The involvement and the role of art in the #rezist civic actions in Romania

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The present paper analyses the presence of art and artists during the largest protests from post-communist Romania, known as the #rezist protests. The research is applied to the protests from two perspectives: the first refers to the way in which, especially well-known, artists become influencers of protest movements, by joining the protesters in the streets, by intensively using social media or by creating artistic products that support the protests; the second perspective refers to the identification of various forms of action that entail a significant artistic component, employed by protesters in order to accomplish the desired results: mobilisation of participants, generating solidarity or gaining the media's attention. In this research we have combined quantitative and qualitative analysis of data in order to explore the presence of the artistic dimension during the protests from the beginning of 2017. The active involvement of notorious Romanian artists from different fields was unprecedented in Romania, as they had an important contribution in promoting the dominant way of thinking and, consequently, in creating a sense of solidarity and mobilising people. Activism was visible online and offline, as protesters showed their creativity in slogans, banners with humorous, ironic or uncompromising images and messages, in spectacular choreographies and laser projections but also in releasing manifesto-songs.

Keywords: social movements, culture, democracy, civil society, journalism.

Introduction

Protests, understood as "the collective use of unconventional methods of political participation to try to persuade or coerce authorities to support a challenging group's aims" (Taylor and Van Dyke, 2004: 263), can comprise a vast variety of actions. According to Taylor and Van Dyke (2004: 263) these actions can vary from conventional strategies of political persuasion, like petitions or lobbyism, to confrontational tactics, like marches, strikes or demonstrations, violent actions, that involve property damage, economic loss or even fatalities or forms of political expression like rituals, music, shows, poetry, art, film or literature.

Cultural forms of political expression provide greater flexibility than traditional forms of civil participation or protest, like marches, petitions or demonstrations. According to Reed (2016: 81), in the last decades "every form of art has been drawn in the circle of protest", and his list includes, without being limitative, visual art, theatre and performance art, protest painting, protest poetry, protest dance, protest films, protest photography, underlining the significant role of protest music and of the ubiquitous protest posters.

In this study we analyse the presence of art and artists during the Romanian protests from the

beginning of 2017 from the following two perspectives: on the one hand we have observed the way in which the most notorious artists use their professional identity and assume an important role in public representation, becoming opinion makers/influencers and on the other hand we have identified various forms of action with an significant artistic component, that have been used by activists to achieve desired results, like mobilising participants, creating a sense of solidarity, distributing information or getting the media interested.

We have chosen these protests, known also as the #rezist protests, because they stand out from other protests in Romania's recent history, not only because of the tenacity and high number of participants that have taken to the streets for weeks in the midst of winter, but also because of the extraordinary burst of creativity that the activists displayed.

The unusual tactics employed by the protesters, that involved spectacular choreographies, guerilla mapping or torch phones, have created memorable moments recorded by the media and shared massively through social media. The active and constant involvement of artists from different fields like music, literature, theater, film or fine arts have been unprecedented in Romania. As Isaac (2009: 942) points out, when activists are artists, they "play a role in aesthetic activism by producing and circulating movement-relevant culture in creative and entertaining ways".

Having understood the crucial role of media in reflecting the protests, the activists try to draw attention to the them by resorting to highly creative actions, as "art can play an important part by producing meaningful images" (Teune 2005).

Theoretical Framework

Studies about the relationship between art, artists and social movements can be found in a variety of fields. We have noted the importance of studies carried out by scholars in cultural studies, social studies or art history, but it is difficult not to notice that, in most cases, the role of art in protests has been subsumed to a more general approach on defining and analysing the culture of social movements.

Most of the theorists that have studied the relationship between art and social movements have tackled this subject form the perspective of the potential of art to fulfill a variety of roles inside social movements. Thus, art can be used in social movements for framing, for mobilising the participants, for attracting resources, for stimulating emotions or in a symbolic way (Adams, 2002: 21). According to Everhart (2012: 204), the studies that have addressed the relationship between art and social movements viewing art as an instrument through which certain objectives are brought to

fruition, can be grouped, based on their profiles, in four main categories. An important category explored by theoretical studies, refers to the capacity of cultural products to transmit information and to express suffering or dissatisfaction. For example, Morrison and Isaac (2011) show how Industrial Workers of the World (IWW, aka "Wobblies") have used cartoons in order to personify and flesh out abstract notions and to visually enhance the ideology, the grievance, the objectives and the tactics of the movement or Chafee (1993), in his investigation on street art, analyses the way in which street art, as a form of collective expression, can be used to shape human emotions and to build social consciousness.

Another path of research has concentrated on highlighting the use of art as a means of provoking dialogue inside social movements. For this purpose, we can exemplify Doerr's (2010) analysis of the Euro Mayday protests. This study demonstrates that the visual images created by activists can act as trigger and generate "visual dialogues" and debates that involve the global civil society.

Other researches from the field of arts and social movements have identified various aesthetic techniques that can be used by protesters to create powerful emotions, so necessary to mobilise and keep the protesters involved in the movement. For instance, Halfmann and Young (2010) have studied the effects of using grotesque or shocking images inside social movements anti-slavery and pro-life, highlighting the strong points as well as the weak points of this technique. Rosenthal (2001) has analysed the role of music in the education, recruitment and mobilising of the participants to social movements.

Lastly, another direction of study, however not as explored as the other ones, is the one that investigates the ways in which art can provide entertainment and free time in a protest movement. Seen as an opportunity to make the protest more dynamic and attractive, art can create connections between the participants but also with people who do not directly take part in the protest. Shepard (2010) has studied the role of creativity, fun and play in urban protests, concentrating especially on queer political activism.

While most studies have examined the role of certain forms of artistic expression in social movements, like visual art (Corrigall-Brown and Wilkes 2012), music (Roy 2010; Eyerman 2002; Futrell et al. 2006; Rosenthal 2001), theater/dramatic art (Moser 2003; Shepard 2010) or literature (Isaac 2009), only a small number have analysed the role of multiple forms of artistic expression. For example, to understand the way in which activists can make use of more artistic forms of expression in the same social movement, Everhart (2012) has studied the variety of artforms present in the movement of the UPR students from 2010, exploring

the way in which these art forms have worked inside the movement and their impact.

Socio-political context

The year 2017 has been a year of protests for Romania. At the end of January and the beginning of February 2017, hundreds of thousands of people have taken to the streets in order to peacefully voice their dissatisfaction with the Romanian government. Considered to be "the largest protest from the last 25 years" (Digi24 TV, February 1, 2017), the #rezist movement is part of a series of notorious anti-government actions that have taken place in the country's recent history.

The massive protests from the beginning of 2017 have been ignited by the passing of an Executive Ordinance (O.U.G.13) that was intended to change criminal legislation, so that politicians accused of corruption were to be favoured. Two of them are in the center of political power: Liviu Dragnea, the president of the governing party (PSD), has been sentenced to two years of probation for fraud in the 2012 referendum and defendant in another trial concerning abuse of power, and Calin Popescu Tariceanu, leader of the coalition party (ALDE) and president of the Senate is accused of perjury and aiding and abetting.

The huge pressure of the streets leads to the repeal of the Ordinance on the February 5th, 2017, when protest participation hit an all-time high. The media estimated approximately 300,000 people in Bucharest, i.e. 15% of the 1.9 million inhabitants of the Romanian capital and over 600,000 in the whole country, i.e. over 3% of the entire population (estimated at 19.2 million) (Digi24 TV, February 5, 2017).

As with all the large protest movements of the last few years, the first spontaneous reactions of outrage regarding the controversial governmental decision, have surfaced on social media, where these protests have been initiated and organised. Because the size of the crowd an organizer succeeds to mobilize is an important aspect of protest politics (Wouters and Van Camp, 2017) we have to highlight here the motivational role of the social media intensively used by the protesters.

Facebook is, by far, Romanians favorite social media outlet, with the highest number of registered users and interactions, followed by Twitter and Instagram. These are the online tools that the users have employed to share news from mainstream media about the controversial decision of the Bucharest government. The subject of #rezist has had the most posts (38,5%) and the highest impact (69%) on Facebook.

Methods and materials

To verify the established assumptions in the present study, we have used the triangulation method (Snelson, 2016), which involves "observation from at least two points of view as basis for research", combining quantitative and qualitative analysis of data regarding the use of art in the #rezist protests in Romania. For this analysis we have used data provided by BRAT (an institution that provides official data about traffic and ratings in Romania), by Zelist.ro (the first and most popular platform for monitoring social media in Romania), data form the website adevarul.ro (using the website´s search engine, as well as data obtained from analysing 100 of viral photographs form the #rezist protests, as shown by Google Images.

The period we are investigating is January 22 - February 22, 2017, with the mention that the highlight of the protests was on February 5 and has been accordingly reflected through media and social media, as proven by the charts provided by Zelist.ro. This day has registered the highest number of participants in a protest in Romania, since the fall of the communist regime.

[Figure 1 about here]

Concerning the weekly evolution, in the timespan January 22 - February 22, 2017, the occurrence of the term "protest" and of the terms derived from it has known an exponential growth at the end of January and the beginning of February, especially on the 4th, 5th and 6th of February. During these three days, only on the website adevarul.ro have been published an average of 50 articles/day regarding the #rezist protests, with a maximized intensity of interactions on Facebook.

[Figure 2 about here]

In order to identify the various forms of action that contain significant artistic components used by protesters, we have monitorized the mentioned period of time, as depicted by the platform/publication adevarul.ro, one of the online publications with highest ratings and traffic in Romania, coming on second place after stirileprotv.ro (site affiliated with a mainstream TV station), according to BRAT with 8,500,274 views and 2,344,111 unique visitors, in the timespan January 30 - February 12, 2017.

Besides being one of the most used online platforms in Romania of the last few years, the adevarul.ro website runs nationwide, having contributors in all the major cities of Romania.

The website displays a number of 691 articles using the keyword «protests», for the determined benchmark. Sorted after popularity, we have investigated the first 300 materials, ranked after the number of shares, likes and comments. From the 300 articles, approximately 250 refer to the #rezist protest, the others refer to related or unrelated topics. From the 250 articles, 98

refer explicitly or implicitly to artists or the creative, ingenious and artistic dimension of particular actions.

Connecting the data extracted from the Zelist charts that refer to the use of social media with that provided by adevarul.ro, we can conclude that the interdependence between mainstream media and Facebook was again very close, with numerous pieces of information being taken by adevarul.ro from the social network and vice versa. Furthermore, a very relevant indicator was given by certain press materials going viral. From this point of view, the present research was strictly limited to articles that refer to #rezist protests with an artistic component.

Analysis and results

By screening and analysing multimedia content from the website adevarul.ro, we were able to identify two distinct forms of art presence in the #rezist protests. Both forms of artivism are present online as well as offline, complementing each other. The first line of research intended to identify the way in which artists were involved in the #rezist protests. From the 250 articles that we screened and analysed on adevarul. ro, 98 materials (text, photo, video) refer to artists or artistic actions carried out by the protesters, with 22 discussing the involvement of well-known artists and their civic actions in supporting the protests against the government and 76 making reference to the creativity displayed by protesters. Two of the 22 articles referring to the involvement of artists in the protests have become viral, being shared over 10,000 times each. The article "Celebrities react after the government has changed criminal legislation: *Everybody will realise that the only purpose is to save criminals*" (Constanda, 2017), published on February 1 has 11,228 shares. The other viral article, with 10,137 shares, referred to an actor and comedian from Cluj, host of a TV show called "Epic show", who has also been very present amongst protesters. Entitled "Bob Radulescu, the epic voice of the streets: When my child will ask me 'Daddy, what did you do when they stole our country?', I will not say that I liked it on Facebook" (Florescu, 2017). A snapshot with a close-up of the artist speaking in a bullhorn at protests illustrates the article.

Frequent social media posts, especially in the most intense period of events, joining the protesters in the streets, participating in unique actions, like protest through culture, agora readings, drawing up materials for the press or writing songs dedicated to protests are the most common civic manifestations of Romanian artists that felt solidarity with the #rezist protests.

Among the Romanian artists and cultural figures that have actively supported the protests, some of them becoming symbols of civic culture and online influencers, are: Tudor Chirilă (musician and actor), Mircea Cartarescu (writer), Dan Perjovschi (fine artist), Mihai Sora (philosopher), Andrei Plesu (essayist), Radu Vancu (poet). None of them have declared any political affiliations. Other less notorious artists have joined the protests in the cities that had large numbers of participants, with the local and national media recording their unique actions.

Such a large number of artists involved in protests is unprecedented in post-communist Romania.

A notorious example is Mircea Cartarescu, the Romanian writer who enjoys a wide national and international popularity. Nominated for the Nobel prize for literature, with works translated in multiple languages, Mircea Cartarescu is one of the artists who has continuously shown his support for the #rezist protests, either by repeatedly posting on Facebook or by joining the protesters in the streets. His presence amongst protesters has been highly covered by the media, with snapshots of him circulating in media and social media.

Romanian philosopher Mihai Sora is also an emblematic figure of the Romanian public and cultural space. Staunch critic of the communist regime, the 101 years old intellectual is a model of morality, high education and civic involvement. By posting on Facebook and by physically participating in the protests, he has captured media's attention, being very popular on social media, where his posts were massively shared. The post paraphrasing Descartes ("I resist, therefore I am"), became viral in social media, as well as the paraphrase "Winter of our resistance" (a subtle hint at John Steinbeck's renowned novel "Winter of our discontent"), which has become the leitmotiv of a number of posts from the peak of the protests.

The second objective of this study was the identification of the actions and strategies with artistic components employed by the protesters and analysing their role in the deployment of the protests. Even though some of the strategies were inspired by similar actions that happened during non-violent protests from other cultural spaces, they have created an unique indigenous performance, as they have been used in Romania for the first time. Creativity has been considered a key note of these protests. This phenomenon of numerous artistic manifestations is explained by the profile of the #rezist protester. According to a survey conducted by IRES from March 6-8, 2017 on 980 people (Jurcan, 2017), the protesters were, in general, urban, young people and people below the age of 50, with intermediate (30%) and higher (40%) education.

In other words, the majority of the protesters was made out of members of Generation X (born in the 80ies), but mostly form generation Y (millennials), born in the 90ies, people with active lives and pro Europe values, very online savvy, with a penchant

for visual arts, especially in the case of millennials. In Romania, Facebook is the favourite social media network of the Generation X. Millennials use Facebook as well, but they also use Whatsapp for private and group communication and Instagram for iconic communication. This comes as no surprise, as it is known that "young people interact with digital social networks more than any other social group" (Cabalin, 2014:26). Millennials have been described as "civic-minded", more than previous generations (Howe and Strauss, 2000:352).Popular with millennials is neo-activism, which, according to M. Castells (2015), means a rapid mobilisation generated by new and flexible forms of solidarity, specific of the digital age.

As it has been proven by the protests that changed the world (Arab Spring, Twitter Revolution), social networks are prone to becoming "networks of outrage", where mass self-communication represents autonomy and creativity.

From the 250 articles published on the website adevarul.ro, 76 materials (text, photo, video) refer to the creativity of protesters in two ways: directly, by explicitly referring to it and/or indirectly, by citing slogans written in verse or containing political and cultural hints, by using photographs of creative banners and making reference to unique actions like choreographies or video projections on buildings.

Signs and slogans: from drawings to prints and digital visual art

Signs and slogans are the protesters' most used accesories. Many of them have stood out through their intransigence, humour or subtlety. A great number of banners contained texts and visual symbols that were shared on Facebook and Twitter, like "#neamtrezit" (wehaveawoken/nationawaken), or "stopthestealling". The most prevalent message, #rezist (resist), a symbol of these protests and massively shared on social media, perfectly describes the feat of endurance that the protesters were subjected to, by participating to this marathon-like demonstration in the midst of winter and also hints to the solidarity found in social media, the online space that had hosted the first bursts of outrage.

Some banners carried messages written in verse and/or with radical allusions or satiric intransigent content: "Noaptea hotii votează ca mafiotii" (In the night they vote, like mobsters), "PSD, ciuma rosie" (PSD, the red plague), "Noaptea ca hotii" (Like thieves, in the night!).

Humour, in its various forms, has been extremely present in the messages displayed by protesters, allowing activists to express their frustrations and dissatisfactions while simultaneously providing the public with a positive and enjoyable experience (Branagan, 2007). The use of puns ("we don't beLiviu", hinting at the president of the ruling party's first name), sarcasm ("Lunetist, caut de lucru!"/ Sniper, looking for work!), irony ("Bun venit in Romania, tocmai au legalizat hotia"/ Welcome to Romania, they have just legalized larceny), elusive improvisation ("Chuck Norris help us!"), intertextuality obtained through creative paraphrases ("Somnul na/ratiunii naste monstri"/ The sleep of a nation/reason produces monsters), funny rhymes (most messages were rhymed) etc., have been crucial ingredients of the burst of creativity displayed by the protesters through banners and slogans.

It is important to state that almost all articles from adevarul.ro, that make reference to the protests, use snapshots of very creative banners and signs in order to illustrate the articles. This is a practice adopted by the majority of Romanian press outlets.

The initiative of a few visual artists that have created a website entitled https://www.artofprotest.ro must be highlighted here. This website works both as an art gallery, displaying over 70 pieces of art made by illustrators - professionals or amateurs - who participated in the #rezist protests, and also provides the public with DIY instructions on how to participate in protests using these posters that can be downloaded for free.

A specific form of artivism is represented by "Perjovschi's Wall", a civic initiative of the Romanian internationally renowned artist Dan Perjovschi, which he started in 2015. It involves an actual wall located in Sibiu, on which the artist writes or draws civic creative messages. Also known as the «vertical newspaper», it contains chalk drawings, cartoons and statements, described by the author as a "free show" (Stoica, 2015).

Another, this time, editorial project that has pointed out the creativity of the protesters displayed through banners or video projections on buildings is the album "#rezist. Protests against OUG 13/2017". This album contains a collection of 150 images depicting the protests that took place in Bucharest, in other major cities and abroad. Messages that expressed the feelings and thoughts of the protesters have thus been archived in a 200 pages album, to be subsequently studied by researchers of social movements.

Another remarkable editorial project was the anthology of poetry entitled "#Rezist! Poezia" (#Rezist!Poetry), an unusual poetic experiment in Romania, comprising 47 poems written by poets present at the protests.

The key role of the banners and slogans was that of expressing the protesters' discontempt, of communicating outrage in an unique manner, but they have also contributed to shaping a collective identity. The fact that the protesters have expressed their anger and indignation caused by extremely serious and

severe problems by using irony, puns, good natured irresistible humour proved that, by using these means, the protesters have managed to mobilise people to join them and to get the media's attention. The protesters have expressed their anger and indignation, caused by extremely serious and severe problems, by using irony, puns, fine humour and they have managed to captivate the public's attention and inspire the others, mobilising participants and attracting the media.

Costumes and props

The protesters' props had no shortage of puppets, masks, costumes, national flags, vuvuzelas, trumpets, whistles or drums but also unique elements like the "bucium", a traditional musical instrument used in the past by Romanian shepherds. The life-size puppets that were carried around Victoria Square, representing the most notable politicians from the ruling party, wearing prison uniforms, attracted the media's attention. Another protester came with a puppet portraying Vlad Tepes, the Romanian 15th century ruler, well-known for his harsh punishments for thieves, like cutting off their hands, holding a sign saying "Have you missed me?".

Plush elephants or elephants made of various materials have also represented a symbolic prop for the #rezist protests, as they referred to a speech delivered by Romanian president Klaus Iohannis, in which he compared the government's executive ordinances, drawn up to change the penal legislation so as to pardon those charged with corruption, with two elephants in the room that no one can see.

By using costumes and props, the protesters have gained the media's attention but have also generated a burst of collective creativity, managing to enhance the public's support and convincing others to join the protests. Making noise by using vuvuzelas, drums, and other musical instruments has gained attention on the one hand and has also created an entertaining, show-like atmosphere, on the other hand.

Music: manifesto-songs

Many Romanian songwriters have been inspired by the protests from the beginning of 2017 and have released manifesto-songs in which they spoke about the tensed situation in Romania, about corruption, change and protests. Voltaj was the first band to release a song with a civic message. The song "10 days (if Romania could speak, it would say this…" enjoyed a remarkable success online, with over 5 million views on Facebook and over 120,000 views on Youtube. In the first eight hours after posting the song on the band's Facebook page, it was shared 40,000 times.

Shortly after, the band Taxi released a song called "We are allergic". Using explicit lyrics, the band encouraged people to protest: "We are allergic to infamy, we are allergic to lies and larceny/ And when it itches, and we cannot take it anymore/ We go outside and we scratch".

Slamming claims according to which the protests haven't been spontaneous, but hiding occult interests and that people have been paid to protest by the American billionaire George Soros, the same band Taxi wrote a spoof song, called "Domnu' Soros" (Mista Soros), in which they gave a humorous answer to this attempt at discrediting the protesters.

Vunk is another band that has encouraged people to protest. They have launched in a video for their song "Tara lui peste / No man's land" in February 2017, with images from the protests in Bucharest of those days.

The music created by artists who were inspired by the determination of the people that took to the streets and who have, themselves, participated in protests, had first and foremost the role of keeping people involved, of encouraging them in their endeavors. The involvement of these artists, through their songs, has generated enthusiasm and instilled in them the desire to continue with the protests. Some of the songs deeply moved protesters, others, the sarcastic ones, amused the general public, who followed the protest.

Choreography and visuals

The most broadcasts moments, organised by the protesters, took place in the evenings, usually in the interval between 9 and 10 p.m. The memorable images created by the protesters have become viral and endowed the protests with a very special splendor.

The first moment that became emblematic for the #rezist protests was the simultaneous turning on of the mobile phone flashlights on February 5, 2017, at 9 p.m. and singing the national anthem. From an aesthetic point of view, this symbolic performance can be «translated» as follows: "lighting thousands of flashlights in the middle of the night could be seen as representative of a galaxy of unseen bodies becoming shining stars for a few seconds" (Paun, 2017). A few days later, on February 12, 2017, in a freezing cold, on the 13th day of protest, 50,000 protesters participated in the "operation tricolor" and created a giant national flag by simultaneously turning on the flashlights of their mobile phones and holding them under coloured pieces of paper.

This exceptional choreography, that has managed to create an emotional moment, holds a symbolic significance: "Creating a huge Romanian human flag — red, yellow and blue — can, at a stretch, be read as

a symbolic transfer of state power from the institutions to the streets, from the authorities to civil society" (Paun, 2017).

This moment has been reloaded on February 26, 2017, when approximately 5,000 protesters held up 12 yellow stars and blue pieces of paper, illuminating them with their mobile phones, to create the European Union flag, a symbol of unity.

Writer Mircea Cartarescu, who was present at that moment amongst protesters, considered the idea with the EU flag the best action: "Because we know well that we are Romanians, but we know less that we have two identities, a Romanian and an European one and we have to be proud of them both!" (Digi24 TV, February 26, 2017).

These elaborate choreographies have been orchestrated through social media "each protester knew from Facebook where they needed to stand (and were even advised about an app – Flashlight – they could download which would enable their smartphone screens to display a particular colour)" (Ciobanu and Light, 2017: 65).

Every night of the protests, on the tall buildings surrounding the square, spontaneous projections were made, called guerilla mapping. Laser projections showing key-messages of the protests, like #rezist (resist), have been carried out by artists of a projection mapping studio from Bucharest, who wanted to put their skills to good use in expressing their grievances. A Batman sign, projected on a building, suggested that the famous comic book superhero was summoned to come and save the city from villains.

Despite the absence of a formal leader and of a hierarchical structure, the #rezist protests managed to bring together an impressive number of protestors in a huge performance. The choreographies and the projections on buildings generated an exceptional media coverage. Moreover, Romania beneficiated from a positive reflection in international media and even a change in the way the country is perceived abroad "and many believe the powerful #rezist imagery is responsible for this. The glow of protesters' flashlights in the darkness is like a call for attention right before the rest of the world goes to sleep" (Paun, 2017).

Conclusions

Until 2012 in Romania, protest movements meant the gathering of a few hundred participants, usually ordered by others, who expressed individual grievances, demanding wage increases or better work conditions. In recent years, however, Romanians have started to shape their own culture of protest, organising ample street movements and employing artistic and creative means in expressing indignation and dissatisfaction.

The protests from the beginning of 2017 in Romania have been generated by a spontaneous riot that erupted online, where people have organised themselves during the protests, making the #rezist movement one of peaceful, coherent and creative opposition. Even though non-violent resistence already has a well-defined history (Roberts and Ash, 2009), for Romania it was the first time it consciously and steadily occured, with an outspoken, clear plea for peaceful civic actions.

The singularity of these protests has been given by the tenacity and the substantial number of participants and by the extraordinary burst of creativity that the activists displayed.

Activism manifested itself online, where it involved creating, posting and sharing creative content photo/video/text with the potential of going viral and, also, offline, where creativity was depicted mostly in slogans and banners that carried humorous messages, funny and elusive rhymes, borrowing tools from the advertising sector, like intertextuality. Furthermore, the ample choreographies and laser projections have generated real visual performances, capturing the attention of photojournalists, who have taken memorable pictures of the events. The release of manifesto-songs, heavily shared on social media, has moved the public and has led to an increase of solidarity between demonstrators.

The active and steady involvement of artists from various fields was unprecedented in Romania. The most notorious of them became opinion leaders/influencers, having tens of thousands of posts shares, the level of viral messages corresponding to the notoriety of the artist.

In this case, notoriety is equivalent to media visibility and, complementary, to social media visibility.

In conclusion, through media coverage and the dissemination of information and, above all, of opinions in social media, Romanian artists involved in the #rezist protests have had an important contribution in promoting the dominant way of thinking and, consequently, in creating solidarity and mobilising people. Traditional media recorded their actions, transforming them into mediatic events.

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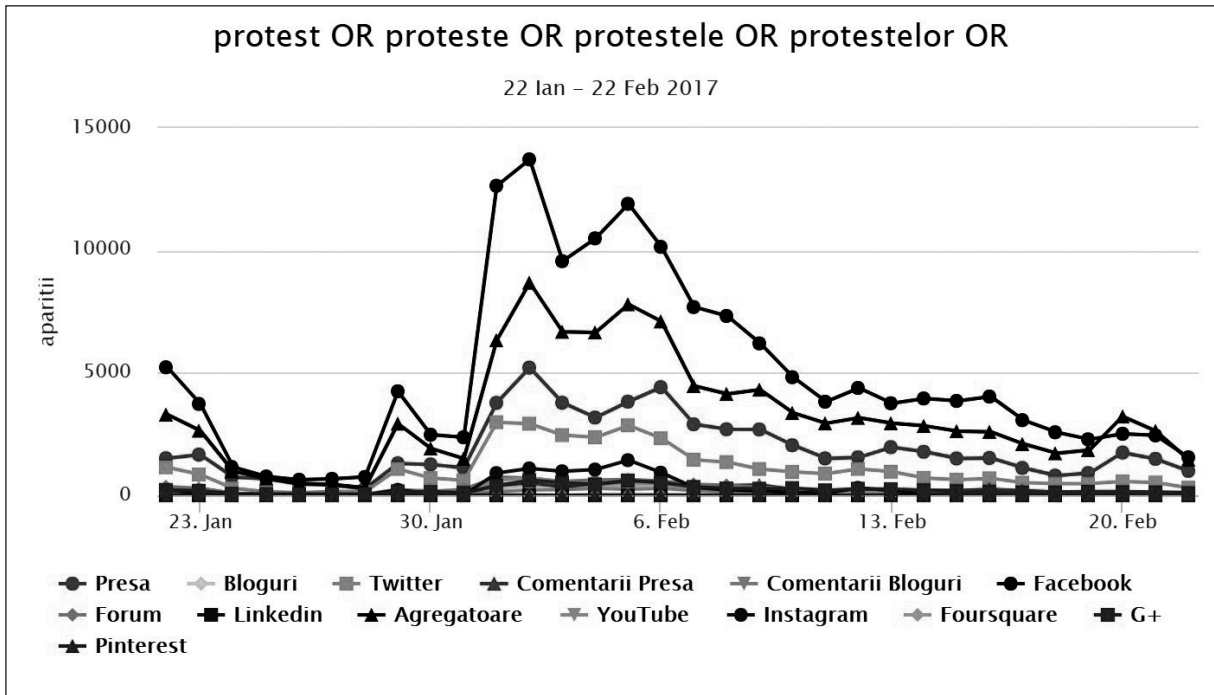
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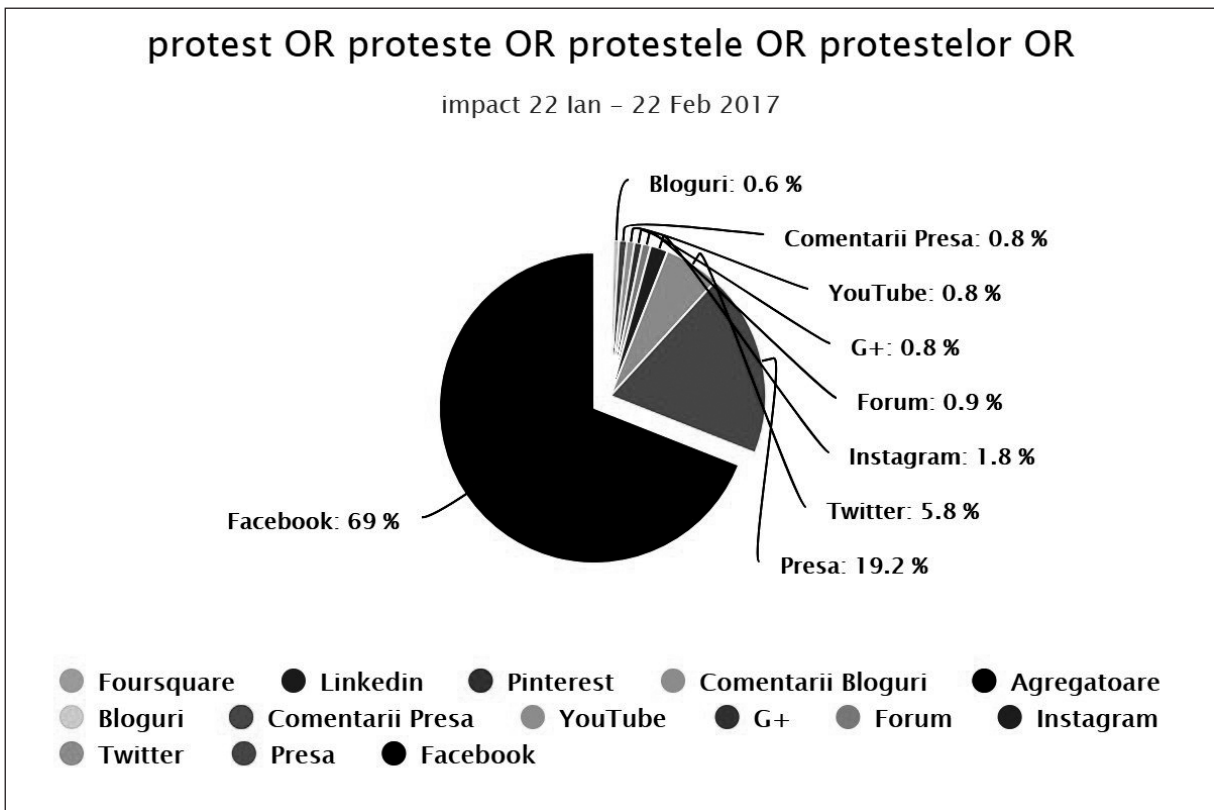
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