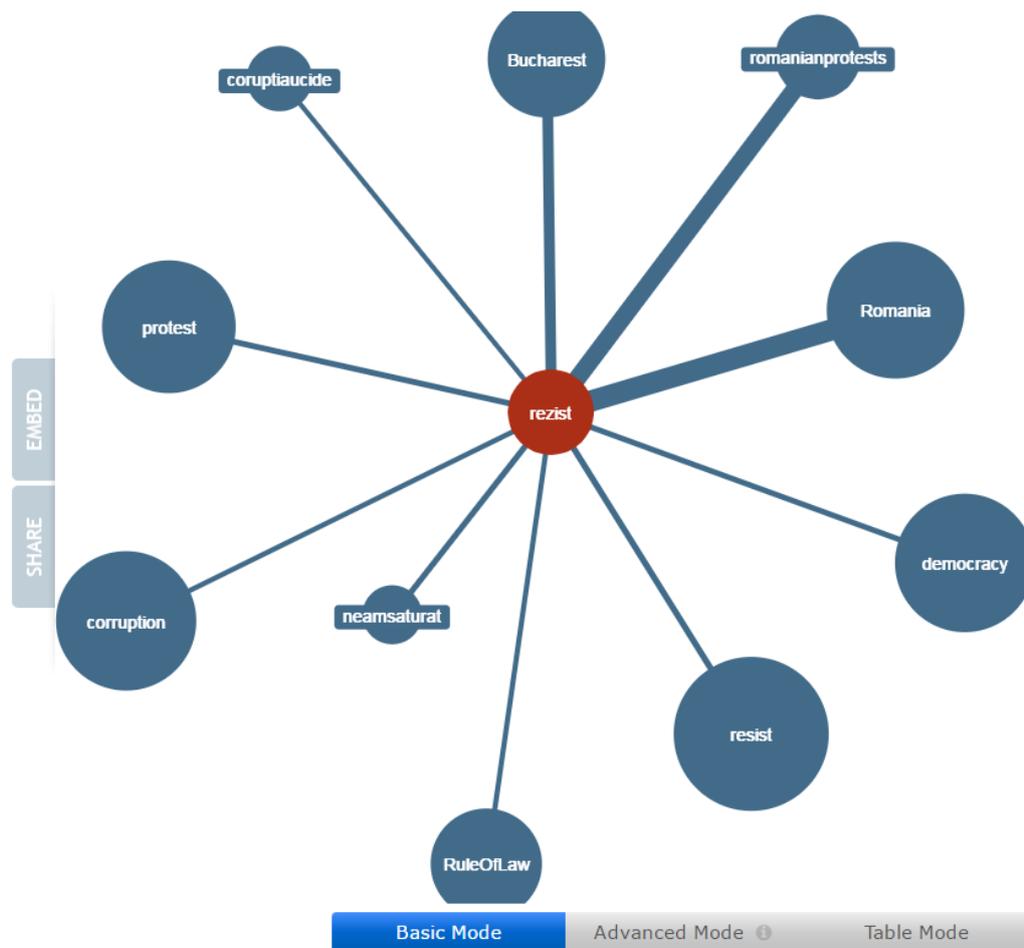


Figure 12. #rezist and the hashtags connected to it (Hashtagify.me, 2017)

Figure 12 displays the main hashtag used and the related ones. Taking into consideration that contextualization “comprises all activities by participants which make relevant, maintain, revise, cancel ... any aspect of context which, in turn, is responsible for the interpretation of an utterance in its particular locus of occurrence” (Auer, 1992, as cited in Blommaert, 2005, p. 41), the related hashtags are useful in determining that context. Ergo, these hashtags indicate a vivid portrayal of the movement’s collective identity communicated by the activists through their discourse: a democratic, corruption-free Romania, achieved through people’s protests, which were ignited by the Government’s corruption deemed (by the protesters) dangerous enough to even kill people.

Figures 13-16 below offer an exemplification of the #rezist usage by the protesters, both online and offline. Appendices G - I extend the exemplification.

Anca Drăghia with Ioana Anastasia Constantin at Piața Victoriei.

15 mins · Bucharest, Romania · 🌐

Până vine milioanele de susținători PSD, rezistăm.



Figure 13. Until the PSD's million of supporters show up, we will resist (Anca Draghia, Facebook, 2017)

Cristi Purice with Moldoveanu Stefan at Victory Square, Bucharest.

15 mins · Bucharest, Romania · 🌐

#rezist



Figure 14. Another #rezist message used during the protests (Cristi Purice, Facebook, 2017)

Irina Nita
2 hrs · 🌐

Miercurea la birou



Figure 15. (Wednesday at the office) The #rezist message written in the snow (Irina Nita, Facebook, February 2017)



Figure 16. The former Minister of Health's Facebook profile picture during the protests (Vlad Voiculescu, Facebook, 2017)



Figure 17. The former Minister of Health’s Facebook encouragement to get in the street and protest (Vlad Voiculescu, Facebook, 2017)

The above Figure 17 shows a Facebook conversation between the former technocrat Minister of Health, Vlad Voiculescu, who occupied the Minister chair as a consequence of the #Colectiv Revolution, and a Romanian student abroad, visiting Utrecht at that moment, during protests, on February 3rd.

Excerpt 6. Vlad Voiculescu: *Get out in the streets and protest! #utrechtprotest*

Silviana Uta: *We have #amsterdamprotests right next to us* [reference to the supporting protests that were taking place in Amsterdam at the moment].



Figure 18. 600.000 for Romania Facebook page post, encouraging people to come in the streets and protest (Andi Carlan, Facebook, March 2017)

Excerpt 7. Andi Carlan: *Isn't it true that you missed this picture? Tonight, at 18:00, we'll see each other*

in the Victoria Square, with the #REZIST badges. We have a couple more, so whoever comes first is going to be the first to get tagged.

Stoica Ritta: We #resisted today as well.

Figure 18 is another instance of offline #rezist usage - people created stickers and pins with the message, further enforcing the hashtag as a symbol of resistance against the Government.

Lastly, Appendix J illustrates another call for protests, made on March 20th on *Coruptia Ucide* (*Corruption Kills*) Facebook group, another #rezist-related page, after the main offline #Rezist Revolution protests came to an end. Below is a fragment of the translation, while the complete text can be found in Appendix J.

Excerpt 8. Coruptia Ucide: We are 51.000 members in Coruptia Ucide page. However, there are only a couple of thousands left in the streets. We would like to know from you why you haven't been in the streets lately. [...]

Doru Nadoleanu: Is it really not clear that we cannot spend 4 years in the streets? Is it not clear that we need a decisive political and social action?

Ion Stanculescu: We stayed in the streets almost our entire life... and we have hopes in these beautiful and smart children, and us behind them, for a clean and fair country.

Moreover, the essential role that emotions had during #Rezist Revolution was specifically emphasized in terms of its dawn. Fueled by the idea that #corruptionkills (#coruptiaucide), one of the main messages of #Colectiv Revolution, which #Rezist Revolution also plentifully used, as indicated by the previous figures and excerpts, aimed not only the perceived corruption of the Government, but also the major negative implications that it may have for the Romanian people, including tragic outcomes such as the Colectiv fire. As Gordon (2017) points out, without the pulse of the collective, and the general sentiment of shared grievances of the large number of people, the sheer social medium and the social media combined will not work in mobilizing people; thus, the role that the emotions play in online activism cannot be ignored.

Directly connected to the messages used during the #Rezist Revolution, as stated above, the Colectiv tragedy had its impact on the Romanian public. This view fuelled by mainstream media, which broadcasted powerful images of the events: the burned victims, their parents and friends crying in front of hospitals after finding out that their child, their brother, their friend was one of the victims killed by the fire. Figure 19 below represents an instance of such.



Figure 19. Colectiv victim transported to the hospital (DC News, 2015)

Accordingly, the protesters used the importance of a corruption-free Romania in their messages and stressed the weighty implications that a law which encourages corruption, such as the emergency ordinance 13/2017, may have for Romania. Figure 20 below illustrates one of the placards used during the #Rezist Revolution, representing a reference to the 64 fatal victims of the Colectiv fire.



Figure 20. #colectiv hashtag during #Rezist Revolution (Irina Rusu, Instagram, 2017)

Excerpt 9. *When you count the people in the streets, add 64 #COLECTIV*

Another appeal to emotions was made through references connected to the '89 Revolution, which ended the communist regime in Romania, and resulted in the death of 1142 people and other 3,138 wounded people, mostly protesting civilians (The State Secretariat for Revolutionary Affairs report, 2005).



Figure 21. February protests placard (Valentin Voiculescu, Facebook, 2017)

Excerpt 10. December 24th, 1989. You died in vain, father.



Figure 22. A.R.C.E.N 89 revolution-related Facebook post (A.R.C.E.N, Facebook, 2017)

Figure 22 above represents the *Romanian Association for Culture, Education and Normality's* (A.R.C.E.N) Facebook post, displaying two pictures, as a connection between the goal of the '89 revolution (the left picture - *Our children shall be free*), a traditional model, where protests and violence, both civil and military took place, and the #Rezist Revolution (the right picture - *The Revolution's children are here!*), an online initiated movement, translated into offline protests. The same reference is illustrated in Appendix K.

4.6 The leaders

It was established in the third chapter that *"the complex of figuration of meetings arenas in a social*

movement or protest mobilization constitutes an infrastructure that synchronizes the dispersed activities of moving actions in time and space. This infrastructure is not an entirely emergent phenomenon but is also the result of conscious decisions by organizers” (Haug, 2013, p.1, as cited in Gordon, 2017, p.11). During the #Rezist Revolution, the soft leaders (Gerbaudo, 2012) were impersonated by opinion leaders, Government-opposing politicians, and Facebook pages admins, who systematically encouraged people to join the offline protests and revolt against the Government’s corruption, both during the offline protests development, and after the street demonstrations came to an end. Appendix L/Excerpt 11 represent an instance of #Rezist Revolution-related Facebook groups posts: Caleen Pop, admin for #REZISTENTA, talking about Mihai N. Tudorica and Andrei Rosu, admins and founders of 600.000 for Romania and #REZISTENTA. Below is the excerpt of the post; the full translation can be found in Appendix L.

Excerpt 11. Dear friends, tonight, initiators and administrators of the Facebook groups #REZISTENTA and 600,000 for Romania had our first common meeting, an opportunity to know us personally. Andrei and Mihai had the initiative to set up the groups, desiring that the positive energy of the people who came out of protest, beginning with the end of January, should not be lost but rather transformed into concrete actions to help changing the situation in which Romania is at this moment.

The issues debated all the time in the group discussions were multiple, as are the problems of our country, and will not be solved within a month or two. But out of all the debates between the volunteer members of these two groups (some of us and you), it has become clear that we want a different Romania, based on truth, respect and meritocracy [...].

Further, Appendix M/Excerpt 12 illustrate a Facebook post of Cristian Ducu, a University of Bucharest Professor, and Senior Expert in Ethics & Compliance, Sustainability, and Organisational Change, Lead Ethics Auditor at Centre for Advanced Research in Management and Applied Ethics.

Excerpt 12. Grindeanu announced that, in fact, he is not giving up, but, on the contrary, the emergency ordinance 13/2017 will be ‘repealed, prorogue or in another way’ just so that he can send it to the Parliament. #resignation #ciordache [a linguistic combination between lordache, the name of the former Minister of Justice, and ‘a ciordi’, which means ‘to steal’, making, therefore, reference to the Government’s corruption] #theciordeanugovernment #weresist. The biggest mistake would be for the square [reference to Victoria Square] to retreat now. Nothing is solved yet. PSD believes that it committed a communication error, not a profoundly immoral deed.

In both #Colectiv Revolution and #Rezist Revolution, non-traditional leaders rallied people using media in order to create a unitary movement with a specific goal. In the #Colectiv Revolution’s case, the aim was the removal of the current Government. In the #Rezist Revolution’s case, the goal was the repealing of OUG 13/2017. Although both movements focused on a corruption-free political class, by creating a moral battle between the Government and the protesters, each of them targeted different

specific objectives, as seen in the messages used both online and offline.

4.7 The offline outcome

In the third chapter, Gordon (2017) makes another relevant point for the purpose of this thesis, by using Haug (2013) as a reference: the ideas of combining *social movements as actors* to *social movements like spaces* emphasizes the importance of face to face meetings and actual convergence onto a physical space such as the Victoria Square or the University Square in Bucharest, where the Romanian protests concentrated.

As mentioned in the conceptual framework, democracy and freedom of speech construct the context in which on ground social movements take place, where citizens have the freedom, guaranteed by law, to express their political, social or other opinions, to organize rallies, demonstrations, processions and any other meetings. In Romania, according to the Article 2 of Law no. 60/1991, public meetings - rallies, demonstrations, sports competitions, processions and the like - to be held in *markets, on public roads or in other open air places* can only be organized after prior announcement²⁶. (The Romanian Constitution, n.d.)

Social movements' strategies are the product of interplay of structure and agency "*as activists seek to respond to changing political and cultural circumstances and maximize their impact*" (Meyer and Staggenborg, 2012, p.4, as cited in Gordon, 2017, p.12), where the decisions are made based on incrementally formed web of relations. These relations allow activists to make choices about how to conduct a collective action regarding demands, partners, media frameworks, resources and tactics. Three major factors of strategic decision-making are emphasized: "*the demands or claims made by the collective actors*" (in this case, the repealing of the emergency ordinance 13/2017), "*the arenas or venues of collective action*" (the Victoria Square in Bucharest, and other diaspora cities, such as Berlin, as seen in Figures 23-24 below, and Appendices N-O), and "*the tactics of forms of collective action*" (Meyer & Staggenborg, 2012, p.5, as cited in Gordon, 2017, p.12).

²⁶ According to Law no. 60/1991, for organizing the public assemblies, the applicants shall address in writing to the mayor of the territorial-administrative unit on whose radius the assembly is to be held. The organizers of the public assemblies shall submit the written declaration to the municipal, town or communal city halls on the territory of which they are to be held at least 3 days before the date of their performance, mentioning information such as: the name under which the organizer group is known; the purpose; the place, date, time of start and duration of the action; the approximate number of participants; people empowered to ensure and respond to organizational measures; the services they require from the local council, the local police and the gendarmerie. It is not necessary to declare in advance the public assemblies whose purpose is the cultural, artistic, sporting, religious, commemorative manifestations, those occasioned by official visits or taking place within the premises of the public or private legal entities (The Romanian Constitution, n.d.).



Copyright Dan Mihai Balanescu

Figure 23. Romanian protesters form a huge tricolor flag in Victoria Square (Dan Mihai Balanescu, 2017)

 Alex Pasca shared Horga Violeta Dora's post.
March 19

Protest artistic la Londra



Horga Violeta Dora ▸ Protestatari PRO DEMOCRATIE Londra
March 19

Protest cultural !!❤️❤️ Multumesc celor care si au luat din putinul timp liber si au venit!

Like Comment Share

164

Figure 24. London supporting protests (Alex Pasca, Facebook, 2017)

4.8 Media reactions and counter media movements

Another digital element of the #Rezist Revolution was the national media covering the event. As it will be observed, the media trusts were generally divided into two categories: the one which supported

the move - Digi24, along with other Romanian media trusts such as Realitatea TV, and the one who opposed it, Antena 3 and Romania TV, known for their PSD support (Fairpress.eu, 2017). The media covering of the protests reflected these political directions. Figures 25 and 26 illustrate two Digi24 and Realitatea TV protest-coverage instances, while figures 27 and 28 show the Antena 3 and Realitatea TV perspective.



Figure 25. Digi24 Facebook #rezist Facebook post (Facebook, January 2017)

Excerpt 13. *BREAKING NEWS | S. Grindeanu: OUG 13, repealed. OUG 13 | Day 5. The street #rezists*



Figure 26. Realitatea TV, Games of Power (Realitatea TV, January 2017)

Excerpt 14. *The streets are chanting: PSD, PSD, go in URSS* [a reference to the negative association between PSD and the Soviet Union].



Figure 27. Antena 3 protests coverage (Antena 3, January 2017)

Excerpt 15. *The fire did not succeed, the coup d'etat continues* [a reference to the Colectiv fire, and Bamboo fire²⁷ (Paginademedia.ro, 2017), supposedly used by the Government's opposition in order to create a coup d'etat (Obae, 2017)]



Figure 28. Romania TV protests coverage (Romania TV, January 2017)

Excerpt 16. *Immediately: New scandalous disclosures from Iohannis's protests. Iohannis forces a coup d'état*

As it can be observed in the Excerpts 15 and 16, Antena 3 and Romania TV presented the events as a coup d'état attempt organized by President Iohannis (also indicated by Appendices P-S). Additionally, starting February 5, concomitant with the #rezist protests, a smaller crowd of people (between 1,500 and 2,500) gathered in front of the Cotroceni Palace, the official Presidential residence, expressing

²⁷ On 21st of January 2017, a fire broke out at the Bamboo nightclub in the capital. No fatalities were reported (Agerpres, 2017).

their support for the Grindeanu Government and opposition for Iohannis and the Victoria Square protests (Stirile ProTv, 2017). This counter-protest, which supported the coup d'etat claim, ended on February 12th. Further, according to Fair Press (2017), after the protests coverage, eight of the top ten advertising clients which Antena 3 had in January withdrew their advertising or have reduced it substantially, while nine of Romania TV customers did the same. In addition, The National Audiovisual Council sanctioned the two TV stations with fines of 50,000 RON on the grounds of public injunctions for irregularities in programs that reflected protests on January 22, after the forum received approximately 690 complaints on the subject (DigiTV, 2017).

4.9 International reactions

When it comes to the international reactions to the #rezist movement, a point taken into consideration is that “modern communication created a global village, which increased the awareness of others in distant parts of the world” (Miller, 2016, p. 31). The geographical constraints become less relevant to one’s social horizons and, in front of events with a powerful emotional load, people become what Miller describes as mediated spectators, where modernity created a worldwide community of witnesses to global events. The international media discussed the event and its implications, focusing on the way the #rezist protests caused the OUG 13/2017 to be repealed, and on the power of democracy used by the protesters in an *impressive democratic movement*, where it is certain that *anti-corruption activism in Romania is here to stay* (Abaseaca, 2017), as seen in Figures 29-32.



Figure 29. Kai Frithjof Brand-Jacobsen post regarding the events (Facebook, 2017).

Romania has recently seen the biggest pro-democracy and anti-corruption protests since the end of communism more than 25 years ago. The opinion that these events were organized by the secret services is a very distant departure from the true reasons, suggests Lucian Ancu.

Figure 30. News article excerpt on the #rezist movement (Swissinfo.ch, 2017).

LETTER FROM BUCHAREST

10 days that shook Romania

There is no right or left in Romania's protests. It is an example of direct, participatory democracy.

Figure 31. Politico news article excerpt on the #rezist movement (Politico, 2017).

AT A time when democracy is eroding in several nations in Central and Eastern Europe, an encouraging countermovement [has suddenly erupted in Romania](#), a formerly Communist nation of 20 million on the Black Sea. For the past week, huge demonstrations by hundreds of thousands of people have rocked the capital, Bucharest, and other major cities in what has been widely described as the largest political mobilization since the collapse of the Communist regime in 1989. The rallying point has been simple, direct and, given the country's history, inspiring: a demand that the government not relax anti-corruption laws.

Figure 32. The Washington Post news article excerpt on the #rezist movement (The Washington Post, 2017).

The results obtained from the analysis of the data, both from the empirical study case and the theoretical concepts previously discussed, are described in the following chapter.

Chapter 5. Results

This dissertation has attempted to provide an answer to the following problem statement: *How did the online dimension of #Rezist Revolution influence its offline revolutionary outcome?* In order to do so, the three research questions will be answered first, based on the findings of each afferent chapter.

What are the characteristics of a revolution?

What was found in Chapter 2 indicates that the logic a revolution follows requires a clear *purpose*, usually directed towards changing the ruling class/regime, which must be associated with a negative image and therefore suffer moral and political disintegration (Becker, 1937). The *change*, which represents the end goal of the movement and a fundamental premise for revolutions, is achieved through certain *acts* (Arendt, 1963). The on point acts must involve a *mass participation of the population* and a broad popular support. Ultimately, a revolution needs a dedicated elite (Johnson, 1964, as referenced in Stone, 1966), a leading class which will plan and support the movement.

What are the online features of a neoliberal revolution?

Chapter 3 focused on the role that new media, especially social media, has in the neoliberal social movements, emphasizing the online/digital features of a movement of such. The findings indicate that the introduction of digital in social movements is defined by a series of common mobilization factors and organizational structures: a collective identity, heterogeneous goals, a quest for participation and direct action, the identification of the adversary, an object considered at stake in the conflict, as well as the 'soft leaders' (Gerbaudo, 2012) who promote the pursuit of goals, develop strategies and help formulating the movement's ideology. The outcome of the literature review performed in Chapter 2 connect the features of neoliberal revolutions with the traditional types of revolution, notwithstanding, however, some key differences between them, such as the fact that there is no mandatory violence in the neoliberal revolutions. Further, in neoliberal revolutions, the Internet is more and more integrated into resistance, since digital networks granted people and easier access to public speech, increased the speed and scale of group coordination, brought greater speed with lower costs, adaptability, dispersion, and flexibility in both disseminating the information, and communicating between activists (Castells, 2004). The horizontal networks created position the online communities as agents of change, by accelerating the movement's development and making its successful outcome more likely. Although the digital media do not fully replace offline meetings, social media platforms greatly reduced the reliance on local face-to-face networks as a channel or mobilization and offers people "*both a technology and space for expanding and sustaining the networks upon which social movements depend*" (Lim, 2012, p. 234). By providing a platform for social movements that allows the power to be shifted away from journalists and into the hands of activists

(Gerbaudo, 2012), therefore enabling a tool for social and political participation, digital activism became the most common first tool of activists (Brodock et al., 2009).

Within the context of the Romanian #Rezist Revolution, what is the relationship between its online dimension and the offline outcome?

In the analysis performed in Chapter 4, a positive correlation was found between the online-offline dimensions of the #Rezist Revolution. Firstly, the online infrastructure represented by the Facebook groups dedicated to the movement indicates an experience of solidarity and cooperation in terms of goals and the actions taken towards the achievement of those goals. The following Figure 33 shows the infrastructure of the movement and the connections between the two online-offline dimensions:

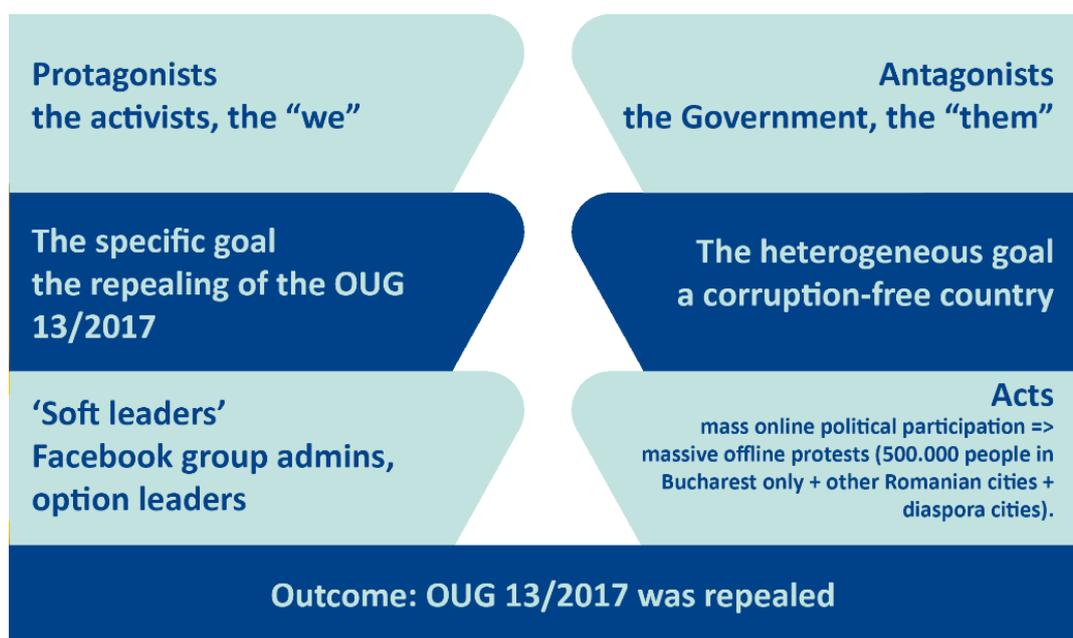


Figure 33. #Rezist Revolution infrastructure (created by the author)

The findings of the performed CDA suggested a common call for offline protests effectuated through social media posts, using the consecrated hashtag of the #Rezist Revolution: *#rezist*, as a discursive symbol of resistance against the Government, along with the connected hashtags, which ultimately created the discursive identity of the movement, amply used, as shown in the Excerpts, in the offline protests as well. An interesting result to emerge from the data is that, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the heterogeneous goals (Melucci, 1996) further determined the online continuation of the movement, even after the offline protests came to an end. Although there was no quantitative research performed, and, at least up to this point, there is no other research that would back the findings of this study, overall, together these findings suggest that there is a positive association between the online development of #Rezist Revolution and the offline protests, indicating that the *"anti-corruption activism in Romania is here to stay"* (Abaseaca, 2017).

Chapter 6. Conclusion and discussion

This thesis has used theoretical references, obtained through a literature review, which conjugated the empirical case construction, in its attempt to answer *How did the online dimension of #Rezist Revolution influence its offline revolutionary outcome?* Although there is not enough data which would determine the exact influence that the digital media had during #Rezist Revolution, the research does suggest a positive correlation between the online development of the movement and its offline mass participation of people. As Newlands (2013) points out, social movements and, thus, political participation are aided by new media networks. However, they are not completely reliant on digital media and social media, in particular.

Nevertheless, although the results were insufficient in order to formulate a valid answer to the problem statement, the research indicates that #Rezist Revolution was not a spontaneous eruption of indignation or a horizontal leaderless network (Maly, forthcoming). As shown in Chapter 4, it did have an integrated organizational infrastructure, identified in the Facebook groups dedicated to the movement, created and supported by the 'soft leaders' (Gerbaudo, 2012). This infrastructure reduced the reliance on local face-to-face networks as a channel or mobilization (Kohn, 2003, as referenced in Gerbaudo, 2012, p. 30), and generated a platform which helped the activists to create and promote the movement. After the activists moved their demands offline, the amplitude of the movement can only validate Blommaert's (2001) new kind of *vox populism*. Moreover, considering the findings of the literature review, mobilization and networking are thought-out to be crucial to any social movement, regardless if it is online or offline. Hence, since the online dimension of a revolution is suggested to facilitate collective action and cooperation, it can be implied that the online dimension of #Rezist Revolution influenced the mass participation of the population in the offline protests. The Limitations and Recommendation sections below offer further possible research suggestions which could determine a more accurate answer to the central question.

The findings of this research point out how the revolution, though its online infrastructure, managed to draw into the *local* political orbit a community usually detached from local political life: the diaspora, the many Romanians working abroad, thus creating both a momentum and a critical mass possibly not within reach, had the movement exclusively operated *locally*, drawing on the masses in Romania. This point brings the discussion to a rather frequent aspect in the Internet age: political upheavals often decisively influenced by diaspora populations, through online resources. Further, the outcomes indicate another point of discussion: how the online revolution rode on a wave of reconfiguration of the national mass media: they were *split*, some of them supporting the movement, others opposing it. This is yet another dimension of the present: online infrastructures, how they led to a new *market* of mass media in which new media (commercial ones) seek the backup of online movements.

Furthermore, the success or failure of revolutionary movements depends in large part upon how incumbent governments respond to them (Goodwin, 2001.) This means that the Romanian Protests were successful in terms of their aims, since in both cases (#Colectiv Revolution and #Rezist Revolution), the Government complied with the people's request: in the first case, the Prime-Minister resigned, leading to the entire cabinet's dissolution; in the second case, the OUG 13/2017 was repealed.

Lastly, a question can be raised on whether the #Rezist Revolution somehow disrupted the democratic system of Romania. Indeed, as Goodwin (2001, p. 9) indicates, "*revolution refers to any and all instances in which a state or political regime is overthrown and thereby transformed by a popular movement in an irregular, extraconstitutional, and/or violent fashion*", since it requires, as established in Chapter 2, the mass mobilization of population against the ruling class.

"Social movements may be socially conservative, socially revolutionary, or both, or none. [...] There is no predetermined directionality in social evolution, the only sense of history is the history we sense. Therefore, from an analytical perspective, there are no 'bad' and 'good' social movements. They are all symptoms of our societies, and all impact social structures, with variable intensities and outcomes that must be established by research" (Castells, 1997. p.70).

The #Rezist Revolution may have disrupted the democratic system in some manners but, according to these theories, in the case of revolutions, it comes with the territory.

6.1 Limitations

The research method used in this dissertation, Critical Discourse Analysis, represents the main limitation imposed to the results of this research. Since there is no other study that can corroborate the results of this research and, therefore, provide additional evidence on how the online influenced the offline outcome of #Rezist Revolution, the results of this study cannot establish the impact that the digital media has on its audience/users, nor are they considered sufficient in order to determine what an entire community thinks. It does, however, show how the activists/actors constructed their argument and, most importantly, how that argument fit into the development of the movement.

Further, it is necessary to take into consideration the limitation imposed by the online platforms used to collect the data, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Known to be using commercial algorithms, it can definitely be asserted that these platforms influence the reach of the movement, its mobilization power and the effect of its discursive battle (Maly, forthcoming). Therefore, there are limits to consider in terms of the mobilization power that social media, in particular, and digital media, in general, have. Moreover, there are authors such as Morozov (2011), who are rather skeptical of the role that digital

media may have in social movements, considering that the Internet cannot contribute to freedom and democracy.

6.2 Recommendations for future research

In the light of this dissertation outcomes, thus considering the role that social media, both as a technology and organizational infrastructure, may have in the current neoliberal social movements, in-depth focusing on the specifics of the activists (thus conducting interviews, focus groups, more detailed observations) could reveal substantial insights for the “to do list” of these movements, hence further expanding this topic. Also, considering the limitations of this research, a qualitative research could provide valid grounds into the influence that digital media has in terms of social movements.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Day 3 of the #Colectiv Revolution (Deviant Art, 2015)



Appendix B. President Iohannis protests-related Facebook post (Klaus Iohannis, Facebook, 2015)

 **Klaus Iohannis**
November 4, 2015 · 🌐

A fost nevoie să moară oameni pentru ca Guvernul să demisioneze. Românii inițial au răbdad, apoi s-au indignat, iar în final s-au revoltat. Tragedia de la Colectiv a atins cel mai sensibil nerv al națiunii. Zeci de mii români au protestat în București și în alte orașe din țară pentru a cere lucruri de bun-simț: demisiile celor vinovați, răspunsuri și clarificări. Eu sunt dispus să îmi asum demersurile care, în final, vor duce la o altfel de politică în România, o politică pentru cetățeni, previzibilă și transparentă. Următorul guvern trebuie să vină urgent cu soluții la problemele care i-au scos pe oameni în stradă și să nu repete greșelile de până acum.



842K Views

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

👍🗣️ Elena Teodora, Nick Boca and 38K others Top Comments ▾

7,197 shares

Translation: *People had to die for the Government to resign. The Romanians initially endured, then they got indignant, and finally revolted. Collective tragedy has touched the nation's most sensitive nerve. Tens of thousands of Romanians protested in Bucharest and other cities in the country to ask for things that have to do with common sense: the resignations of the guilty, answers and clarifications. I am willing to take the steps that, in the end, will lead to a different policy in Romania, a policy for citizens, predictable and transparent. The next government must urgently come up with solutions to the issues that have brought people to the streets and not repeat the mistakes so far.*

Appendix C. 600.000 for Romania Facebook post, encouraging people to protest (Irina Andries, Facebook, 2017)

 **Irina Andries**
March 19

Up date ziua 48. Ora 21 este ora Imnului. A fost, este si va fi si mâine, si poimâine...va fi...noi #rezistam, noi #nucedam, noi #nuplecam. Noi #suntempicaturachinezeasca, #incetdarsigur, #continuum, #sapunempresiunepeei. Ne vedem mâine seara in Piața. Acum va spun doar noapte buna!



👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

👍❤️ 514

Appendix D. Another 600.000 for Romania Facebook post, encouraging people to protest (Olavy-Theodor Pecou, Facebook, 2017)

 **Olavy-Theodor Pecou** shared Epoch Times Romania's post.
March 17

Respect, oameni frumoși, demni și liberi !
Ne revedem în strada duminică !
Luptăm, rezistăm, uniți salvăm, uniți schimbăm !



Epoch Times Romania added 27 new photos.
March 17 Like Page

Piața Victoriei, ziua 46. Foto credit: Mihuț Savu / Epoch Times România #rezist

Mai multe detalii aici: goo.gl/0vUhDD

Like Comment Share

180

13 shares

Appendix E. #REZISTENTA Facebook group description

We are the #REZISTANCE

WHAT WE WANT: Together we save the entire Romania!

WHO: All Romanians who want the anti-corruption fight to be a success, the true values to be promoted in Romania, the ones who want Romania to be a country of common sense, civic spirit, a rich country, with people who live in good conditions, a country in which the Romanians who were forced to work abroad come back home, a country where the children are respected and raised with great care, a Romania belonging to the Romanians.

HOW: If you want to join this group, it means you want to contribute to the above, by:

- positive attitude and civic spirit*
- proposing solutions*

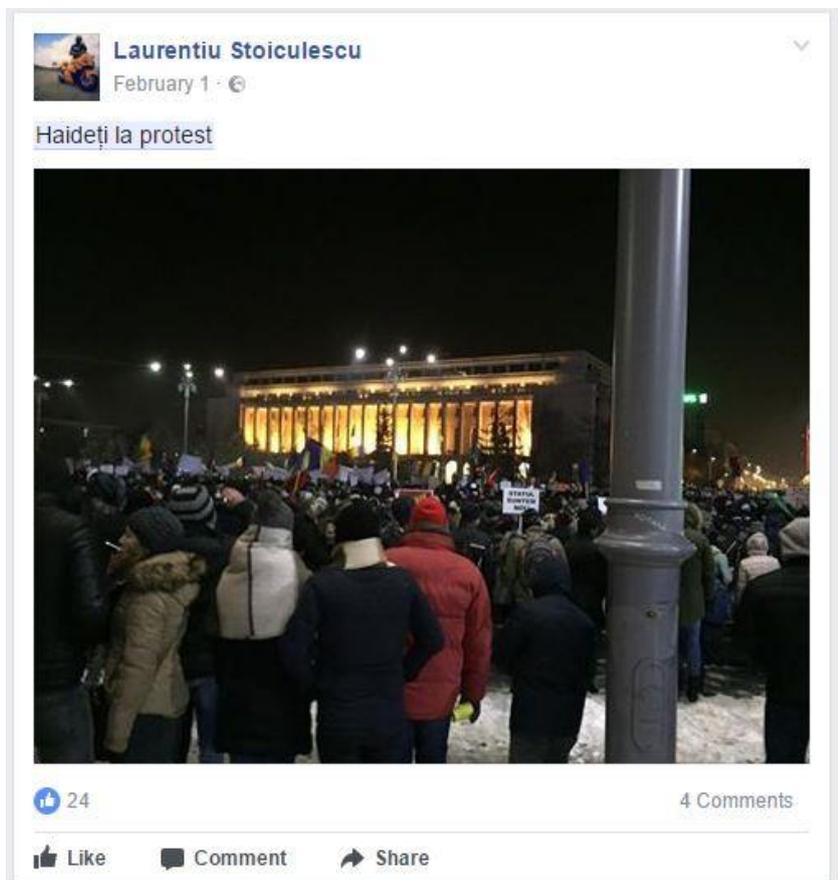
- *posting information from verified and useful sources of the case*
- *initiating discussions that can generate solutions*
- *active participation in events and events organized by the group*
- *informing the group's administrators of serious issues that may affect Romania by sending an email to rezistenta@rezist.ro*

WHY?

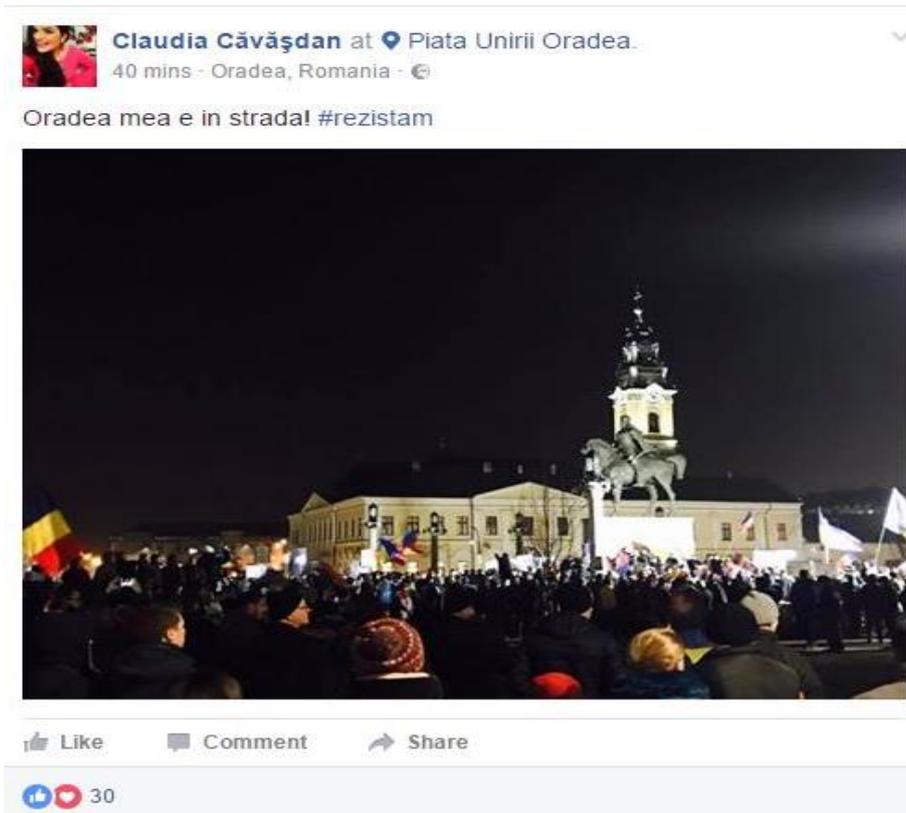
- *because we are tired*
- *because we want a beautiful country, with intact forests, not illegally defrauded*
- *because we want a country with healthy people, not going to hospitals and getting even sicker*
- *because we want a country based on meritocracy*
- *because we want a transparent state system*
- *because we want a country without corruption*

To be able to communicate effectively about all of this, we also have some rules or rules of conduct <https://qoo.gl/IHLTUu>".

Appendix F. Come to the protest! (Laurentiu Stoiculescu, Facebook, 2017)



Appendix G. *My Oradea [city in Romania] is in the streets! #weresist* (Claudia Căvasdan, Facebook, 2017)



Appendix H. *Day 3 and #weresist #wehadenough #bucharest #protest* (allidda, Instagram, 2017)



Appendix I. Romania pura Facebook post (Romania Pura, Facebook, 2017)

 **RomaniaPura** Sponsored ·  Like Page

World, THIS is how you stand for our values.
300 000 protesters in Bucharest, Victory Square.
Feb 5, 2017. Foto Credit: Dan Mihai Balasescu

#romania #values #rezist #anticorruption Share for a United Romania!...
See More



   Dominic Bortoc, Paul Hîncu and 10K others · 120 Comments · 1.9K Shares

Appendix J. Another online call for protest (Farcas Mariana Valeria, Facebook, 2017)

 **Farcas Mariana Valeria** shared [Corupția ucide's](#) post. March 20

 **Corupția ucide** updated their status. March 19 · Bucharest, Romania

Suntem cincizeci și unu de mii de oameni pe pagina corupția ucide. Totuși în stradă am rămas doar câteva mii de oameni. Dorim să aflăm de la voi motivul pentru care nu ați mai ieșit în stradă în ultimul timp.
Nu este o critică faptul că nu mai iesi la proteste, dar consideram ca ne ajuta ca să aflăm motivul fiecăruia pentru a înțelege de ce acest lucru nu se mai întâmplă.
Vă încurajăm să lăsați un comentariu sau să trimiteți un mesaj pe pagina noastră.

 Like  Comment  Share

   60

1 share

 **Doru Nadoleanu** Chiar nu este clar ca nu putem sta 4 ani in strada? Chiar nu este clar ca e nevoie de actiune politica si sociala hotarata?
Like · Reply ·  7 · March 20 at 9:16am

 **Ion Stanculescu** Noi am stat aproape o viata..... si avem sperante in copiii astia frumosi si destepti , si noi pe langa ei , pentru o tara curata si dreapta .
Like · Reply · March 25 at 9:59am

Translation:

Coruptia Ucide: *We are 51.000 members in Coruptia Ucide page. However, there are only a couple of thousands left in the streets. We would like to know from you why you haven't been in the streets lately. It is not a critique, but we consider that it would be helpful for us to know each of your reasons in order to understand why this [referring to the protests] is not happening anymore. We encourage you to leave a message on our page.*

Doru Nadoleanu: *Is it really not clear that we cannot spend 4 years in the streets? Is it not clear that we need a decisive political and social action?*

Ion Stanculescu: *We stayed in the streets almost our entire life... and we have hopes in these beautiful and smart children, and us behind them, for a clean and fair country.*

Appendix K. Connection between the '89 revolution and #Rezist revolution (Andreea Diana, Twitter, 2017)



Appendix L. *Coruptia Ucide* Facebook group announcement (Carleen Pop, Facebook, 2017)



Carleen Pop

March 15

Dragi prieteni,

In seara aceasta, initiatorii si administratorii grupurilor de Facebook #REZISTENTA si 600.000 pentru Romania am avut prima intalnire comuna, prilej de a ne si cunoaste personal.

Andrei si Mihai au avut initiativa de infiintare a grupurilor, din dorinta ca energia pozitiva a oamenilor care au iesit la proteste, incepand cu sfarsitul lunii ianuarie, sa nu se piarda, ci sa se transforme, in timp, in actiuni concrete care sa ajute la schimbarea situatiei in care se afla Romania in acest moment.

Problemele dezbatute in tot acest timp in cadrul discutiilor din grupuri au fost multiple, asa cum sunt si problemele tarii noastre, si nu se vor rezolva intr-o luna sau doua. Dar din toate dezbaterile intre membrii voluntari ai acestor doua grupuri (unii dintre noi si dintre dumneavoastra, in ambele), a reiesit clar ca ne dorim o altfel de Romania, bazata pe adevar, respect si meritocratie.

Aceste idealuri comune ne-au determinat ca azi sa luam decizia de a uni aceste doua grupuri, in urmatoarele zile, pentru o eficienta sporita a comunicarii si actiunilor viitoare. Vom anunta detaliile pe masura ce lucrrurile se vor concretiza.

Va multumim pentru sprijin, ramaneti aproape!

Like Comment Share

195

17 shares

View 13 more comments



Stoica Ritta #rezistam & luptam

Like · Reply · March 17 at 11:31am

1 Reply

Translation:

Dear friends, tonight, initiators and administrators of the Facebook groups #REZISTENTA and 600,000 for Romania had our first common meeting, an opportunity to know us personally. Andrei and Mihai had the initiative to set up the groups, desiring that the positive energy of the people who came out of protest, beginning with the end of January, should not be lost but rather transformed into concrete actions to help changing the situation in which Romania is at this moment.

The issues debated all the time in the group discussions were multiple, as are the problems of our country, and will not be solved within a month or two. But out of all the debates between the volunteer members of these two groups (some of us and you), it has become clear that we want a different Romania, based on truth, respect and meritocracy.

These common ideals have determined us to take the decision to unite these two groups today in the coming days for increased efficiency in communication and future actions. We will announce the details as things will materialize.

Thank you for your support, stay close!

Appendix M. Cristian Ducu's Facebook post encouraging the protesters (Cristian Ducu, Facebook, February 2017)



Cristian Ducu

1 hr · 👤

grindeanu a anuntat ca, de fapt, nu renunta, ci, dimpotriva, "abroga, proroga sau alt fel" OUG 13/2017 doar ca sa o trimita in Parlament. **#demisia #ciordache #guvernulciordeanu #rezistam** Cea mai mare greseala ar fi ca piata sa se retraga. Nu s-a rezolvat nimic. PSD-ul crede ca a facut o greseala de comunicare, nu o fapta profund imorala.



3 Comments 19 Shares

Appendix N. Berlin supporting protests - *We resist in Berlin also* (Dragos Grozavu, Facebook, 2017)



Dragos Grozavu

February 3 · 👤

Rezistam si in Berlin!!!!



Sebastian Mihăilă in 📍 Berlin, Germany.

February 3 · 🌐

Appendix O. Toronto supporting protests - *The message from the Romanians in Toronto: We resist!*
(Grigore Cartianu, Facebook, 2017)



Appendix P. Romania TV protests coverage (Romania TV, January 2017)



Translation:

How is Iohannis using the street in order to overthrow the PSD Government

Appendix R. Romania TV protests coverage (Romania TV, January 2017)



Translation

Immediately: the documents of the Iohannis manipulation. Who are the instigators infiltrated in the protests.

Appendix S. Romania TV protests coverage (Romania TV, January 2017)



Translation

The proof of Iohannis's people involvements in the country's disunity