CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of International Studies

Master thesis

2013   **Andrei Macsut**

CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of International Studies

Andrei Macsut

Civic engagement in Romania
testing the applicability of mainstream theories
on the winter protests of 2012

Master thesis

Prague 2013

Author: Bc. Andrei Macsut

Supervisor: František Šístek, Ph.D.

Academic Year: 2012/2013

Bibliographic note

Abstract

The past few years have seen the emergence of new types of civic engagement. Citizens are now more capable to organize themselves than ever before and this creates a new pattern of social mobilization that has not previously been the centre of academic focus. This work analyses the particular case of the Romanian winter protests of 2012 in an attempt to prove that current mainstream theories of resource mobilization and framing do not fully explain the emergence of unstructured movements. The results aim to pave the way for a new theory of civic engagement that fits the newly observed realities and could be generalized to explain all forms of structured or unstructured participation to collective action.

Abstrakt

V posledních několika letech jsme svědky vzniku nových typů občanské angažovanosti. Občané jsou nyní schopni organizovat se více než kdykoliv předtím, což vytváří nový vzor sociální mobilizace, která se dosud neocitla v centru akademické pozornosti. Tato práce analyzuje konkrétní případ rumunských protestů v zimě roku 2012 ve snaze dokázat, že současná mainstreamová teorie mobilizace zdrojů a její způsob rámování plně nevysvětlují vznik nestrukturovaných hnutí. Cílem práce je s využitím získaných poznatků připravit půdu pro ustavení nové teorie občanské angažovanosti, která se hodí na nově zjištěné skutečnosti a mohla bý celkově vysvětlit všechny formy strukturované nebo nestrukturované účasti na kolektivní akci.

Klíčová slova

Keywords

Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.

2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.

3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague   **Name, surname and signature**

Acknowledgments

Institute of International Studies
Civic engagement in Romania – testing the applicability of mainstream theories on the winter protests of 2012

Contents

Introduction – Research questions and hypothesis

There can be no law for civic engagement. That is to say, citizens cannot and should not be legally coerced into engaging in the affairs (political or otherwise) of their community. This has been true for thousands of years and is motivated, among other things, by the simple and true reasoning that any form of coercion, no matter how well intentioned, is unlikely to be a successful tool of good government. The model of government used in Athens during its peak around two and a half millennia ago, which modern democracy aspires to mirror at least in theory, relied on voluntary engagement of all citizens in the act of government. This was not mandatory but refusal to participate in the decision-making process was sanctioned by informal means. The modern word "idiot" has its origins in the Greek word "idiotas", used to describe those citizens who were not active enough in political affairs[1]. In this case, not law but common practice or policy was used to ensure that all but the most recalcitrant Athenians participated and held office[2].

To this day, any state claiming to respect the "will of the people" cannot impose upon its citizens an obligation to become civically engaged in any way whatsoever. However, one also cannot deny the importance of civic engagement for maintaining a balanced and functional system of administration. It therefore becomes necessary, in some countries with a less than democratic past, or where civic engagement is not common practice, that some forms of encouraging and incentivizing citizen participation be taken. This is in order to avoid a slip towards authoritarianism, as well as in order to aid in the development of certain forms of social cohesion which might complement the state on some important projects or initiatives.

But what happens when this important component of a functional society is compromised or missing? What could cause this issue to occur and, most importantly, what can be done to encourage its emergence or consolidation over time? Of course, the extreme cases exist only in theory, as not all citizens can be either fully engaged or completely disengaged from their communities. However, achieving a healthy balance where a sufficiently large proportion of the citizenry is at all times engaged in public and community affairs can prove troublesome without adequate policy.

Ideally, and this point is discussed at greater length later on, civic engagement is completely a grassroots initiative and is done with, without or even against involvement from the authorities. However, not all areas are the same in this respect and some are more prone than others to mobilize at the grassroots level. Thus it becomes necessary to understand what factors encourage or discourage the grassroots from becoming civically engaged so as to develop tools for stimulating active participation wherever this is lacking on the most basic levels.

Assuming there is no such thing as too much civic engagement (although arguments can be made to the contrary), this work deals with instances of too little, analyses exceptions to the existing rules and tries to figure out what factors trigger visible engagement or attempt to suppress it. Worth mentioning is that not all forms of civic engagement are visible or politically relevant but, due to the difficulty of measuring and quantifying even the most evident instances of it, it stands to reason that only observable cases can be studied. This is also looked into in greater depth later on, when defining civic engagement and its boundaries and categories.

---

[1] *Are We All Now Idiotai? Remembering the Meaning of Democracy*, December 23, 2011, http://www.andmagazine.com/content/phoenix/11657.html (accessed January 23, 2013)
[2] Hansen, Mogens Herman. *The Athenian Assembly in the Age of Demosthenes*, Blackwell, 1987

In areas where there is no tradition or long history of public participation in community affairs, there may emerge a type of imbalance wherein authorities and citizens do not cooperate for common good. In such situations, it often falls to the former to fulfil even the smallest tasks that concern the community as a whole and this can produce a highly inefficient and highly bureaucratized system of governance. In Europe, this phenomenon can perhaps best be observed in some former communist regimes in the Eastern part of the continent.

When considering the former political configuration of Europe, one immediately notices that the great milestone of 1989 was made possible precisely because of some forms of civic engagement. The roles that civil society played in toppling dictatorships in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia or the former GDR are well known. However, nowhere in Europe was the overthrow of the communist leadership more intimately linked with the direct, active and personal involvement of "the citizen" than in Romania. Nowhere in Europe were the grassroots so directly committed to change or so willing to suffer for it. However, equally remarkable as the events of December 1989 is what happened in years to follow.

One would expect that a society who suffers an official death toll of 1104 and 3352 injured[3] during a violent mass uprising learns the value of solidarity and is aware of the power that civic engagement (in its most extreme form at least) can have. Yet, it is well known that this was not the case in Romania. The grassroots movements that toppled the Ceauşescu regime were not the result of a calculated strategy for power exchange. The elites that rose to fill the power vacuum emerged from the chaos of the popular uprising[4].

---

[3] Peter Siani-Davies, *The Romanian Revolution of 1989* (Cornell University Press, 2005), p.97
[4] *Ibid*, p.117.

Many works have explained in great detail how spontaneous the events now called the "Romanian Revolution" were and the goal of this work is not to go into any depth on the matter. Instead, the aim is to try and understand why visible forms of civic engagement are more the exception than the rule. Can mainstream theories of mobilization explain what triggers instances of engagement where they do occur? My hypothesis is that mainstream social mobilization theories do not fully explain instances of spontaneous or unstructured civic engagement. Validating this hypothesis would reveal one important conclusion, namely that a revision is required not only for the theory itself but also for the overall approach to the field of social movements.

The Romanian case study thus focuses not on the regime change of 1989 but on the much more recent demonstrations of 2012, whose (direct or indirect) result was the resignation of Prime-Minister Emil Boc[5]. This was the first instance in post-Decembrist Romanian history where a government was forced into resignations following street rallies and pressures from below. In a context more apathetic than militant, one must ask what made the 2012 protests possible and, more importantly, did the factors that motivated citizens to brave freezing temperatures and topple an unpopular government leave any lasting effects on the grassroots? Was the 2012 moment just a fluke or is indicative of something more? This work attempts to find answers to the aforementioned questions.

Methodology and sources

In order to answer the questions expressed in the introduction and test whether or not mainstream theories of mobilization fully explain spontaneous and unstructured instances of civic engagement, several stages are followed.

The first part of the work deals with defining and clarifying the concepts used and placing them within an established theoretical framework. Emphasis is placed on definitions not provided by the authors whose theories are analyzed. The second stage is the review of literature in the field of civic engagement and social mobilization. The main theories which are presented and analyzed briefly are that of resource mobilization and that of framing, as these represent arguably the two main contemporary schools of thought in the field. This section also explains why social mobilization is important when addressing the issue of civic engagement. The third stage is the justification for the case in question. As mentioned prior, the work aims to test the hypothesis using the case of the 2012 Romanian protests and the reasons why this case is relevant are explained in the section on case selection. This part explains in brief the history of Romanian civic engagement after 1989 as well as the context in which the protests occurred. Several remarks are made concerning why other similar cases were not chosen, both in Romania and abroad. The fourth stage is a day-by-day account of the protests as they unfolded. This part deals with raw facts alone, the intention being to form as accurate an image as possible so as to overlap the theory with the actual events and analyze the findings. The fifth part is also the most important, as it analyzes the events in context and looks at how well they fit in with mainstream theory. The patterns mainstream theories describe are overlapped with the actual events and conclusions are drawn appropriately. Any discrepancies between theoretical patterns and observable practical events are analyzed so as to reveal potential gaps in mainstream theory. Suggestions for new theories or refinements to existing literature are made according to the results of the findings. The sixth and last part is the conclusion, explaining and generalizing the findings.

---

[5] "Boc a Demisionat: Am depus mandatul Guvernului pentru a detensiona situaţia politică şi socială din ţară", *Mediafax.ro*, February 5, 2012: http://www.mediafax.ro/politic/boc-a-demisionat-am-depus-mandatul-guvernului-pentru-a-detensiona-situatia-politica-si-sociala-din-tara-9209410 (accessed April 11, 2013)

The sources used are mostly academic works of great significance in the field of social mobilization and civic engagement, media sources and official statements, as well as official statistics, surveys and studies that are relevant to establishing a clear image of Romanian society before, during and after the 2012 protests.

Defining and clarifying the concepts

In any field of social sciences, the strength of words is given by their ascribed meanings. What one understands by the concepts one uses must therefore be clarified so as to allow all readers to fully grasp the ideas put forth.

Perhaps the most important concept used in this work is that of civic engagement. There are many slightly different meanings ascribed to this idea, all of them having to do with some form of grassroots participation in community affairs.

Current literature on the topic shows no clear consensus over the meaning of "civic engagement"[6]. This is a well-known fact to all scholars, organizations or students who take an interest in the field. The wide array of existing definitions seems to form two distinct trends. The first describes civic engagement as being specific to certain types of activity such as community service[7], collective action[8], political involvement[9] or social change[10]. This approach tends to limit civic engagement and the role it plays within society as a whole. The second trend is to define the concept in very broad terms, encompassing virtually all collective action or even feelings of connection to a certain

---

[6] C. Gibson, *From inspiration to participation: A review of perspectives on youth civic engagement*, New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2000

[7] E. Van Benshoten, *Civic engagement for people of all ages through national service*, Unpublished manuscript, 2001

[8] Elisa C. Diller, "Citizens in service: The challenge of delivering civic engagement training to national service programs". *Washington, DC: Corporation for National and Community Service,* July 17, 2001

[9] B. Ronan. Testimony at the White House Conference on Aging Public Forum on Civic engagement in an Older America, Phoenix, Arizona, February 25, 2004

[10] Richard P. Adler and Judy Goggin,. "What Do We Mean By "Civic Engagement"?", *Journal of Transformative Education* 3, No. 3 (2005), pp. 236-253

community[11]. Without doing a critique of these definitions, one can notice that few authors or organizations who deal with the issue (such as the World Bank) go in depth to explain their perception of the concept, its limits and characteristics. The following section deals with my understanding of civic engagement and offers some explanations regarding its meaning. It is not intended to deal with the concept in an exhaustive manner but merely to explain some of the features essential to this work.

For the sake of clarification, I refer to civic engagement as being the active and voluntary participation of citizens in activities for the sake of common good within certain communities. The key word in this approach is "active", meaning that citizens are directly and personally involved in the well-being of a community. The term stands in opposition to displays of passive support wherein people may show a certain allegiance to given ideas but invest no significant time or effort in promoting them. By "significant", I mean that an amount of time or effort (including financial effort) is taken away from a different, more personal, activity specifically for the goal of being invested toward common good. In this sense, civic engagement comprises all activities wherein the citizen stands to lose something if the goal invested in is not met. Donating to charity, spending an afternoon doing volunteer work or joining a protest rally are all examples of civic engagement. By contrast, "liking" or "up-voting" a comment, article or other entries on a social network is more a display of sympathy than of active support because the time and effort necessary to do it is negligible, as are the losses in case the initiative is unsuccessful. Even sharing and commenting, if not followed by direct action, are still types of passive support.

Active participation implies a concrete finality and an investment or stake of the participants in the outcome. As can be seen later on, passive support which is relatively

---

[11] R. Putnam, *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000

risk-free is much more common among the grassroots than proper civic engagement, which carries with it the risk of failure and loss in terms of time or effort.

Civic engagement necessarily needs to be voluntary. Any form of action which is the result of coercion or is incentivized by any means other than a desire for common good cannot benefit the community long-term and is therefore best described as 'fake' civic engagement. In fact, attempts at forceful or otherwise inorganic activities for common good might actually cause harm to the community overall because they would not encourage solidarity and kinship among the grassroots. Coerced participation might actually breed contempt for the promoted goal. For example, when the Romanian Communist Party organized rallies in support of Ceauşescu, they did so without considering the true allegiances of the participants[12]. As such, the 'spontaneous' mass rallies cheering for the 'Beloved Leader' only contained a few genuine sympathizers of the regime. It should come as no surprise therefore that the uprising in Bucureşti began precisely during one such rally where people were brought against their will to cheer for something they did not believe in. The same holds true for incentivized participation toward a common good, because one can never know if participants truly believe in the goal. Genuine civic engagement must therefore necessarily be voluntary. Fines are a particular case. Many countries in the world apply fines for misbehaviour that damages the community (littering, destruction of public property, disturbing the peace, or even refusal to vote) and it might be worth discussing the role that these have. Are fines coercive means of enforcing civic engagement? What about community service performed as part of a court sentencing? The answer in both cases is no. Fines and community service are not forms of coerced civic engagement precisely because they are issued as sanctions and are, therefore meant to right a wrong that has been

---

[12] Siani-Davies, pp. 26-27

committed. They are the consequences of what is considered misbehaviour and should not be considered to generate fake civic engagement. Coercion would imply that fines or community service are imposed upon an individual or a group in the absence of misbehaviour. There are cases when actions typically associated with civic engagement are sanctioned as misbehaviours and some of these will be discussed at greater length when analyzing the case study.

According to the aforementioned definition, I consider civic engagement to be a feature exclusively of the citizens, of the grassroots. Organizations (NGOs, political parties, trade unions, etc.) or even institutions (town halls, prefectures, universities, etc.) might have a role in initiating, organizing or supporting some activities or programs but this type of engagement is structured or, one could say, 'formalized'. For this reason, it would be more appropriately labelled a manifestation of 'civil society' as a whole rather than civic engagement. This is an important distinction to keep in mind when discussing civic engagement. Most often it is the citizens themselves who are (or should be) the initiators of action for common good. When defining civil society, the relationship between it and civic engagement is discussed at greater length.

Where the community is concerned, however, the grassroots should see it as primarily their task to ensure a thriving environment and should, ideally, do the utmost to ensure that problems affecting the community are dealt with primarily by the community itself. The success of any project involving citizens is, or should be, measured according to how committed they are to continue activities supported by the project even after its official ending. In other words, any project attempting to mobilize citizens toward a certain goal (keeping the streets clean for example) should be mostly concerned with granting it a self-generating character. The project is successful only if citizens continue to invest toward the good of their community even after they are no longer actively

encouraged to do so. If they no longer take it upon themselves willingly to maintain or improve the standing of or the conditions within their community, then they are not civically engaged. The same applies to situations in which citizens urge state institutions to intervene for the good of the community without attempting to resolve the issue themselves. Appealing to institutions can be considered a form of civic engagement if the community itself is unable for some reason to take direct action. It is not civic engagement if direct action is possible but responsibility is nonetheless passed to the authorities.

Although civic engagement does not need to be organized, the old principle of 'strength in numbers' does apply and the best way to coordinate actions of large groups is by means of an organization, be it structured or unstructured. The difference between a structured organization and an unstructured one is crucial. An unstructured organization or movement differs from a structured one in terms of formality and hierarchy. A structured organization (a CSO, political party, labour union, charity group or any other SMO) has a fixed hierarchy, legal-rational leadership in the Weberian sense[13], clearly defined attributes and positions for at least some of its members, legal identity and a clearly defined set of mandatory rules of conduct. As such, a structured organization has a much more formal character than an unstructured one and follows certain rules or guidelines that make its behaviour largely predictable. An unstructured organization, however, has no fixed hierarchy (all members are theoretically equal in status), leadership is charismatic and prone to changes, attributions of members are determined on the spot and can change according to need, there is no legal entity, and no enforced code of conduct. As such, decisions in unstructured organizations are more likely made arbitrarily and membership in most cases can be established or broken largely at will.

---

[13] Weber, M. "The three types of legitimate rule", *Society and Institutions* 4, no. 1 (1958), pp. 1-11

This makes an unstructured organization much more unpredictable. In spite of this, there is still some form of informal organization between the members and some form of unanimity or consensus exists regarding certain issues. That consensus motivates individual members to pool resources for what they perceive to be the common good and prevents the emergence of chaos. Examples of unstructured organizations are spontaneous protests, communities but also certain criminal organizations, groups of vigilantes, etc. In short, the nature of the rules that guide interactions within the organization and its interactions as a whole with outside entities determines its level of structure. The presence of formal or codified rules mean than an organization is structured, informal or consensus-based rules mean that it is unstructured and no rules whatsoever translate into chaos.

Before moving on, several other comments must be made concerning civic engagement. As stated prior, there are certain types and boundaries to be considered. Civic engagement requires active participation, but not all such involvement is visible. Most actions carried out in the interest of common good are very difficult to observe or to quantify and very few are politically relevant. For example, a street rally is easy to observe because the goal is to become as visible as possible and make itself heard by as many citizens and decision-makers as possible. It thus becomes easy to study the rally, determine the number of participants, observe it for the whole of its duration and gather data from several rallies to establish correlations. However, the case of tenants pooling money in order to paint the hallways in a block of flats, for example, is much more difficult to observe because the matter is usually dealt with discretely and has no political connotations whatsoever. This is as much an act of civic engagement as the rally but its goal and the way in which it is carried out differs greatly. For this reason, only visible and politically relevant instances of civic engagement are discussed with

any sort of quantitative depth in this work. To do otherwise would require an immense amount of time and resources. By 'visible instances' I refer to cases where the goal is to attract attention of as large a number of people as possible (rallies, national programs, calls for volunteers, etc.).

Worth noting is that there might be a correlation between visible and invisible or between politically relevant and politically irrelevant civic engagement. Although it might be hard to imagine, it is worth reflecting upon the possibility that grassroots initiatives to, for example, plant trees or carpool might encourage political activism by creating an environment where such bottom-up actions are encouraged. The frequency of one may influence the frequency of the other. However, for the same reasons stated above, determining such a correlation would require an enormous amount of effort and logistics. What can be said for certain at the moment is that all types of civic engagement need to occur with some frequent regularity in order to have a healthy functional society.

By this point, it is perhaps necessary to clarify the distinction between civil society in general and civic engagement in particular. This is by no means an easy task, given the fact that no clear and exhaustive definition of civil society exists. Of the more influential definitions in use, worth noting is that adopted by the World Bank, according to which civil society refers to "the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based

organizations, professional associations, and foundations"[14]. This definition is more an enumeration of characteristics and traits that holds little value from a theoretical perspective. What this and many other definitions imply is that civil society is equal to the sum of its parts. Such a view leaves out the existence and importance of an element that binds all of these structures and organizations together into a whole and it also does not explain spontaneous and unstructured actions for common good such as the events in Romania in 1989 or in 2012. A more accurate definition would account for CSOs as well as the element holding them together, namely civic engagement. Without the will of the grassroots to become civically engaged, CSOs would have to give out incentives in order to gain support. As discussed previously, the effects of such a measure may actually be harmful to society. Therefore, civic engagement is an essential part of civil society, as it provides the backbone that supports all CSOs and the projects undertaken by them.

Given the complexity and the different meanings ascribed to the concept of civil society over time, it is unsurprising that any form of theoretical approach is highly problematic. Indeed, many definitions focus on the structural dimension of civil society (namely CSOs) without considering the elements that make such organizations possible in the first place. In the scholarly field, views on civil society are divided along many lines. Hobbes and Locke see it as the parent of the state, while for Tocqueville or Montesquieu it is in opposition to the state. More modern scholars would argue that civil society promotes the interest of public good not only in opposition but also complementary to the state, often on a case-by-case basis. Dunn considers civil society to be "the domain of relationships which falls between the private realm of the family

---

[14] "Defining Civil Society", *WorldBank.org*, February 8, 2013, available from: http://go.worldbank.org/4CE7W046K0 (accessed March 12, 2013)

on the one hand and the state on the other"[15], while for Taylor, it is "a web of autonomous associations independent of the state, which bind citizens together in matters of common concern, and by their existence or actions could have an effect on public policy"[16]. For authors like Schmitter, who define civil society as a "set or system of self-organized intermediary groups"[17], there is ample room for interpretation as to where certain elements such as the family, economic interests or the political sphere are situated.

The approach taken in this work is that of civil society as a public arena for uncoerced collective action to promote the interests, purposes and values of communities that are not part of political or of economic societies. This definition allows for the existence of both structured and unstructured forms of collective action, thus allowing civic engagement to take its place as the binding element of civil society. It also allows civil society to work both with and against the state, according to what its interests may be. Worth noting is that an arena for collective action does not necessarily imply that its component parts (organizations, citizens, etc.) are necessarily active. A passive organization is as much part of civil society as an active one, given that its existence is still the result of citizens willing to be civically engaged. It is therefore possible to have a passive civil society even if citizens are actively engaged in organization, although the opposite would most likely not be true.

According to Linz and Stepan[18], civil society is not to be confused with other arenas of interests (political and economic societies). Without dwelling on the distinctions, one

---

[15] Elizabeth Dunn, *Money, morality and modes of civil society among American Mormons*, in Chris Hann, and Elizabeth Dunn ed., *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models*, London: Routledge, 1996

[16] G. Kligman, "Reclaiming the public: a reflection on recreating civil society in Romania", *Eastern European Politics and Societies*, 1990

[17] Philippe Schmitter, "On Civil Society and the Consolidation of Democracy: Ten Propositions", mimeograph, Stanford Department of Political Science, July 1995

[18] Juan José Linz and Alfred C. Stepan, *Problems of democratic transition and consolidation: southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1996

must keep in mind that actors attempting to occupy political functions and hold positions of power within the state form political (*not* civil) society. Political society is the "structured and organized level of society for political ends"[19]. For example, guerrillas and opposition parties do not hold political power, but are attempting to obtain it via more or less legal or legitimate means. They are indeed a collective taking common action for a certain goal, but they are not part of civil society because they try to take power themselves rather than direct the hand of the establishment. A particular case is that of terrorist organizations who pursue a certain goal (which may or may not be legitimate) but do not seek the attainment of political power. They cannot be classed as 'civically engaged actors of civil society' because of the means used in pursuit of their goals. Such means often imply inflicting premeditated physical damage on the community in which they are employed, which is something civil society cannot do. The same applies to partisans supporting the state against an enemy during war.

The other particular case is that of revolutions. Without going too much into detail, I consider them to either be a part of political society from the onset (if there is an already established leadership looking to gain power even if only provisionally) or to become part of it if leaders emerge after the start of the revolt. A spontaneous revolt is the product of civic engagement because it does not inflict premeditated physical damage to the community and it seeks to merely, at most, topple the existing establishment and then allow political society to seize power and complete the revolution.

With regard to the other distinction, it is worth mentioning that civil society is more concerned with creating the environment or milieu for economic growth rather than being directly engaged as an economic (or for profit) actor. In this respect it differs from

---

[19] Stelian Tănase, *Elite şi societate: Revoluţia ca eşec*, Polirom, Iaşi, 1996

economic society[20]. I also consider family affairs to be inherently private matters and therefore not a part of civil society which is, by definition, public.

The definitions previously explained made use of the concept of "community". The term is apparently a simple one to comprehend but its meanings have changed over time, from the French Revolutionary ideal of 'fraternité', to the ties that bonded individuals living in a common and well-defined area[21]. As means of communication became more efficient and widespread, the term again changed meaning and became less about territoriality and more about shared beliefs, interests, values and a sense of belonging[22]. Other approaches deal with the community as a type of network or social system, where what matters are the interactions and the relationships maintained[23]. The problem with interactions is they imply some form of contact between individuals or groups. Modern-day reality challenges the needs to have such interactions in order to form a community. Bonds today can be formed using channels that require little or no interaction between participants by merely advocating for shared values and interests. As such, these bonds are more abstract than personal and have more to do with common interests and collective action than with direct interactions. Such communities are formed of weaker ties than those requiring direct personal contacts but are much more flexible and, one could argue, more tolerant of outsiders and diverse than the closely-knit communities of the past.

To my mind, a community is a collective of individuals who share similar values and interests in common good, and a consistent desire to pursue those interests as a whole (or single entity). It is therefore possible to have a community in any avenue of life

---

[20] Linz and Stepan, pp.11-13
[21] E. H. Harper and A. Dunham, *Community Organization in Action. Basic literature and critical comments*, New York: Association Press, 1959

where people have common interests, even in the absence of personal interaction. Shared values are important because it is difficult to envisage a shared perception of common good in the absence of at least some common beliefs. In this respect, individuals could possess many divergent values and still form a community based on one single shared belief. However, the more values there are in common, the stronger the ties within a community are likely to be.

The key factor within a genuine community is not the presence of at least one shared interest but the will to act together in its defence. In this sense, one citizen may be civically engaged alone but would not constitute a 'community'. Also, a community needs to be engaged in order to exist. A group of people sharing an interest but not manifesting a common will to defend that interest does not constitute a community. The same is true of a group that shares no interest, even if it interacts frequently. This is relevant when discussing civic engagement. By definition, it is possible to be civically engaged by yourself so long as the interest pursued serves the collective good and the community has expressed the will to defend the said interest but has not yet taken action. This makes it possible for every citizen within a group to be civically engaged independently of all the others (taking matters into one's own hands). However, such a situation would greatly reduce the effectiveness of most actions undertaken, which is why acting as a community is preferable in most cases. The difference between a community and an interest group, according to this definition, has to do with consistency. In an interest group, each member is concerned with their own interest alone. Once the goal is achieved the group disbands. A community is concerned with common good and will take action on behalf of the whole even if not all active members

---

[22] E. Frazer, *The Problem of Communitarian Politics. Unity and conflict*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. See also D. Lee and H Newby, *The Problem of Sociology: an introduction to the discipline*, London: Unwin Hyman, 1983 and Willmott, P. *Community Initiatives. Patterns and prospects*, London: Policy Studies Institute, 1989
[23] Putnam, 2000. See also E. Bott, *Family and Social Networks*, London: Tavistock, 1957

share the same interest. The key distinction has to do with consistency in promoting the common good. This harbours trust and a sense of belonging which are critical if one is expected to invest in a cause that does not concern them directly, as one would in a community but not in an interest group.

Theory and literature

Because this work deals with instances of visible civic engagement and their roots, placing it within an established theoretical context might prove tricky. The theory dealing with civic engagement as a phenomenon usually focuses on outcomes and implications, and only seldom explains its origins and triggers or what conditions facilitate its visible manifestations. Classical theory places visible civic engagement in the broader category of social movements and this work follows the same line of reasoning. Although social movements address a wider range of issues in a broader context than civic engagement, it is safe to assume that participation is in either case stimulated by the same factors. Indeed, the line between civic engagement and social movements is blurry, not least because there is a lack of consensus on the definitions of both concepts. However, because both are essentially referring to collectives of people with common goals, there is no evident reason to suggest that what causes passive desire to become manifest is different in one case than in the other.

Theory on social movements has been a hot topic for at least the past five decades and many claims and interpretations have arisen to try and explain what it is exactly that motivates people to make their grievances public through such events as protests, support rallies or even open revolts. One of the most influential, well-known and most often quoted theories dealing with the issue is that of John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, called 'resource mobilization theory'. According to it, social movements arise

because there is a significant and relatively constant flow of resources directed toward mobilization. Although the origins and the nature of these resources differ, the theory emphasizes the necessity of a core body that attracts and organizes support for a cause addressing a certain (real or fabricated) grievance[24]. The success of a social movement, in this case, is attributed to the availability of resources (financial, human, cultural, etc.) and the ability to use them properly. As such, as the authors themselves state, social movements have a higher chance of emergence and of success in environments where resources are more abundant and more easily pooled for a perceived common goal. The work of McCarthy and Zald discusses the case of the United States but makes no attempt to refer to itself as valid only in certain specific cases where certain conditions can be found. If anything, the arguments put forth are phrased so as to appear the product of a general theory of social mobilization which is, in some form or another, valid in any possible case. Although the theory is discussed in more detail in the analytical section of this work, several points need to be made clear from the onset.

First of all, resource mobilization theory makes no clear distinction between CSOs and SMOs. Although it is possible that the two terms have grown to overlap since the original theory was published in the late 70's, it is still relevant because SMOs play such a central role in mobilizing resources. As is described later on, CSOs played no significant role in the Romanian winter protests of 2012 and only political parties took an active approach to mobilizing some of the participants. Considering political parties or media trusts to be (at least in theory) SMOs, one finds that their influence and role in unfolding events was still minimal, as their reception by the spontaneous protesters who constituted the majority shows.

---

[24] John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory", *The American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 6 (May 1977), pp. 1212-1241

The second point that needs clarification is how resource mobilization fits in with the definitions formulated in this work. According to McCarty and Zald, incentives play a large role in attracting support for an SMO. This, as was stated in the early part of the previous section (page 4), runs the risk of stimulating fake civic engagement, meaning involvement for the sake of the direct rewards, not for the common good. Although a pragmatist might argue that, as long as goals are met, it matters little what motivates participants, there are countless reasons why fake civic engagement should be discouraged. It can be argued, for example, that in certain contexts, traditional rules of interaction between SMOs and state change, as is the case with totalitarian or authoritarian regimes where SMOs can be politically infiltrated. In such a case, fake civic engagement would give the appearance of normality and would undermine genuine participation. Where fake engagement becomes the norm, the sudden disappearance of incentives or of powerful SMOs (as was often the case in East-Central Europe after 1989) would lead to passivity. Incentives, therefore, are best used on request to support grassroots initiatives that are already underway, rather than as tools for mobilization. Where few or no bottom-up initiatives can be found, existing resources are best used for dissemination of ideas, information and know-how so as to stimulate their organic emergence. This point is the first critique of resource mobilization theory, which makes no distinction between grassroots initiatives and those of SMOs, and considers the latter to be the uncontested representatives of the former.

Other theories that emerged after that of resource mobilization have tried with varying degrees of success to explain phenomena like social movements from different paradigms, arguing that the perspective proposed by McCarthy and Zald did not fully explain their complexity. Of these, few could claim to approach the influence of framing theory, whose application extends from political and social science to media

and communication studies, discourse analysis or even cognitive psychology[25]. Framing has been defined in many ways, starting from Goffman's 1974 description as a 'schemata of interpretation' that individuals use to 'locate, perceive, identify, and label' what they observe around them[26]. This approach is highly individualized and claims that personal ontological perspectives have a key role in determining how a person aligns themselves with regard to a problem or event. Perhaps the most comprehensive definition appears in Nelson's 1997 work on media framing and states that framing is "the process by which a source defines the essential problem underlying a particular social or political issue and outlines a set of considerations purportedly relevant to that issue"[27]. Applying this view to the realm of social mobilization, Benford and Snow elaborate on the idea of 'collective action frames', proposing that not only individuals but also collectives function in much the same way and can be mobilized if a common schemata of interpretation is widespread, leading to predominantly the same choices. Thus, how an issue is presented has effects on how people react to it. They define collective action frames as "action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization (SMO)"[28]. These are not merely passive values but the ever-changing result of interactions, outside influence, and negotiations regarding meanings[29].

Such an approach to social movements is simple in essence but complex in implications and in the processes that it entails. The aforementioned definitions make two key assumptions in explaining what mobilizes individuals to take action. The first is that there is necessarily at least one outside body attempting to construct a frame that

---

[25] David A. Snow and. Robert D. Benford, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment", *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000), pp. 611-639
[26] E. Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of the Experience*, New York: Harper Colophon, 1974
[27] T. E. Nelson, R. A.Clawson and Z. M.Oxley, "Media framing of a civil liberties conflict and its effect on tolerance". *American Political Science Review* 91 (1997), pp. 567–583
[28] Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 614
[29] *Ibid.*

resonates with a collective. Much like in the theory of resource mobilization, this places an SMO at the heart of collective action. In the context of civic engagement, an SMO would therefore be essential to generating uniformity between the various actors. As previously mentioned, it is possible to be civically engaged alone and, in the absence of a collective frame, this could become a genuine problem if individuals have personal views over what common good means. SMOs are therefore essential to disseminate certain types of knowledge and encourage certain values and frames that mobilize people to respond in similar fashion to certain events. This approach largely overlooks the role of unstructured actors such as the community in shaping and defining frames.

The second key assumption is detailed when discussing 'frame alignment', which presupposes that grassroots active participation necessarily requires that individual or collective frames are 'congruent and complementary' to those of SMOs[30]. As such, this argument reasons that grassroots only become actively engaged if and when their frames of interpretation align with those of the SMOs, so long as the frames in question imply active engagement. The assumption also implies a relationship of mutual support wherein SMOs and the grassroots aid each other in achieving their goals so long as frames align, irrespective of which side took initiative. One would, therefore, expect to see large-scale grassroots support for SMO initiatives (assuming SMOs time their actions correctly) and also large scale involvement of SMOs in aiding grassroots initiatives whenever frames align. However, the analysis of the 2012 winter protests shows that both assumptions, and the theory they support may need to be revised. The protests not only began, evolved and largely succeeded without aid from SMOs (at times the protesters were actually hostile to SMOs trying to intervene) but they also

---

[30] Snow et al., 1986, p.464

showed that people may still be unwilling to participate even if they share a common interpretative frame.

Both the framing theory and that of resource mobilization make no distinction between SMOs and CSOs, and both start by expressing a desire to explain *why* grassroots mobilize for collective action but drift away from this goal and later focus on explaining *how* they are mobilized by SMOs. The centrality of SMOs to both theories implies that spontaneous or unstructured mobilization is either impossible or cannot be successful. The case study chosen brings evidence in contrary to both of these implications.

Case selection

This section answers the question of why the protests of 2012 were chosen as a case-study over any other movement that occurred in Romania around the same time. As is seen later on, several features make the 2012 winter rallies not only atypical for the Romanian scene but also exceptions to the rules that mainstream theory seems to ascribe to social movements in general.

As stated in the introduction, nowhere in Europe was the overthrow of a dictatorship more bloody or more intimately linked to the will of the grassroots than in Romania in December 1989. Much has been written about the events that toppled Ceauşescu and how they were made possible to begin with. There was no coordinated dissidence movement or underground society that might have hailed a popular uprising or negotiated a power transfer like in Poland, and no real force for mass mobilization except the Communist party-state itself. There were, therefore, no organizations to educate citizens in political or civil matters and no representatives to deliver the grievances of the public to the leadership. It should therefore come as no surprise that, when discontent did arise in a visible form, discipline among the masses broke-down,

leading to a very bloody series of events. However, this is not the most interesting aspect about Romanian civic engagement but rather the paradox that, after successfully toppling a dictator, the grassroots descended into passivity and disengagement. There were, indeed, student rallies in the early 1990's in Bucureşti but other towns and cities stood silent in the face of repeated state abuses and largely remained so for over 20 years, until a small rally in Cluj-Napoca grew and spread into the most significant visible instance of civic engagement in post-Decembrist Romania. What made the 2012 protests special and why they are unique in the recent history of Romania are questions that this section goes in depth to explain.

Since the international financial crisis of 2008 began, there has been a sharp increase in the number and size of protests around the world[31], among the largest being the Arab Spring movements, the Occupy movements and many others such as those in Greece, Spain or Portugal. Indeed, the international scene has been favourable to large social movements over the past several years and the trend has also affected Romania, where civil society in general is otherwise not known to be particularly active in terms of staging protests or strikes. Still, several movements did occur in Romania within this context of global escalation of protests. Between 2009 and 2012, some of the largest post-1989 rallies were held but all followed similar patterns and achieved similar results. Relevant examples are the teachers' unions[32] and the austerity protests of May 2010[33].

---

[31] Anup Shah, *Public Protests around the World*, November 7, 2011, available from: http://www.globalissues.org/article/45/public-protests-around-the-world (accessed February 8, 2013)
[32] "Greva profesorilor – minivacanta pentru elevi", *stirileprotv.ro*, October, 2009, available from: http://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/social/greva-profesorilor-minivacanta-pentru-elevi.html (accessed February 10, 2013). See also "Protestele profesorilor se extind în toată ţara", *cotidianul.ro*, November 14, 2011, available from: http://www.cotidianul.ro/protestele-profesorilor-se-extind-in-toata-tara-163745/ (accessed February 10, 2013) and Anca Dragomir, "Profesorii se pregătesc de grevă generală", *romanialibera.ro*, January 18, 2012, available from: http://www.romanialibera.ro/actualitate/locale/profesorii-se-pregatesc-de-greva-generala-250574.html (accessed February 10, 2013)
[33] "Scăderea salariilor şi a pensiilor a provocat cel mai amplu miting sindical din ultimii 19 ani", *Monitorulsv.ro*, May 19, 2010, available from: http://www.monitorulsv.ro/Ultima-ora/2010-05-19/Scaderea-salariilor-si-a-pensiilor-a-provocat-cel-mai-amplu-miting-sindical-din-ultimii-19-ani (accessed February 10, 2013)

The teachers were the first large group to be affected directly as a result of the global crisis. In 2008, a law was enacted promising to increase their wages by 50% but, due to subsequent economic difficulties, this measure was never applied[34]. Moreover, their wages were cut by 25% in 2010, as part of an austerity program enacted by the government[35]. As a result, teachers have gone on strike and have taken to the streets more times over the past five years than any other group in Romania. Each year, some form of collective or individual protest has been staged but the pattern was always the same, as was the level of success. Unions would organize large rallies, sometimes together but mostly separate from one another, or would go on strike for extended periods of time but support for either of these would decline after the first day or two.

The protest of May 2010 remains the largest anti-establishment meeting held in Romania after 1990. Triggered by the announcement of austerity measures that included wage cuts of 25% for all state workers and pension cuts of 15%, the rallies brought together between 30.000 (according to police) and 50.000 (according to the organizers) people to protest in Victoria Square[36]. Considering that at least seven million people (one third of the population) were affected directly by these two measures alone, even 50.000 protesters seems a meagre gathering. The protesters met in a rare collaborative action and picketed the Government, demanding alternative measures to those announced. Union and opposition leaders also asked for the cabinet's resignation and threatened to go on large strikes and stage even larger protests should the government refuse to comply[37]. These threats were, however, proven hollow, as momentum quickly vanished among the grassroots, who supported no subsequent large-scale collective action.

---

[34] "Greva profesorilor", 2009
[35] "Scăderea salariilor", 2010
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] *Ibid.*

This was (and still is) generally the pattern followed by actions organized by SMOs. People and resources would be mobilized for common good or for supporting or opposing certain concrete policies and the movement would begin in force but lose momentum and support almost instantly, and gradually fade over a period of a few days or weeks. Sometimes, as in the case of teachers' protests, leaders would call off the movement after closed-doors negotiations that yielded promises at best for the participants. Many anti-establishment rallies, such as those in May 2010, either began as political initiatives of various opposition factions or soon became politicized as political factions took them over. This pattern, as is detailed later on, was clearly broken in January 2012, as protesters booed and ousted opposition leaders who tried to join them or speak on their behalf.

Actions that were not organized by SMOs have had even less impact. Shortly before the 2012 events, the Occupy movement gathered around 30 people in protest against social injustice[38]. Participants, whose request for authorization had gone unanswered, were surrounded by twice as many gendarmes, taken to the police station and fined. Although their popularity grew on social media sites as a result of this conflict, the movement did not gain any strength in terms of number of participants over the next few weeks. The Occupy movement was, still, the most significant grassroots initiative of the period, in spite of the small number of participants. There are many reasons why this movement failed to gain support, including the fact that it addressed an international issue when there were clearly other pressing matters do deal with domestically. The real question is why grassroots did not support the May 2010 movement, even though SMOs played a large role both in aligning interpretative frames (few people, if any, agreed with the

---

[38] Dan Arsenie "Povestea Occupy România. Tinerii care au ocupat Piaţa Universităţii după 20 de ani", *Realitatea.net*, December 15, 2011, available from: http://www.realitatea.net/exclusiv-povestea-occupy-romania-cine-sunt-tinerii-care-au-ocupat-piata-universitatii-dupa-20-de-a_895545.html (accessed February 8, 2013). See also Mircea Restea and Vali Deaconescu, "Occupy Bucharest: Cum a decurs protestul "indignaţilor" din Bucureşti", *romanialibera.ro*,

austerity measures) and in mobilizing resources to enact more popular changes. Of yet greater importance is why the grassroots did not participate when mainstream theory stated that they were most likely to but instead mobilized and were more successful in a manner that contradicts the theory.

The winter protests of 2012 were chosen as a case study because they break from patterns usually found in Romania. Firstly, they differ from any other movements of the time in terms of scale. At its height, the movement covered over 60 towns and cities in Romania and several others abroad, making it the most widespread series of protests in the post-Decembrist period. The movement was also one of the longest in duration, as the series of anti-establishment rallies began on January 12th 2012 and continued for almost 30 consecutive days (over 40 in some places[39]). As explained in the following chapter, the *de facto* end of the protests is very hard to determine precisely but February 10th was chosen to be the last day because subsequent rallies were no longer predominantly anti-establishment but focused on concrete policy such as ACTA, prevention of shale gas extraction or union grievances.

The third peculiarity has to do with how the movement evolved over time. Unlike any other movement in Romania, the winter protests gained momentum from one day to another. What started as a small protest in support of a state secretary grew into a large movement against the establishment. To have a movement escalate in terms of support and active participation, rather than decline, is a novelty for Romania and might be one of the main reasons why protests carried on for as long as they did.

October 15, 2011, available from: http://www.romanialibera.ro/actualitate/bucuresti/foto-occupy-București-cum-a-decurs-protestul-indignatilor-din-bucuresti-241208.html (accessed February 8, 2013)

[39] *Piața Universității, ziua 42 de proteste*, February 24, 2012, available from:
http://curaj.tv/reportaj/civic/protest/piata-universitatii-ziua-42-de-proteste/ (accessed April 14, 2013)

The fourth particularity of the winter protests of 2012 is that they were not triggered politically and did not become politicized. Political factions in Romania usually play an active role in initiating rallies either for or against the establishment. Movements started by other, non-political, groups or organizations are usually either too weak to have any visibility or are hijacked by political factions claiming to speak on their behalf. This applies especially to the largest movements of recent years. The teachers' protests and strikes were organized by unions, whose ties to political parties are openly close[40]. The May 2010 movement brought together unions, political activists and some students and pensioners but its voice was that of the opposition[41]. Both of these examples highlight the role that SMOs can have in rallying and organizing the grassroots and would, upon closer examination, seem to fit well with the model described by either resource mobilization or framing theory. However, as the following chapter shows, there is no evidence that political or politicized factions played any significant role in initiating the winter protests. There is, however, an abundance of evidence that the movements rejected and opposed not just the establishment but the entire political class, as well as SMO intervention.

Perhaps the most important element that distinguishes the winter movement of 2012 from any other in Romania is its spontaneous character. Throughout the entire month of protesting, not a single person or organization claimed leadership or assumed the task of organizing the movement as a whole. Spokespersons did appear and carried the voice of protesters all the way to the level of European Union institutions but there was no formal hierarchy established, no organization emerged officially to carry on or coordinate the fight and much of the mobilization was done peer-to-peer via social

---

[40] Diana Preda, *"BNS and CNSLR Frăţia merger plan postponed"*, *EIROnline*, November 9, 2004, available from: http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2004/11/inbrief/ro0411101n.htm (accessed April 25, 2013)
[41] "Scăderea salariilor", 2010

media[42], akin to the Arab Spring but different due to the adamancy of not becoming politicized. Several voices have raised doubts as to the authenticity of the movement's spontaneous character. Virgil Măgureanu, former chief of the Romanian Information Service (SRI) declared during an interview that he did not believe the protests were spontaneous[43]. However, he did not explain or motivate this claim in any way, nor did he give any indication as to who might be responsible. Therefore, his statements were most likely an expression of personal belief, as no evidence has yet emerged in support of them.

Many of these particularities were made possible by an element not commonly found among Romanians, namely solidarity. Traditionally, as during the protests of May 2010 or during the many teachers' strikes and rallies, participation would be restricted to members of organizations who had direct stakes in the outcome. Without there being any immediate threat to their direct and personal interests, people would seldom join a movement out of solidarity. Even after the announcement of austerity measures that, as seen prior, directly affected a third of the total population, only people who were mobilized directly, either by a political faction or one of the several unions who joined in the rally, took part, and there was no snowballing effect. People outside of Bucureşti and categories not affected by wage and pension cuts (such as students or private employees) remained largely silent. Actually, even the fact that several unions collaborated and staged common action is somewhat rare. At times, during the period's many protests, unions would actually seek to avoid overlapping rallies on purpose[44]. Active solidarity for common good is, therefore, something not often found among

---

[42] Radu, Ştefan-Cristian, "Stima, Admiratie, Respect – Raed Arafat!!!", Public Event for Romania Bunului Simt, available from: https://www.facebook.com/events/207426876014642/?ref=14 (accessed March 22, 2013)
[43] Sabina Fati, "Virgil Măgureanu: "Protestele nu sunt spontane"", *romanialibera.ro*, January 30, 2012, available from:http://www.romanialibera.ro/opinii/interviuri/virgil-magureanu-protestele-nu-sunt-spontane-251759.html#top_articol (accessed February 8, 2013)
[44] Cristina Ghioca, "Cartel Alfa şi-a amânat protestele", *politicaromaneasca.ro*, September 17, 2010, available from: http://www.politicaromaneasca.ro/cartel_alfa_si_a_amanat_protestele-1193 (accessed May 12, 2013)

Romanian movements, which makes the 2012 winter protests all the more interesting, as people whose interests did not come under direct threat rallied together against the establishment and the entire political class.

Also worth noting is the behaviour of the masses. Spontaneous movements which are, by definition, self-organized face the genuine risk of degenerating rapidly into violence. With no established leadership exercising control over the protesters, it is not uncommon for order to break-down. However, the crowds in Romania, with few exceptions, generally made a good show of discipline. Given the scale and duration of protests, as well as the general discontent voiced and the harsh attitude of the gendarmes, this comes as a pleasant surprise. As is detailed in the following chapter, the crowds maintained a peaceful stance and even dispersed as a sign of opposition whenever certain factions did engage in violent conduct. Throughout the 30 or more days of protest, only two or three rallies (all in Bucureşti) turned violent. Discipline was not just manifested through peaceful conduct but also through the language used to advance claims, through ousting provocateurs and politicians attempting to speak for the movement, through the consistency of dispersing at night and reuniting again the next day, as well as through the willingness to protest even as temperatures dropped to below freezing.

Lastly, the case of 2012 was chosen due to its impact. As stated prior, the movement achieved its initial objectives, forcing not only policy change but also the cabinet's resignation. In this sense alone, the 2012 protests stand out as the most successful popular movement in Romania of the past 20 years. The fact that this success was achieved through peaceful, non-politicized means is cause for joy. However, this work analyzes how the movements achieved success without following the patterns described by mainstream theory. The peculiarities of this case make it the ideal choice for

revealing gaps that the main contemporary schools of thought do not account for. The next chapter begins the process of analysis by presenting a day-by-day history of the movement.

History

On January 12th, 2012, a spontaneous rally began in Târgu-Mureş, meant to support sub-secretary of state Dr. Raed Arafat, the founder of the Mobile Service for Emergency Resuscitation and Extrication (SMURD), who had been pressured to resign following his opposition to a new health bill discussed by the Government. The bill, among other things, called for the privatization of SMURD and the introduction of a co-pay system for certain medical services. The rally grew to an unexpected size as over three thousand people gathered in peaceful protest[45]. This is widely quoted as the official start of the 2012 winter protests although a smaller meeting had been held a day before in Cluj-Napoca. The surprising scale of the Târgu-Mureş rally, as well as several online petitions brought the movement media coverage and public attention[46].

The next day, rallies of various scales mushroomed throughout the country. The largest occurred in Bucureşti, where around 500 people gathered in University Square and marched toward Cotroceni Palace, the presidential residence, gathering support along the way. Police claim that no more than one thousand people took part whereas media sources indicate twice as many[47]. Ample forces were mobilized around Cotroceni Palace but no serious incidents occurred. One person was detained by gendarmes after

---

[45] "Revolutia SMURD incepe la Targu-Mures! Peste 3.000 de oameni au cerut demisia lui Basescu!", *Ziarul de Iaşi*, January 13, 2012, available from: http://www.ziaruldeiasi.ro/national-extern/revolutia-smurd-incepe-la-targu-mures-peste-3-000-de-oameni-au-cerut-demisia-lui-basescu~ni82k0 (accessed March 1, 2013)

[46] "Petiţie: Raed Arafat trebuie să participe la noua lege a sănătăţii! Semnează şi tu", *Realitatea.net*, January 12, 2102, available from: http://www.realitatea.net/semneaza-si-tu-pentru-ca-raed-arafat-sa-participe-la-noua-lege-a-sanatatii_903625.html (accessed March 1, 2013)

[47] "Revoluţie 2012. Proteste împotriva lui Băsescu la Bucureşti, Timişoara, Braşov şi Sibiu", *Ziuaveche.ro*, January 14, 2012, available from: http://www.ziuaveche.ro/actualitate-interna/politica-interna/revolutie-2012-proteste-impotriva-lui-basescu-la-bucuresti-timisoara-brasov-si-sibiu-68974.html (accessed March 1, 2013)

going passed the police line and reaching the gate. In Braşov, between 500 and 1000 people met and marched toward the prefecture chanting against the president and the ruling Democrat-Liberal Party. Protesters shoved law-enforcers trying to block their way but these were the only incidents that occurred[48]. Two hundred people met in Timişoara and a similar rally also occurred in Sibiu. Members of opposition parties joined the movements and spurred on protesters[49]. None of these protests were authorised and several people were asked to identify themselves. Georgian Enache, spokesperson for the General Direction of Gendarmes in Bucureşti mentioned that organizers of unauthorised protests would be fined between 1000 and 10.000 lei (the equivalent of 230 – 2300 euro at the time) and participants in such protests also risked fines of between 500 and 5000 lei. As a result of upcoming rallies, president Băsescu announced the new health bill would be withdrawn from public debate[50], adding that allegations regarding the privatization of SMURD were "lies"[51] although the bill's text was rather ambiguous in this respect. Between 9 PM and midnight, all rallies had dispersed either by themselves or were cleared by gendarmes. Protesters agreed to meet again the following day in spite of being urged by Dr. Arafat not to do so and to avoid being manipulated politically[52].

---

[48] Clarice Dinu, Adrian Popescu, and Cristian Andrei,"Protest la Cotroceni. Manifestaţii anti-Băsescu în Bucureşti, Braşov, Timişoara şi Sibiu", *Gandul.info*, January 13, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/news/video-protest-la-cotroceni-manifestatii-antibasescu-in-bucuresti-brasov-timisoara-si-sibiu-9146134 (accessed March 13, 2013)

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] "Băsescu retrage proiectul noii legi a sănătăţii. Boc şi Ritli au operat de urgenţă schimbarea", *Gandul.info*, January 13, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/news/basescu-retrage-proiectul-noii-legi-a-sanatatii-boc-si-ritli-au-operat-de-urgenta-schimbarea-9145694 (accessed March 22, 2013)

[51] "Băsescu a retras Legea Sănătăţii. Proteste la Cotroceni", *Ziuaveche.ro*, January 13, 2012, available from: http://www.ziuaveche.ro/actualitate-interna/politica-interna/ce-vrea-ponta-dupa-ce-basescu-a-retras-legea-sanatatii-68958.html (accessed March 22, 2013). See also "Băsescu renunţă la Legea Sănătăţii", *Ziuaveche.ro*, January 13, 2012, available from: http://www.ziuaveche.ro/actualitate-interna/politica-interna/basescu-renunta-la-legea-sanatatii-68939.html

[52] Elvira Gheorghiţă, "Raed Arafat le cere oamenilor să nu mai iasă în stradă. "Mulţumesc pentru susţinere, dar îi rog pe toţi să nu se lase manipulaţi politic"", *Gandul.info*, January 13, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/news/raed-arafat-le-cere-oamenilor-sa-nu-mai-iasa-in-strada-multumesc-pentru-sustinere-dar-ii-rog-pe-toti-sa-nu-se-lase-manipulati-politic-9145688 (accessed March 13, 2013)

On Saturday, protests were larger, more widespread and their theme had shifted from supporting Raed Arafat and SMURD to opposing the president and the government lead by Emil Boc. At 2:30 PM, thousands of people were already on the streets in Bucureşti, Constanţa, Cluj, Timişoara, Craiova, Drobeta Turnu Severin and many other places. The largest rallies were in Bucureşti, where thousands of people blocked streets and divided into two masses. One marched toward Cotroceni Palace once again, this time under police escort, while the other remained in University Square. By 7:30 PM, all protesters returned to University Square, where police attempted to clear the streets. Clashes broke out and twenty people were injured, including five gendarmes. Police used tear gas and forced the reluctant crowd to disperse. 29 people were detained. By midnight the streets were again cleared. The clashes in Bucureşti were the only instances of violence during the third day of protesting[53] but also the largest since the 'mineriads' in the 1990s. Police claimed the pro-Arafat meeting turned into a large-scale clash with football supporters, some of whom had previous convictions[54].

January 15th saw the emergence of two distinct factions. One group was comprised of football supporters who occupied Unirii Square. Their demands included "Freedom for supporters!"[55] and their intentions, as described by witnesses and police, were openly belligerent[56]. The highlight of the day was the violence that broke out in Unirii Square. Six people, including two gendarmes were taken to hospital and several shops were vandalized as a result of clashes. The second faction, comprised of students and other

---

[53] "Proteste Violente în Bucureşti! Jandarmii au trimis oamenii acasă, după ce i-au ameninţat cu folosirea forţei", *Antena3.ro*, January 14, 2012, available from: http://www.antena3.ro/romania/proteste-violente-in-bucuresti-protestatarii-s-au-luat-la-bataie-cu-jandarmii-live-video-151508.html (accessed March 23, 2013). See also "Several people hurt in Bucharest anti-austerity protest", BBC News Europe, January 15, 2012, available from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-16565123 (accessed March 21, 2013)
[54] "Piata Universitatii, cele mai violente proteste de la mineriade. Jandarmii acuza ca mitingul pro-Arafat s-a transformat in lupta ultrasilor din fotbal", *HotNews.ro*, January 14, 2012, available from: http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-11216836-noi-mitinguri-loc-sambata-pentru-sustinerea-lui-raed-arafat-bucuresti-alte-orase-din-tara.htm (accessed March 25, 2013)
[55] "Proteste violente în Capitală! Manifestanţii au provocat incendii în Piaţa Unirii", *gsp.ro*, January 15, 2012, available from: http://www.gsp.ro/gsp-special/diverse/proteste-violente-in-capitala-manifestantii-au-provocat-incendii-in-piata-unirii-297450.html (accessed March 25, 2013)

citizens, occupied the area around University Square and withdrew from the streets as a sign of opposition to the Unirii Square events.

In a bid to prevent future violence, Dr. Claudiu Crăciun, a university lecturer who became one of the most prominent spokespersons of the protests, published an online guide for peaceful manifestations. He explained that the rallies were not pro-opposition and not the acts of hooligans or party members but of concerned citizens acting against the entire political class of Romania. His list of 12 guidelines advised toward solidarity among protesters, avoidance of violence, taking care of one's health and recording any instance of police aggression[57].

The following day, police took measures to filter out agitators and aggressive participants. Some rallies were, for the first time, authorised (Sibiu, Focşani, Timişoara) but most still were not (Bucureşti, Craiova, Slatina, Buzău, Cluj-Napoca, etc.). This day saw fewer incidents than the previous and gathered the largest number of participants. In all, over 13.000 people took to the streets in over 52 towns[58].

Tuesday the 17th also saw over 10.000 people protesting in over 62 towns around the country[59]. Reactions to the rallies began to appear in both official and unofficial contexts. Officially, Dr. Raed Arafat returned to his position, given that the health bill which had caused his resignation was withdrawn[60]. Unofficially, many politicians and

---

[56] "Proteste Bucuresti 2012 (15.01)", *Realitatea.net*, January 15, 2012, available from: http://www.myvideo.ro/watch/8409675/Proteste_Bucuresti_2012_15_01 (accessed March 17, 2013)

[57] Crăciun, Claudiu. *Scurt ghid pentru un protest paşnic!*, January 15, 2012, available from: http://www.criticatac.ro/13245/scurt-ghid-pentru-un-protest-pasnic/ (accessed March 25, 2013)

[58] "Bilanţul Protestelor de luni - 13.000 de manifestanţi în 52 de localităţi. "Un întreg arsenal", descoperit la protestatari din Capitală", *Mediafax.ro*, January 17, 2012, available from: http://www.mediafax.ro/social/bilantul-protestelor-de-luni-13-000-de-manifestanti-in-52-de-localitati-un-intreg-arsenal-descoperit-la-protestatari-din-capitala-9152022 (accessed March 24, 2013)

[59] "Băsescu şi politicienii, huiduiţi în peste 60 de oraşe", *Realitatea.net*, January 17, 2012, available from: http://www.realitatea.net/proteste-in-piata-universitatii-demonstranti-ridicati-politicieni-huiduiti-live-tv_904952.html (accessed March 28, 2013)

[60] Lumezeanu, Lucian. "Raed Arafat revine in functie la Ministerul Sanatatii", *Ziare.com*, January 17, 2012, available from: http://www.ziare.com/raed-arafat/legea-sanatatii/arafat-revine-in-functie-la-ministerul-sanatatii-1145505 (accessed March 3, 2013)

academics expressed their opinions regarding the protests and their views on events as they unfolded. The then senator from the Democrat-Liberal Party (PD-L) Iulian Urban referred to Romanians (himself included) as "worms who want nothing but complain about everything"[61] on his personal blog as early as the 13th and on the 19th claimed that civil society was subservient to the Social-Liberal Union (USL), the main opposition coalition formed by the Social-Democrat Party (PSD) and the National Liberal Party (PNL). Reactions to his statements led to his resignation from PD-L. The Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, Teodor Baconschi suffered a similar fate[62], being removed from office as a result of opinions concerning the protests published on his personal blog on the 16th. He claimed that the population was "imbeciled" by opposition media[63]. These became the first two political casualties of the 2012 protests.

By contrast, political analysts such as Dan Pavel, himself an active revolutionary in 1989, saluted the protests and called them indicative of an "awakening of civil society" although he labelled them "anaemic" and lacking an overall strategy. He criticized the opposition for not knowing how to handle a popular uprising and the president for being continually involved in party affairs[64]. Throughout the period of protests, the motives and authenticity of participants were amply discussed, as was their impact. Cristian Preda, Euro MP, presidential counsellor and former dean of Bucureşti University's Faculty of Political Science, commented on the protests on his blog and set them apart from both those which occurred in Romania in 1990 and the 'Arab Spring'. For him, the

---

[61] Iulian Urban, "Mentalitate de viermi care nu vor absolut nimic, dar se plang de tot ce-i inconjoara", personal blog entry, January 13, 2012, available from: http://www.urbaniulian.ro/2012/01/13/mentalitate-de-viermi-care-nu-vor-absolut-nimic-dar-se-plang-de-tot-ce-i-inconjoara/ (accessed March 3, 2013)

[62] "Emil Boc l-a demis pe Teodor Baconschi din functia de ministru de Externe pentru jignirea manifestantilor" *HotNews.ro*, January 23, 2012, available from: http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-politic-11308155-ultima-ora-emil-boc-revocat-din-functie-ministrul-externe-teodor-baconschi.htm (accessed April 7, 2013). See also "Baconschi, despre demitere: Am primit un telefon de la Boc. Nu regret ce am scris", *Realitatea.net*, January 23, 2012, available from: http://www.realitatea.net/baconschi-despre-demitere-am-primit-un-telefon-de-la-boc-nu-regret-ce-am-scris_906825.html (accessed March 3, 2013)

[63] Teodor Baconschi, "Opoziţia socialistă a trecut în sfârşit la fapte", personal blog entry, January 16, 2012, available from: http://baconschi.ro/opozitia-socialista-a-trecut-in-sfarsit-la-fapte/ (accessed April 7, 2013)

protests were unique because participants spoke "the same language as the politicians"[65].

Reactions did not stop at comments and blogs but had repercussions at the very highest level of Romanian politics. Opposition leaders met with prime-minister Emil Boc on the 18th but declared that no positive outcome was reached. Their demands included the prime-minister's resignation, early elections and a government of technocrats. The two sides agreed to call an extraordinary session in Parliament the following week[66].

The 18th also saw rallies of solidarity occurring in the diaspora. In London, for example, around 100 people met near the Romanian embassy to show solidarity and express their own discontent toward the establishment[67]. Similar small-scale rallies occurred in Italy and in Canada[68].

For the first time, members of USL tried to officially join the protesters but were met with boos, and shoved. The following day, USL staged its own rally in Bucureşti near the Triumph Arch, reuniting people from across the country and marching to University Square. The number of participants ranged from 10.000 according to USL, to 7000 according to police, whereas the number of protesters at University Square was around

---

[64] Dan Pavel, "Noul fenomen „Piaţa Universităţii"- falsa democraţie şi pseudorevoluţia", *Ziua de Cluj*, January 17, 2012, available from: http://ziuadecj.realitatea.net/editorial/noul-fenomen-piata-universitatii--falsa-democratie-si-pseudorevolutia--82006.html (accessed April 4, 2013)

[65] Cristian Preda, *E altceva*, January 17, 2012, available from: http://cristianpreda.ro/2012/01/18/e-altceva/ (accessed April 4, 2013)

[66] Laura Ciobanu and Marius Vulpe, "Puterea şi Opoziţia nu s-au înţeles. Boc, de acord numai cu sesiunea extraordinară a Parlamentului", *evz.ro*, January 17, 2012, available from: http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/puterea-si-opozitia-se-aseaza-la-masa-negocierilor-962024.html (accessed April 3, 2013)

[67] Vârlan, Corina. "Proteste la Londra. Peste 100 de persoane "s-au adunat" pe Facebook pentru a demonstra în faţa Ambasadei României", *Gandul.info*, January 18, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/news/galerie-foto-proteste-la-londra-peste-100-de-persoane-s-au-adunat-pe-facebook-pentru-a-demonstra-in-fata-ambasadei-romaniei-9156361 (accessed April 5, 2013)

[68] Ionel, Corina. "Circa 150 de persoane au protestat, in Londra, in semn de solidaritate cu romanii care au iesit in strada", *HotNews.ro*, January 18, 2012, available from: http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-diaspora-11264039-circa-150-persoane-protestat-londra-semn-solidaritate-romanii-care-iesit-strada.htm (accessed April 5, 2013)

1500 and rose as people came in from the Triumph Arch[69]. Several USL members were again shoved and booed when they tried to mingle with other groups of protesters. The rally was describes as a cauldron of smaller interests, as different factions with different goals met to express their discontent[70]. Revolutionaries of 1989, football supporters, far-right organizations, party members, pensioners, students and other groups met and shouted their demands and grievances. Rallies also occurred in Braşov, Alba, Argeş, Drobeta Turnu Severin, Târgu Mureş, Bistriţa, Oradea, Alexandria, and even in front of the embassy in Vienna. The 19th was also one of the more violent days, police using tear gas to control the crowd who repeatedly broke through containment. Several people were detained and some were injured in the clashes. University Square protesters accused the opposition of trying to "confiscate" the movement after six days of silence[71].

Beginning on January 20th, temperatures began to drop to as low as -18° C and heavy snowfalls covered most of Romania. Still, several hundred people continued to protest in Bucureşti, accompanied by several thousand throughout the country[72]. There were no violent incidents and the only highlight of the period was the presence of a young army lieutenant who joined the protesters on the 23rd, in uniform, thus breaching military protocol. He declared he wanted to deliver the message that the army was not indifferent to the struggle of the citizens and was fully aware of the consequences of his actions[73].

---

[69] Mădălina Mitan et al. "A saptea zi de proteste - fumigene, violente si zeci de oameni retinuti", *Ziare.com*, January 20, 2012, available from: http://www.ziare.com/stiri/proteste/doua-proteste-paralizeaza-capitala-mii-de-oameni-asteptati-in-strada-live-1145886 (accessed April 8, 2013)

[70] "Talmeş-balmeş în a şaptea zi de proteste: Orban, Mazăre, "Ştiinţa nu moare" şi Ţinutul Secuiesc", *Adevarul.ro*, January 19, 2012, available from: http://adevarul.ro/news/eveniment/talmes-balmes-saptea-zi-proteste-orban-mazare-Stiinta-nu-moare-Tinutul-secuiesc-1_50ad69417c42d5a66394a3c4/index.html (accessed April 6, 2013)

[71] Mitran et al. 2012

[72] "400 de oameni au protestat sambata in Piata Universitatii. Manifestantii au primit bonuri de ordine", *stirileprotv.ro*, January 21, 2012, available from: http://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/actualitate/a-noua-zi-de-proteste-aproape-100-de-protestatari-s-au-adunat-la-universitate-in-ciuda-ninsorii.html (accessed April 8, 2013)

[73] "Protest în uniforma militară, în Piaţa Universităţii: Acum sunt liber spiritual, vedem mâine dacă mai sunt liber şi fizic", *Antena3.ro*, January 23, 2012, available from: http://www.antena3.ro/romania/protest-in-uniforma-militara-

Protests continued with less intensity over the following days. The mayor of Bucureşti approved 16 marches and rallies in the last week of January, all of them carried out by unions and CSOs[74]. Attendance in Bucureşti was low compared to the previous week, numbers oscillating between one person and 150 who continued manifestations in spite of the blizzard and the temperatures that dropped below -10° C[75]. On the 18th day, rallies still took place in Bucureşti, Timişoara, Sibiu, Satu Mare, Suceava, Vaslui and other towns. Their demands included the resignation of the president and government but were more focused than previously on concrete policy such as changing the Labour Code, refusing to sign ACTA, keeping the gold mines at Roşia Montana free of cyanides and many others[76].

By February 1st, most media sources in Romania no longer offered live coverage of the protests and rallies were no longer headlines. Still, unions, some CSOs and spontaneous demonstrators continued to take to the streets in support of their demands[77]. Hundreds of people, scattered across several towns faced freezing cold temperatures to shout their discontent[78].

in-piata-universitatii-acum-sunt-liber-spiritual-vedem-maine-daca-mai-sunt-liber-si-fizic-152655.html (accessed April 9, 2013)

[74] Cristiana Geanina Sandu, "Primăria Capitalei a aprobat 16 proteste şi marşuri în perioada 23-31 ianuarie", *Gandul.info*, January 20, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/news/proteste-bucuresti-primaria-capitalei-a-aprobat-16-proteste-si-marsuri-in-perioada-23-31-ianuarie-9164069 (accessed April 8, 2013)

[75] Vasilcoiu, Cristian Ştefan. "Protestul din Bucureşti a devenit ca cel de la Baia de Arieş", *evz.ro*, January 27, 2012, available from: http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/ziua-a-15-a-protestul-din-bucuresti-a-devenit-ca-cel-de-la-baia-de-aries-963652.html (accessed April 9, 2013). See also "Aproximativ o sută de oameni au protestat la Universitate, pentru a 15-a zi, în ciuda gerului", *Gandul.info*, January 27, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/news/proteste-in-romania-aproximativ-o-suta-de-oameniau-protestat-la-universitate-pentru-a-15-a-zi-in-ciuda-gerului-9183067 (accessed April 9, 2013)

[76] "Piaţa Universităţii, a 28-a zi de proteste. Sâmbătă, ACTA ocupă kilometrul 0", *rtv.net*, February 10, 2012, available from: http://www.rtv.net/piata-universitatii-a-28-a-zi-de-proteste-sambata-acta-ocupa-kilometrul-0_15344.html (accessed April 14, 2013)

[77] *Protestul din 5 februarie 2012 împotriva AIE organizat de către Comitetul pentru Apărarea Constituţiei şi a Democraţiei*, February 5, 2012, available from: http://www.privesc.eu/Arhiva/8789/Protestul-din-5-februarie-2012-impotriva-AIE-organizat-de-catre-Comitetul-pentru-Apararea-Constitutiei-si-a-Democratiei (accessed April 10, 2013). See also "A 41-a zi de proteste. Victor Socaciu: Sunt unul dintre ciumpalacii pe care, din când în când, îi veţi vedea în piaţă", *Antena3.ro*, February 2, 2012, available from: http://www.antena3.ro/romania/a-41-a-zi-de-proteste-victor-socaciu-sunt-unul-dintre-ciumpalacii-pe-care-din-cand-in-cand-ii-veti-vedea-in-piata-156499.html (accessed April 12, 2013)

[78] "Protestele au intrat în a treia săptămână. Oamenii cred că până la urmă vor ieşi învingători", *Antena3.ro*, February 3, 2012, available from: http://www.antena3.ro/romania/protestele-au-intrat-in-a-treia-saptamana-oamenii-cred-ca-pana-la-urma-vor-iesi-invingatori-154000.html (accessed April 10, 2013)

On February 6th, prime-minister Emil Boc announced the cabinet's resignation in order to "defuse the political and social situation in the country"[79]. Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu, former director of the External Information Service (SIE), and, at the time, politically unaffiliated, eventually formed the new cabinet[80]. In spite of this, protests continued, asking for the resignation of president Traian Băsescu, early elections and a reformed political class. These were the only demands left unfulfilled since the start of the movement[81].

On February 8th, several dozen people gathered in Bucureşti in spite of freezing temperatures and similar numbers continued to rally in Ploieşti, Deva, Piteşti, Reşiţa, Suceava and other towns and cities. This was, for most of them, the 26th straight day of protests, even though the strength of the movement was visibly reduced compared to the late part of January.

As mentioned earlier, I have chosen February 10th to be the date the anti-establishment movement finally ended. By this time, protests has shrunk in size to just a few dozen supporters in each town and the number of towns still protesting was also much smaller than it had been two weeks before[82]. The main reason for this particular day is that a large rally was called on the 11th to oppose ACTA. Starting February 11th, protests and rallies would have narrower and more specific policy-oriented goals, basically ending the spontaneous, anti-establishment phase. Such an evolution is common among grassroots movements. One protest grows and rallies more and more supporters, attracting diverse factions with different interests, who then branch-out into their own

[79] "Boc a demisionat", 2012

[80] Ana Zidărescu and Alexandra Postelnicu, "Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu este noul premier desemnat de Traian Băsescu", *evz.ro*, February 6, 2012, available from: http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/mihai-razvan-ungureanu-este-noul-premier-desemnat-de-traian-basescu-live-text-965183.html (accessed April 14, 2013)

[81] "Protestele continuă în întreaga ţară. Românii cer demisia lui Băsescu", *Antena3.ro*, February 8, 2012, available from: http://www.antena3.ro/romania/protestele-continua-in-intreaga-tara-romanii-cer-demisia-lui-basescu-154572.html (accessed April 14, 2013)

movements. The anti-ACTA movement was the first in a series of new actions in the streets that continue to plague the government even as this paper is being written.

The anti-establishment movement would continue on and off until as late as March or even April according to some sources[83], amidst other more numerous and more visible rallies. On February 15th, or as late as the 22nd and 23rd, news about the movement could still be found[84] on media sources but after the 42nd consecutive day references almost ceased entirely. Still, non-media sources (such as personal blogs, uploaded videos or social media posts of participants) still provided accounts, sometimes in great detail, regarding how the anti-establishment movement lingered into March[85]. Their effectiveness in this stage is highly debatable, as is their legacy in terms of awakening grassroots activism and stimulating civic engagement of both visible and invisible types, yet the non-media sources often provided insight and details that the mainstream media overlooked.

The next section tries to explain what role the context in which the movement evolved played in determining the authenticity and outcome of the protests. The subsequent chapter finally analyzes the events in context and overlaps the patterns described by the two mainstream theories with that of the 2012 winter movement to see what gaps emerge and how they can be explained.

---

[82] "Protestele au continuat în Piaţa Universităţii", *rtv.net*, February 27, 2012, available from: http://www.rtv.net/protestele-continua-in-piata-universitatii_18165.html (accessed April 12, 2013)

[83] "Au reînceput protestele în Piaţa Universităţii. Vezi aici nemulţumirile manifestanţilor", *Antena3.ro*, April 11, 2012, available from: http://www.antena3.ro/romania/au-reinceput-protestele-in-piata-universitatii-vezi-aici-nemultumirile-manifestantilor-163131.html (accessed April 14, 2013)

[84] Daria Alexandrescu, "Protestele se prelungesc până pe 15 februarie", *ExpressdeBanat.ro*, January 30, 2012, available from: http://expressdebanat.ro/protestele-din-centrul-resitei-se-prelungesc-pana-pe-15-februarie (accessed April 13, 2013)

[85] Emilian. "Protest Universitate 26 feb 2012 – discutii in contradictoriu (pol19)", personal blog entry, March 6, 2012, available from: http://ceicunoi.wordpress.com/2012/02/27/protest-universitate-26-feb-2012-discutii-in-contradictoriu-pol19/ (accessed April 12, 2013)

Context

In order to fully understand the winter protests of 2012 in Romania, it is necessary to look at the processes that were playing-out in the background of the movement, as well as the evolution of such processes and the dynamic of actors not directly involved. Clarifying the context and the different roles that several actors played is crucial before an in-depth theoretical analysis can be made. As such, there are five important factors that were not directly involved with the movement but affected how it evolved in terms of scale, intensity and participation. These are: the media, the political factions, civil society, public policy and external factors beyond the control of any Romanian body.

The role of the media has grown crucial in the realm of social movements. Mainstream media channels offer protesters a quick way to gain visibility and spread their message to the grassroots, to organizations and the world at large. Unsurprisingly, the media has become a powerful tool for control over people's opinions and its use of such power may not always be done with benevolent intentions.

Romania is not known for independent media[86], having a FreedomHouse rating of 41, giving it a status of Partly Free in 2012[87]. Most media trusts, including the ones with highest ratings[88] and circulation[89] at the time of the protests, are owned by prominent politicians or have clear biases toward certain political factions. News of political events is often presented in different lights according to political interest and partisanship. As seen in the previous chapter, there are large differences in accounts regarding numbers

---

[86] "Journalists under fire"*, The Economist Online*, September 1, 2012, available from: http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2012/09/press-freedom-romania (accessed April 14, 2013)

[87] FreedomHouse. *Freedom of the press 2012 – Global Press Freedom Rankings*, available from: http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Global%20and%20Regional%20Press%20Freedom%20Rankings.pdf (accessed April 12, 2013)

[88] The Romanian Association for Measuring Ratings (ARMA), television ratings for January 2012, data available from: http://www.arma.org.ro/ro/audiente (accessed April 13, 2013)

of protesters, the types of slogans and shouts used by the masses and the terms used to describe the movement.

The largest media trust in Romania, Intact, owned by Dan Voiculescu, a senator and prominent opposition leader at the time[90], covered the movement longer than any other source and always provided the largest figures in terms of attendance. Their accounts of the events, however, never mention the movement as being directed against the entire political class but merely against the government, president and ruling party. Slogans that made reference to the coalition in opposition were never mentioned in their reports and police brutality was always highlighted.

By contrast, media sources favourable to the establishment accused protesters of acting on political command and urged citizens not to be manipulated. Their figures regarding participation are low and often disregard rallies that occurred outside of the capital. Most such sources ceased to cover the movement after its peak. They were, however, careful to report slogans condemning the opposition and made little or no distinction between peaceful and violent factions.

Perhaps the most reliable sources were local or foreign-owned media. These generally looked at the movement from several angles and provided official rather than personal estimates, interviews with representatives from different factions and generally dealt with each faction separately.

As an example of media conduct during the protests is how the crowd rallied in London as a show of solidarity was portrayed. I was part of that crowd on the 18th and

[89] The Romanian Transmedia Audit Bureau (BRAT), newspaper circulation ratings for January 2012, data available from:http://www.brat.ro/audit-tiraje/cifre-de-difuzare/year/2012/trimester/10-12/order_by/vanzari/order/desc/per_page/all (accessed April 13, 2013)

[90] Intact Media Group history, available from: http://www.intactmediagroup.ro/en/about-us/history/ (accessed April 13, 2013)

personally witnessed facts that were intentionally distorted. Firstly, the number of participants did not exceed 50, yet media reports mentioned twice as many. The predominant shouts, which targeted the entire political class, were not mentioned and footage calling for the reestablishment of the monarchy, a hot topic since the 1989 regime change[91], was seldom shown by any mainstream media source, mostly during live coverage[92]. Such calls, however, became rather widespread but are only detailed in personal blogs[93], footage[94] or accounts by participants[95]. Even local or foreign-owned media treat the topic of the monarchy scarcely and with caution[96].

The impact such self-imposed censorship had on the public is difficult to assess but the fact remains that the predominant perspective, from the point of view of ratings and length of coverage, belonged to the pro-opposition media. This is useful to keep in mind when looking at alignment of frames and mobilization of resources in the next chapter.

Political factions at the time of the rally seemed caught by surprise when the protests began and spread. The establishment was familiar with protests and did not have a tradition of giving in to demands made on the streets. The same government and president had been in power since the start of the international crisis and had been

---

[91] Official sources on the issue are scarce or classified but many unofficial sources can be found that attest this fact. For more, see: "Romania: The discreet tonic of monarchy", *EurActiv.com*, October 3, 2012 available from: http://www.euractiv.com/countries/romania-discreet-scent-monarchy-analysis-515175 (accessed April 4, 2013) and "Chestiunea monarhiei - miscare reala sau bluf? (Opinii)", *Ziare.com*, October 29, 2012, available from: http://www.ziare.com/regele-mihai/casa-regala/chestiunea-monarhiei-miscare-reala-sau-bluf-opinii-1198363 (accessed April 4, 2013) or the official site of the National Alliance for the Restauration of the Monarchy (ANRM), which was founded in 2012: http://www.anrm.ro/ or https://www.facebook.com/anrmro

[92] "A 10-a zi de proteste in Piata Universitatii din Bucuresti s-a incheiat fara incidente", *stirileprotv.ro*, January 22, 2012, available at: http://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/actualitate/a-zecea-zi-de-proteste-in-piata-universitatii-au-inceput-sa-soseasca-manifestanti.html (accessed April 4, 2013)

[93] "800 de oameni protesteaza in Piata Universitatii. "Monarhia salveaza Romania"", personal blog entry, January 22, 2012, available at: http://calatorprintrevise.wordpress.com/2012/01/22/live-acum-800-de-oameni-protesteaza-in-piata-universitatii-monarhia-salveaza-romania/ (accessed April 4, 2013)

[94] "Piata Universitatii - sustin monarhia", January 26, 2012, available from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQwBh4DYsc0 (accessed April 4, 2013)

[95] Petru Zoltan, Mara Raducanu and Cristian Ionescu, "Cine sunt viermii şi ciumpalacii din Piaţa Universităţii", *jurnalul.ro*, January 24, 2012, available from: http://jurnalul.ro/special-jurnalul/cine-sunt-viermii-si-ciumpalacii-din-piata-universitatii-602396.html (accessed April 4, 2013)

[96] Ana Ilie, "A zecea zi de proteste - ziua pro-monarhie", *Ziare.com*, January 22, 2012, acailable from: http://www.ziare.com/stiri/proteste/a-zecea-zi-de-proteste-romanii-din-tara-si-din-afara-au-iesit-iar-in-strada-live-1146418 (accessed April 4, 2013)

pressured through protests before. The teachers' protests and the May 2010 rally had both been dealt with without giving in to demands, yet the 2012 movement, though less numerous, convinced the establishment to withdraw the unpopular health bill almost instantly and to reinstate Dr. Raed Arafat into office.

Opposition factions were also not expecting protests to emerge on such a scale and it took them a few days to meet and discuss how best to try and take advantage of the new circumstances. Some local leaders, as was already described, were quick to join protesters and attempt to take leading roles by spurring them on. The day of peak participation, January 23rd, saw, as previously mentioned, three separate movements in Bucureşti, one of which was organized and lead by the main opposition faction (the Social-Liberal Union or USL). Interestingly, after the main rally at Triumph Arch Square, whose discourse focused on the government's need to resign, the people who joined the movement at University Square were welcomed. The leadership, however, was not. The protesters made it clear that their grievances were directed at the entire political class, not just the establishment. On January 31st, Claudiu Crăciun, acting as spokesperson or, in his own words, as "storyteller", of the movement, addressed the European Parliament, in the presence of the main opposition leaders, asking them to listen to the crowd, stating that there was no leadership and praising the novelty of solidarity among the people[97]. Overall, in spite of negotiations carried out between government and opposition, neither one of these sides was actually prepared to deal with the scale and nature of the sudden protests. Partisan media, as seen earlier, did try to present distorted facts through self-censorship, but was largely unsuccessful in gathering support for either of the two sides.

---

[97] "Claudiu Crăciun in the European Parliament on the University Square Protests", video available from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjX9nljXGgU (accessed November 12, 2012)

One interesting aspect regarding the 2012 protests is the almost complete lack of CSO involvement in the movement for almost the entire duration of the protests. Apart from some organizations of 1989 revolutionaries and a few local NGOs, support from civil society was almost non-existent. To this day, it is very difficult to find any reference to any Romanian CSO in any media or non-media account of the 2012 movement. Members of NGOs did participate in the rallies and were even interviewed but they were there merely as citizens, not as representatives of their organizations[98]. There is no evidence that CSOs supported the protesters in any way or that they provided the movement with any resources or guidance. The few CSOs that did participate were either small or had their own separate demands. In this sense, the structured component of the civil sector seems to have been largely disengaged from events, whereas the unstructured components, the grassroots, were visibly active. Possible reasons for this are numerous and are detailed in the following chapter but the fact itself is highly relevant when analyzing the mainstream theory.

Public policy played a large role in how the protests unfolded, due to the attitude authorities manifested toward the movement. Romanian law requires that street rallies must be authorised. In cases where a movement is lead by an SMO, the task of requesting authorization falls to it. This is the pattern usually followed by protest movements in Romania. However, as has already been mentioned, most rallies that occurred had no authorization. This is either because there was no structured body in charge to make the formal requests or, as in the case of the Occupy movement occurring less than two months before, requests were rejected or ignored. In some cases, such as

---

[98] "Mihai, membru ONG: "Sunt vierme, inept, incult şi ciumpalac. Cine mi se alătură?"", *Gandul.info*, January 19, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/revolutions/proteste-bucuresti-mihai-membru-ong-sunt-vierme-inept-incult-si-ciumpalac-cine-mi-se-alatura-9159219 (accessed April 29, 2013). See also "Sânziana Dobre, membră ONG: "Vreau o ţară mai bună pentru băiatul meu"", *Gandul.info*, January 19, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/revolutions/proteste-bucuresti-sanziana-dobre-membra-ong-vreau-o-tara-mai-buna-pentru-baiatul-meu-9159240 (accessed April 29, 2013)

in Sibiu, SMOs did take up the task of leadership and obtained authorization to march[99], but such cases were rare. In most places, rallies continued to occur illegally (without authorization) for the entirety of the protest or, at least, for the vast majority of time. Police actions were, of course, influenced by these factors and reactions did not fail to appear. As seen in the following section, their role evolved over time, reaching a type of awkward compromise toward the end of the movement.

The protesters themselves, as seen prior, came from all avenues of life. Students, pensioners, workers from various income categories rallied together, as can be seen from onsite footage[100]. Worth noting is that no evidence can be found of protests in rural areas. The interesting thing, though, is that citizens of all ages and professions came together in solidarity, managed to organize themselves and spoke the same language as the politicians. The unity caused by common grievances is possibly the reason why the movement reached the scale that it did.

Lastly, the context in which the 2012 winter protests occurred was characterised by several external factors which might have influenced the size, scale and, hence, the outcome of the movement as a whole. These external factors are events that were occurring at the time of the protests but independently of the will of any actor involved with or affected by the movement. Of these, worth discussing are the weather, the various social movements being carried-out worldwide and the role played by EU institutions.

The weather might have played a crucial role in affecting the overall participation and, hence, the scale of the entire movement. A shallow overlook at events reveals that the

---

[99] Diana Stancovici, "Aproximativ o sută de protestatari au mărşăluit pe străzile Sibiului, oprindu-se la un ceai", *Gandul.info*, January 28, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/stiri/proteste-in-romania-aproximativ-o-suta-de-protestatari-au-marsaluit-pe-strazile-sibiului-oprindu-se-la-un-ceai-9185029 (accessed April 10, 2013)

[100] "A 10-a zi de proteste", 2012

number of participants to the rallies that occurred always decreased when temperatures dropped to well below freezing and that the largest rallies occurred when temperatures rose to less extreme levels. One can, therefore, argue that the movement never reached its full potential because, at its height, the weather simply discouraged would-be activists from taking part. This might be important to consider from a theoretical standpoint because theories seldom (if ever) account for less than ideal conditions when describing patterns of interaction.

Several other movements were being carried out at the same time as the Romanian ones. Most notable, as previously mentioned, were the Occupy and Arab Spring movements. Many lines of comparison can be drawn between these and the protests in Romania but their similarities are not as numerous as would first appear. For example, the Occupy movement, which was copied almost to the letter in September, addressed issues such as wealth inequality, debts, banking bailouts and corporate influence[101]. These problems did not resonate with the Romanian people, as the almost negligible number of participants indicates. The fact that protesters in Unirii Square and other places could be seen wearing Guy Fawkes masks is more a sign that the public was aware of foreign issues and that some were trying to include similar grievances in the movement's informal agenda. Similarly, the Romanian protests were influenced by the Arab Spring but were by no means ramified from it. The latter was a series of movements against dictatorships and oppressive rule. Unlike the Romanian protests, these were highly politicized and diverse in origin and evolution, as well as in the nature of the grievances put forth[102]. They also received ample support from various CSOs and other structured

---

[101] Learn about #Occupy, available from: http://www.occupytogether.org/aboutoccupy/#issues (accessed May 10, 2013)
[102] Lisa Anderson, "Demystifying the Arab Spring." *Foreign Affairs*, 2011, available from: http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67693/lisa-anderson/demystifying-the-arab-spring (accessed April 13, 2013)

organizations even though their beginnings were spontaneous in many cases[103]. It can be clearly seen, however, that the tools used by the large social movements taking place outside of Romania were quickly adopted within as well. Yet, this does not explain why the movements began when they did or why they evolved given the context. The Arab Spring was well underway in May 2010 and all the tools used to mobilize and coordinate the grassroots also existed. Yet, in spite of news concerning events in North Africa or the Middle-East and in spite of widespread discontent at government policies, SMO backing and favourable weather, the rallies in May 2010 did not escalate into a prolonged grassroots struggle against the establishment. Analyzing possible causes for this might reveal new perspectives regarding current social mobilization theories and their triggers.

Analysis

Having covered most of the relevant aspects regarding social movements in general and gained some familiarity with the 2012 winter protests in Romania and the context in which they occurred, it is time to move toward analyzing if the two most prominent theories of social mobilization fully explain realities on the ground and, if not, what factors need to be considered when attempting to understand the triggers. This part tests the hypothesis that neither resource mobilization theory nor framing theory fully account for how and why the movement started and evolved. The simplest way to do this is by assuming the null hypothesis (that they do), for each theory and then describing the pattern one would expect to see, comparing it to actual events, and drawing appropriate conclusions. Several other questions left unanswered in previous sections are also looked at here. The first theory tested is that of resource mobilization.

---

[103] Civicus, "Bridging the gaps: Citizens, organisations and dissociation", *Civil Society Index summary report: 2008-2011*, available from: http://www.civicus.org/downloads/Bridging%20the%20Gaps%20-%20Citizens%20%20Organisations%20and%20Dissociation.pdf (accessed April 14, 2013)

Several theoretical comments, however, should be made before proceeding to the practical overlap. Firstly, this work is not a critique of mainstream theories and, therefore, not all aspects are commented upon. Several points made by both theories can be considered valid within the framework established in previous chapters but the focus is on those which cannot. Only the key assumptions and statements of the central theories that are contradicted by observable patterns (those seen when looking at the chosen case study) are examined extensively. This is because delving into every aspect of theory would be too time-consuming and irrelevant given the chosen purpose of this work. Specifically, irrespective of how much evidence is found in support of the null hypothesis, it is sufficient to uncover one or two serious gaps in the theory or inconsistencies between observable and theoretical patterns to disprove it, and this is what the work focuses on.

Resource mobilization

In their efforts to explain social movements, McCarthy and Zald define a social movement as "a set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of social structure and/or reward distribution of a society"[104]. A social movement organization, according to them, is "a complex, or formal, organization which identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or a countermovement and attempts to implement those goals"[105]. As such, they define social movements as little more than widespread preferences or beliefs and SMOs as the advocates of those beliefs. This point already reveals some gaps and is worth keeping in mind. For the sake of consistency, these same definitions are used in the current work.

---

[104] McCarthy and Zald, pp. 1217-1218
[105] McCarthy and Zald, p. 1218

The authors begin their argument by taking apart older theories that supported the idea that shared grievances and beliefs are the fundamental components of collective action. In their view, grievances were important but not central because they existed in every society and could be "defined, created and manipulated by issue entrepreneurs"[106]. As such, their argument is that citizens might be motivated by common grievances but only become active in addressing these issues (civically engaged, according to our definition) if mobilized by an external body or SMO who takes it upon itself to further the agenda and seek solutions. Moreover, citizens might be persuaded through incentives to become active even without having direct stakes in the outcome or even in the absence of a real grievance. All that is necessary is for the grassroots to be convinced that an issue exists that must be fixed or, in other words, a grievance might just as well be imaginary.

This perspective starts from five key assumptions that the authors make. The first is that resources are essential to engagement and must be pooled in order to have any hope of achieving the common goal. The second is that pooling resources can only be done by an SMO. The third is that actors from outside of the SMO play crucial roles in the movement's success. The fourth is that social movements follow some sort of supply-demand flow of resources and the fifth assumption is that costs and rewards are affected by societal structure and by authorities.

Worth mentioning is that the authors refer strictly to movements of the left and they themselves declare that those of the right are not accounted for in their theory. Also, the model described was formulated based on observations made in the United States but the theory itself is expressly stated to be applicable in any society[107].

---

[106] McCarthy and Zald, p. 1215
[107] McCarthy and Zald, p. 1236

Already, based on this information, it is possible to formulate a pattern of evolution from passivity to active grassroots engagement. In ideal conditions, the initial stage would see individuals living in a set social structure with a set reward distribution system, disengaged from activism but with certain pre-existing and widespread grievances of varying intensities. In this context, formal SMOs would assume leadership roles and rise to the challenge of improving the social structure and reward distribution. They would do this by pooling their own resources (money, manpower, know-how, time and effort, etc.) to attract other individuals and groups to a cause or a particular set of interrelated causes which they deem important or which advance their goals. The SMO thus convinces the grassroots that action is necessary in a certain direction (whether or not they initially shared that belief) and persuades them through a system of rewards and incentives to pool their resources as well and to attract others to do the same. This self-propagating system creates enough pressure from below that the relevant actors (in this case the authorities) have no choice but to give in to demands or attempt a negotiated solution.

Of course, different variables may apply and actors might not always cooperate as expected. McCarthy and Zald are careful to explain the roles that different actors play (such as constituents, adherents, bystanders, beneficiaries, etc.) and the sometimes delicate tasks that SMOs perform in order to secure more support. However, the overall system of mobilization is largely the same. According to this model, the elements that trigger the switch from passivity to active engagement are the incentives offered or promised by SMOs. These need not be financial, as even the attainment of certain goals may be reward enough for some participants or active supporters. Still, the task of informing, resource pooling, support gathering, organization and negotiation, and generally the tasks of leadership all fall to (or are assumed by) SMOs. As such, social

movements, according to the definitions and the theoretical framework provided, would, in the absence of SMOs, remain little more than beliefs never pursued in any effective manner. The authors openly state that social movements by themselves can have only limited control over resources and only if and when support from conscience adherents is pooled can efficient advocacy for certain goals begin, and SMOs can emerge to carry on this task[108].

By and large, this is the model that resource mobilization theory describes and the pattern which can be expected when applying the model to actual cases. How this model explains the pattern that emerged in 2012 during the winter protests is detailed next. If the null hypothesis is true, then there should be no significant difference between the pattern described in the theoretical model and that observed on the streets and in the background during the 2012 winter protests. If this is not the case, the null hypothesis can safely be considered invalid, thus supporting the claims made in the introduction regarding the applicability of resource mobilization theory.

Overlapping the patterns, one would expect, in case of a match, to see that the key elements of resource mobilization are noticeable in the 2012 protests as well. However, several of the key assumptions made by McCarthy and Zald do not match observations made when studying the 2012 winter protests. The assumption that resources are necessary for the success of a social movement is self-evident considering the broad understanding of the term 'resource' used by the authors. They refer to it as not merely financial capital but also time investment, human resources, know-how, etc. In this sense, it would be impossible to imagine any type of active engagement without at least some amount of resources being pooled. However, the role and importance of money is

---

[108] McCarthy and Zald, p. 1226

arguably diminishing. Spontaneous engagement is financially cost-effective compared to that which requires a professional core and it is also likely to be more appealing to the grassroots, given the consensual nature of unstructured organizations. This, however, is a separate discussion altogether.

Their second assumption, that only an SMO can successfully pool available resources for a common goal excludes the possibility of unstructured movements existing altogether. By their definition, an SMO is necessarily a formal (or structured) organization and, although no attention is given to the meaning of formality, the text makes it clear that it refers to a full-time core of professionals with the capacity to define grievances, rally supporters, establish vertical and horizontal ties and negotiate with authoritative bodies. In the view proposed by McCarthy and Zald, all of these steps are necessary in order to pursue common goals (real or imagined) with any hope of success. Yet, as previous chapters show, the winter movement in Romania operated without the lead of a formal SMO and was, in terms of achieving its stated goals, quite successful. Although the protests did not bring about the desired renewal of the entire political class or the resignation of the president, and many other smaller grievances remained unanswered, the health bill which started the movement and the resignation of Prime-Minister Boc (which were the main short-term demands made) did happen. There are two conclusions that can be drawn from this.

Firstly, as demonstrated by many movements around the world, such as the Arab Spring, there are now tools for mass-mobilization that reduce the cost of gathering and organizing resources, and of disseminating information to almost negligible levels. Mass communication tools such as the Internet, mobile phones or portable recording devices were either unknown or not widespread at the time resource mobilization theory was being elaborated. These technical innovations make it possible for social

movements to mobilize themselves without needing the aid of structured channels of communication or the leadership and ties of a formal SMO. Grassroots can now mobilize themselves peer-to-peer and deliver the same unaltered message directly to millions. From a theoretical standpoint, this is relevant because it introduces unstructured organizations as relevant and significant actors on the political and social stages. This leads directly to the second possible conclusion.

Authors like McCarthy and Zald do not even mention unstructured organizations; much less address their potential to drive change. Yet, looking at the case of Romania, it is possible that the success of the movement was due precisely to its lack of formal structure and formal leadership. There can be much debate as to why the same government who stood firm in the face of every protest up to the 2012 moment suddenly decided to give in to demands almost immediately. Some answers may be found in how previous protests, from 2009 onward, were handled. All significant movements that the increasingly unpopular government had faced, such as the teachers' protests and the May 2010 rally, were organized by some structured SMOs that had a clear hierarchy and leadership. Through negotiations, this leadership could be persuaded to call off the protests. In the case of the winter movement, it is possible that precisely the lack of structured organizations made it clear that a negotiated solution was not possible. The very absence of an identifiable leadership which can be intimidated, corrupted or negotiated with might actually help social movements achieve their goals. If this is true, it would contradict McCarthy and Zald's claim that social movements need be coordinated by a SMO in order to be successful. Whatever the case, the fact remains that an unpopular policy was retracted almost as soon as protests began, and an unpopular Prime-Minister, who had resisted some of the most intense bottom-up pressure of the past two decades, finally decided to step down.

The third assumption, that actors from outside of the collective represented by the social movement play a crucial role in the movement's success is only partly true in the Romanian case. Any politically-oriented movement requires or benefits from the help of outside actors, be they the media, the opposition, international institutions or the authorities themselves. However, this is not the meaning that McCarthy and Zald place emphasis on. Rather, they focus more on the role that non-adherents play via their contributions. A large part of their work is concerned with the tasks that SMOs perform to gather support for their goals. As such, their success is attributed in large measure to the ability with which they gather support from outside of the social movement's ranks (donors, sympathisers, media coverage, elite supporters, etc.). In the Romanian case, given that no SMO was actively engaged in gathering such support, the role of outside actors was limited. Indeed, establishing a common agenda posed serious problems given how few common grievances existed. Apart from the initial support for Dr. Arafat and common dislike of the president and ruling party, there was no serious element linking the protesters together. Personal and often contradicting positions were expressed at grassroots level (against the establishment, against the entire political class, against minorities, for Raed Arafat, against the president, for the monarchy, against austerity), making it impossible for any SMO to assume the task of speaking for the grassroots as a whole. Outside help was therefore largely limited to media coverage, support from the opposition (which was mostly unwelcome) and some demands from EU institutions. These, however, did not come as a result of SMO efforts to gather support, as there was no SMO in charge of the movement, but were motivated by their own interests to align with the protesters.

The fourth assumption concerning the existence of a demand-supply model is also partially true. Again, this is explained in the context of there being a central SMO, so

the flow of resources is bound to be different from what can be observed in spontaneous movements. The pattern resource mobilization describes is a centralized system of resource pooling wherein the SMO gathers support and offers incentives as needed. In an unstructured organization, the supply and demand model is different in that no central body exists to administer common or pooled resources or to offer incentives. Decisions regarding actions and resource distribution are decentralized and consensus-based. Requests for support may be made but the type of support is different. Having no legal entity to administer funding, an unstructured organization has few means of receiving financial support but, in practice, there is little use for it. As seen during the 2012 winter movement, protesters were generally self-reliant and brought themselves whatever material resources they needed. In this case, know-how, consensus on the agenda and the willingness to invest time in pursuit of shared objectives were arguably more important for the success of the movement than financial resources. If this is indeed the case, it would make unstructured organizations more cost-effective forms of civic engagement than those relying on formal SMOs.

The last assumption, concerning the way in which costs and rewards are affected by authorities and social structure can also be considered partially true given the factors that were discussed that affected participation. Again, the perspective the authors focus on is centred on SMOs and costs and benefits referred to are those that concern donors, activists and supporters. As such, they make the point that society provides the necessary infrastructure that social movements use. The reason this is partially true is that unstructured organizations or spontaneous protests function largely the same in any condition. Although the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement and the 2012 winter movement differ greatly in terms of causes, effects, grievances and the type of society in which they occurred, the tools they used were by and large the same. A more ample

study on various unstructured movements throughout the world would be necessary to emphasize this point but, at least at first glance, it seems that, social structure and the role of authorities no longer influence the cost of participation in any significant way once the movement commences. They may play a role in preventing a movement from emerging in the first place but this is clearly not the meaning that McCarthy and Zald had in mind, given that they discuss movements that have indeed occurred.

Framing theory

In response to the shortcomings that resource mobilization and other theories had in explaining *why* people choose to become engaged, several authors have elaborated a distinct approach to the issue of social movements. This new theory uses the concept of 'frames' to consider not merely the presence but also the perception of grievances, and accounts for the many facets of active participation but also narrows the scope of various other processes related to participation. As stated prior, framing refers not just to a 'schemata of interpretation'[109] but a continuous process of constructing and negotiating meanings. When these processes are carried-out with the intent of mobilizing toward a common goal, they are referred to as 'collective action frames'. Benford and Snow[110] define collective action frames as "action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social-movement organization (SMO)".

According to them, collective action frames are characterized by core framing tasks and discursive processes. The former refers to the process by which SMOs define issues, establish accountability, suggest solutions and advise others to take action for the resolve of the stated problems. The latter addresses how the framing discourse is

---

[109] Goffman, p. 21

constructed around gathering support (how the cohesive narrative is built and how certain aspects are emphasized so as to favour certain interpretations). As such, according to this approach, problems are no longer 'real' to a greater or lesser extent in the objective sense but they become real through the spread of discourse that encourages the perception that some issue is important. The role of subjective interpretation, negotiated meanings and the individual, thus becomes central for the success of any social movement. Encouraging certain frames while ignoring or discouraging others not only gives great power to whoever constructs the discourse but it also suggests that collective action is more a product of the imagined (the realm of perception) than of reality (the realm of concrete fact).

In order for active engagement to appear, it is necessary for a process of 'frame alignment' to occur[111]. According to the definition, frame alignment is "the linkage of individual and SMO interpretive orientations, such that some set of individual interests, values and beliefs and SMO activities, goals and ideology are congruent and complementary"[112]. This clearly gives SMOs an important role, though it is not as central as in the case of resource mobilization theory. In this case, it is necessary that the individual's perception matches that of the SMO so that they may cooperate in support of their common goals. As such, it is not sufficient for an SMO to gather support and incentivise supporters to participate. Instead, a duality emerges between SMOs and the grassroots wherein perceptions need to match for there to be common action. Therefore, a large part of an SMO's activity revolves around creating and spreading palettes of interpretation that, once adopted and internalized by individuals, influences or determines how they perceive certain issues or events and, consequently, how they react to them.

---

[110] Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 614

Considering the abovementioned, a pattern may be constructed. There are no different definitions offered for key concepts such as social movements or SMOs, and the work in general seems to address the same framework that was set up by McCarthy and Zald. Therefore, the theory is discussed on the basis of this assumption that the framework used and the meaning of concepts is the same. As such, according to framing theory, again in ideal conditions, a society would exist where individuals live in a set social structure with a set reward distribution system, disengaged from activism much like in the case of resource mobilization. There would also be pre-existing and widespread grievances of varying intensities, as well as certain more or less widespread perceptions concerning those grievances. Within this context, SMOs would again assume leadership roles and begin to define issues they deem important, establish blame and suggest courses of action to remedy the problems. They would then seek to construct and disseminate a palette of meanings and perceptions that would induce among the grassroots a state of willingness to participate in advocating for the desired change. Unlike the case or resource mobilization, participants would not be motivated by given or promised incentives but by a personal desire to be engaged. This desire would wane over time, therefore the process of maintaining or reaffirming it would require constant horizontal and vertical dialogue, and construction of shared meanings and interpretations, akin to kindling a flame so as to keep it burning.

This model accounts for manipulation and deceit and also explains why the grassroots seem more concerned with some issues rather than others. Seen from the perspective of the 2012 Romanian winter protests, this theory appears much more appropriate in describing and explaining the events although, as is seen later on, some aspects continue to pose problems.

---

[111] Snow et al., 1986, p. 464
[112] Snow et al., 1986, p. 464

By overlapping this pattern with that witnessed on the ground, some inconsistencies emerge. Firstly and most significant of all is the absence of a leading SMO to take charge of the protests. Again, the centrality of SMOs to framing and resource mobilization theories seems to exclude the possibility of movements being self-organized in an unstructured way. Snow and other supporters of framing theory do not redefine SMOs so as to account for unstructured organizations and generally attribute them characteristics that unstructured organizations would not be able to have (such as significant financial resources, networks, access to or control over dissemination channels, know-how for constructing discourses, etc.). However, when these are absent, explaining how a movement began, escalated and eventually achieved some measure of success is difficult at best.

One explanation that might be possible within the framework of framing theory is that the movement in Romania was the unintended consequence of framing alignment processes. There might, therefore, have been one or more SMOs attempting to disseminate a shared interpretation of political developments and this triggered but did not take charge of the protests. Assuming this to be true, one would expect that the SMOs responsible had an agenda that closely resembled or matched that of the movement, that they had the means to spread their message over a wide enough area to start a mushrooming of rallies and that they, for some reason, refused or were prevented from assuming leadership once the protests began. Only a few actors could, therefore, have been responsible: the opposition, the media or organizations outside of Romania spreading messages through the media and the Internet.

As seen before, the main international social movements at the time did not enjoy support in Romania. They did perhaps offer insight as to how to properly use new tools

such as social media for mobilization but the grassroots did not align with their frame of interpretation concerning the most pressing issues of the moment.

The opposition had been trying for years to mobilize support against the establishment, both at the ballot and through non-electoral means. The firm rejection they received from protesters highlights the fact that whatever frame they were promoting did not resonate with the grassroots. For the duration of the protests, shouts against the entire political class resonated, and this point was emphasized more than any other in the European Parliament, in front of the opposition leaders[113]. Considering the May 2010 protests and the failure to gather support for dismissing the president in 2012, it seems unlikely that the opposition, whose agenda was clearly coming to power, inadvertently triggered an anti-establishment movement that rejected them.

The media, as detailed in previous chapters, was politically polarized and used self-censorship to select the type of information it disseminated. It was, thus, heavily involved in all framing processes (identifying problems, establishing blame and suggesting solutions) yet it too failed to achieve frame alignment, perhaps precisely because of its open support for political factions. One might argue that the opposition media failed but not that which was loyal to the establishment. However, it is hard to believe that such was the case given the collapse the ruling party faced in the November 2012 elections. The more likely scenario is that people rejected all attempts at political manipulation and simply distanced themselves altogether from events. This might explain why so many remained neutral during the protests in spite of their growing dissatisfaction, manifested at the ballot.

---

[113] "The Romanian Democracy - Political abuse and citizens' reaction", European Parliament hearing, January 31 2012, Brussels, full video available from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_xnpUT8F-0 (accessed November 12, 2012)

Worth mentioning is that the protests in London (and possibly in other foreign towns and cities) were organized by connected members of political parties and were not spontaneous like the ones in Romania. They are, however, relevant for the case study because they show a widespread willingness to participate in solidarity and be civically engaged in a visible way. Political factions did react to the movement but they did not initiate it or have any role in determining what types of demands were advanced. The most they could do was, as in the London case, select what aspects to present and what to ignore, attempting to sway public opinion in a certain direction. In other words, they applied the principles of framing theory to construct frames of interpretation that would favour their interests.

Such attempts were only partially successful though. Protesters who witnessed first-hand realities on the ground did not alter their discourse or demands throughout the duration of the movement (as can be seen from the messages spokespersons consistently delivered) and people who only saw events through the media filter were, obviously, not motivated to activism by the anti-establishment discourse predominantly used. Framing theory claims that collective action is possible when frames align, yet this statement is contradicted by the fact that only few people actively participated in the protests and they did so using different frames of interpretation than those promoted by the media. A reformation of the political class and resignation of the cabinet were the only things most factions that participated shared in common. Framing theory would argue that these elements are enough to prove that individuals in the protests did participate because their frames were aligned. Yet, this perspective does not explain why people whose interpretative frames aligned with the protesters did not participate. Is it possible that only 13.000 people in Romania shared the view that the resignation of the unpopular cabinet and reformation of the political class are necessary? Given public

opinion polls and declining support at the ballot for the ruling party, it would seem that the correct number is in the range of millions. Snow et al. claim that frame alignment is *necessary* for social movements but not always *sufficient* to trigger active participation. This means that, even when frames are aligned, it is still possible not to have active engagement but also that collective engagement is impossible when frames do not align. In this sense they come closer to explaining why social movements happen but fall short of clarifying why citizens choose to become civically active or why they do no. Why did people who shared the same views as protesters not join them?

The motives might indeed be highly personal and subjective but it is also possible that certain categories of triggers do exist and follow certain rules or patterns but only in conjunction with certain preset beliefs (such as the belief that civic engagement actually matters and can lead to improvements). If so, these motives require ample study in order to properly understand and stimulate wherever civic engagement is lacking. Doing so might prevent instances of violence such as those in Romania in 1989 or Egypt during the Arab Spring. As is, current theories cannot fully explain what triggers the citizen to break from passivity and become civically engaged.

The interpretative frame that the protesters shared lead them to chose a stance against the entire political class rather than just the establishment, without being directly guided to do so by an SMO. Also, many people who undoubtedly felt the same way as the protesters chose not to participate. It would take some effort on the part of framing theory advocates to explain what factors influenced both of these facts. The pattern described by the theory under ideal conditions does not account for such happenings, thus raising the question that maybe some external factors played a role or, in other words, that conditions were not ideal.

Several observations can be made that may account for the apparent lack of participation in a protest movement with seemingly wide-reaching appeal. The first has to do with policy. Where authorization to protest was, for whatever reason, not issued, the rallies were deemed illegal and gendarmes were repeatedly called to clear the streets or disperse the protesters. The first few days of the movement caught police forces unprepared, as can be seen from online footage of their initial few interventions[114]. The forceful interventions by police attempting to clear the streets lead to the initial violence witnessed in Bucureşti and reveal the standard practice when dealing with unauthorized movements. Much like the Occupy movement, the 2012 winter protesters found themselves the targets of intimidation and sanctions through fines which, as previously stated, are quite harsh. Considering that fines are issued for misbehaviour, it would seem that authorities in Romania view spontaneous protests as something that needs to be discouraged, irrespective of their causes and legitimacy. This point might be useful in explaining part of the reason why participation in the 2012 protests was low.

Forceful interventions, arrests and fines likely discouraged the active involvement of some people, who otherwise would have taken part. However, this type of context (which might be argued is repressive), did not hinder the overall success of the movement, in spite of what effects it may have had on participation. Toward the end of the movement, an awkward compromise was reached, wherein police allowed protesters to rally without authorization as long as their actions did not impede the flow of traffic. This was in spite of recurring provocations from some extremist factions who joined the movements to pursue their own, completely unrelated goals. For the gendarmes, there

---

[114] "Proteste Violente în Bucureşti!", 2012

was no real difference between the various factions and they presented themselves just as intimidating regardless of who they were tasked with watching[115].

However, neither harsh policy regarding unauthorised protests nor the lack of a structured SMO taking charge prevented the movement from achieving most of its goals. According to framing theory, as well as resource mobilization theory, movements need SMOs to coordinate actions, pool resources from participants and sympathisers or set the goals and the tone for collective action. The 2012 winter protests in Romania show that this is not at all necessary for the success of a SM. Rather, what is necessary is discipline and unity on the part of the grassroots. Without these, a movement is likely to lose support quickly in spite of large SMO involvement, as was the case in May 2010 and in the many instances of teachers' protests.

Another factor that might explain the relatively low turnout is the weather. One observation that can be made regarding theory in general is that it cannot account for the unpredictable. In the case of the 2012 winter movement, the cold was perhaps a key factor in limiting the number and strength of participants. Had the weather been kinder, it is possible that the course and outcome of events would also have been different. Two key questions apparently need to be asked. Firstly, why did the protests erupt and escalate in spite of discouragingly low temperatures and secondly, how large might the movement have grown in ideal conditions? I use the word 'apparently' because there is one possible explanation to the protests that might seem paradoxical, namely that the movement escalated or even began not in spite of but precisely because of unfavourable weather conditions. Given that the protest really escalated beginning January 13th, a Friday, is it possible that people took to the streets simply to avoid spending a weekend

---

[115] Emilian."Noutati proteste piata Universitatii Bucuresti 5 martie 2012 (pol21)", personal blog entry, March 6, 2012, available from: http://ceicunoi.wordpress.com/2012/03/06/noutati-proteste-piata-universitatii-bucuresti-5-martie-2012-pol21/ (accessed April 12, 2013)

inside with nothing to do? When temperatures drop, the incentive to stay indoors appears great but it may not be unthinkable that boredom, in this particular case acted as the trigger for mobilization. Having nothing else to distract them from current events, citizens might have chosen visible civic engagement as a pastime more than anything else. This is, of course, merely hypothetical, as no serious method of testing can be applied but the point remains that theory generally works with models and patterns in ideal conditions and any instances occurring in different circumstances solicit special attention. Even assuming the obvious (that the cold contributed to reduced participation), framing theory runs into an obstacle. Advocates of the theory might suggest that, had an SMO taken charge of or emerged from within the movement, participation would have escalated in spite of the cold. The crux remains, however, that for the people who did participate (whose number were large by Romanian standards), no SMO was needed and, in fact, no outside involvement was needed or, indeed, accepted.

Unlike McCarthy and Zald, Snow et al., acknowledge the existence and potential importance of "protests that exist apart from SMOs"[116]. They admit, that these "latent mobilizing structures" or "incidents of collective behaviour[117] have not yet been explained within the paradigm of framing theory. In their view, such occurrences are exceptional cases or deviations from the norm, yet how trustworthy this view is remains to be seen. As technological developments make self-mobilization easier and more cost-effective, it might be important to determine just how unstructured organizations emerge, function and grow, why some calls for action go unanswered in spite of massive efforts while others seem to spread organically. Even as Benford and Snow were elaborating their overview of the literature on the issue in the year 2000, they

---

[116] Snow et al., 1986, p. 478
[117] *Ibid.*

admitted that framing theory was still a work in progress[118]. Framing theory might in future times provide some answers to the unstructured movement issue but at its current stage it is unable to do so. The null hypothesis can therefore safely be considered invalid, meaning that mainstream theories cannot fully explain the origin, escalation and eventual success of the 2012 winter protests in Romania.

Conclusion: Towards a new theory?

Having analyzed the mainstream theories of social movements and determined that they do not, as yet, fully account for some of the observable phenomena on the ground, it might be time to suggest some forms of revision. Some of the key points have already been stressed. The last few years especially have seen an increase in self-organizing movements initiated by the grassroots. What the future holds is anybody's guess but, irrespective of patterns that may emerge, some of the tools and phenomena that today constitute exceptions might need to be explained in a more comprehensive manner. Reverting back to the questions addressed in the introduction, based on the findings described in this work, is it possible to affirm that the 2012 winter protests in Romania were a fluke or were they indicative of something more? Though it might be too early to estimate the long-term impact of the movement on the Romanian grassroots, from a theoretical stand point there are important lessons to be drawn concerning the nature of social movements and the way in which civic engagement can manifest itself in a visible way.

New approaches would have to examine closer the ties between civic engagement and social movements. Civic engagement, as defined in this work, is the active component (the actual participation) that drives social movements forward. In some instances, the

---

[118] Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 633

very presence of a desire to become engaged simply for the sake of engagement is sufficient motivation to break from passivity. In other instances, it may be that exterior incentives (such as rally calls from SMOs) are necessary as well, though they might not be sufficient on their own. Theories wanting to explain such complex phenomena should perhaps account for the various types of movements that can emerge. Attempting to explain all social movements through one all-encompassing theory neglects the various types of movements that exist and the various factors that influence and ultimately trigger the grassroots to become active. Undoubtedly, some form of collective consciousness must be in place (be it a frame, a sense of solidarity, community spirit or common grievance) to motivate people to take action. There is also clear need for some form of resource pooling before or after the start of any particular movement (be it a centralized structure such as an SMO or an unstructured self-organized collective of individuals acting on their own in a coordinated manner). However, an explanation for the decisive factor or the trigger that ultimately motivates the grassroots to transition from a passive stance to active engagement is, to my mind, as elusive today as when the study of social movements began. Identifying what this factor is represents perhaps the most important step in understanding and predicting when, where and why social movements will begin and persist. This is all the more important in and for societies where social movements are weak and have few supporters. Identifying the underlying reasons for activism in social movements might also be useful in stimulating civic engagement in general, not just the militant visible type.

New theories should thus consider the (perhaps crucial) distinction between a structured organization and an unstructured one, and understand how they differ in composition, emergence, escalation, mobilization, decision-making, resource pooling, etc. Owing to

the cost-effectiveness of using tools for mass mobilization, it seems that grassroots'
initiatives such as the 2012 Romanian protests are likely to become more common.
Even as this paper is being written, thousands of people are actively protesting in many
towns and cities in Bulgaria[119], part of a spontaneous movement[120] that began in a
similar fashion to that in Romania. For societies with little tradition of civic
engagement, understanding the processes and triggers that lead to mobilization could
help establish new trends of participation or even bring about improvements in political
systems.

Another factor that needs to be considered by new theories or approaches is that of
imperfect conditions, namely those that discourage engagement even though there is
willingness to participate. Such factors include weather, policy, politicized SMOs or
channels of disseminating information, availability or resources (financial or otherwise)
and other things that create an environment that encourages apathy. As noticed in
Romania, the underlying problem is sometimes not lack of civic engagement but lack of
an environment that encourages it. The masses displayed great discipline for the
duration of the movement (leaving and rallying again the next day, avoiding violence,
exposing agitators and preventing "mob-breakers" from infiltrating) but this was in spite
of the Romanian environment, not because of it. Fines, police, politicization of SMOs
and of media sources, state monopoly on finances for CSOs and many other factors can
contribute not only loss of trust in SMOs and their intentions but also to generation of
fake civic engagement or a general desire to avoid all forms of collective action for
common good altogether. Elements such as trust and the role of the community in

---

[119] "Bulgaria protests: New self-immolation in Sofia", *BBC News Europe*, March 13, 2013, available from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-21771229 (accessed May 10, 2013)
[120] Mariya Petkova, "Protests in Bulgaria and the new practice of democracy", *AlJazeera.com*, February 21, 2013, available from: http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/02/201322163943882279.html (accessed May 10, 2013)

shaping and generating civic engagement are neglected almost entirely in the mainstream theories even though, in the absence of reliable SMOs, these are vital for the successful pursuit of perceived common good.

The Romanian case also revealed some startling conclusions regarding the role of dialogue in society. As previously stated, the health bill that initiated the 2012 movement was withdrawn from public debate almost as soon as protests began. This begs the question 'what type of public debate was that?' and reveals the almost symbolic role that vertical dialogue has in some cases. Rather than invite representatives of the movement to discuss possible improvements to the unpopular bill, authorities scrapped the proposal altogether and accused the protesters of blocking change[121]. From this, one can see that constructive dialogue is almost non-existent in Romania. Policies are advanced in final form and the grassroots or the civil sector in general play no role in their elaboration. Such an environment where the political sector and the civil barely intersect makes it difficult for bottom-up initiatives to achieve their goals through conventional means. If people feel distrust toward their governments and toward organizations that are supposed to work toward common good, the only form collective action can take is that of active and unstructured grassroots militancy (self-organized social movements). Therefore, social movements are numerous in type, origin, evolution, motivation and method of unravelling.

Attempting to explain all social movements through one all-encompassing theory neglects the various types of movements that exist and the various factors that influence and ultimately trigger the grassroots to become active. Undoubtedly, some form of collective consciousness must be in place (be it a frame, a sense of solidarity,

---

[121] "Băsescu renunţă la Legea Sănătăţii", 2012

community spirit or common grievance) to motivate people to take action. There is also clear need for some form of resource pooling before or after the start of any particular movement (be it a centralized structure such as an SMO or an unstructured self-organized collective of individuals acting on their own in a coordinated manner). However, an explanation for the decisive factor or the trigger that ultimately motivates the grassroots to transition from a passive stance to active engagement is, to my mind, as elusive today as when the study of social movements began. Identifying what this factor is represents perhaps the most important step in understanding and predicting when, where and why social movements will begin and persist. This is all the more important in and for societies where social movements are weak and have few supporters. Identifying the underlying reasons for activism in social movements might also be useful in stimulating civic engagement in general, not just the militant visible type.

Different types of movements have different triggering factors, which makes it difficult to explain (or to predict) all of them using one single encompassing theory. Though the patterns described by the mainstream theories discussed in this work might apply to some cases, they cannot fully and accurately explain certain particular types of social movements. It can be argued that different types of civic engagement lead to different forms of visible manifestation, meaning that there is no single critical element responsible for the initiation, growth, longevity and success of social movements.

Both theories assume that social movements arise in response to something, be it an injustice or some other problem identified by a leading SMO. However, in practice, one can imagine or even notice movements that do not target the righting of a wrong or the solution to a problem but seek to avoid problems emerging, to prevent wrong being committed (such as environmentalists protesting against Antarctic drilling) or even to

improve aspects that are not problematic (such as an innovative country investing even more in research). Action, in this sense, is not meant just to resolve problems (working retroactively) but also to prevent them from appearing (working proactively). This is a different and more constructive approach from that of resource mobilization or framing theory, who presuppose that grievances always exist and that social movements exist to deal with them.

Although it would be unwise to reject either of these theories altogether, it is obvious that the realm of social movements is more complex than previously thought, and that new approaches are needed to get a more thorough understanding of the processes we are witnessing. The past few years have seen an increase in the number, scale and the discipline of unstructured organizations in the form of spontaneous movements, raising the question if we are witnessing a new type of policy-making, in which the grassroots wish to be more directly involved. If this is indeed the case, it would be necessary to understand not just the nature and the tools these new kinds of movements possess but also to develop new tools of integrating them into the normal functioning of the state. If conventional channels of communication disappoint the grassroots, there are currently the means through which these can self-organize and become civically engaged. Understanding these means would be an essential step toward promoting constructive civic engagement (one that seeks solutions rather than just opposing the establishment). If this is done wisely, the Athenian model of democracy that current systems wish to mirror might come closer to reality.

Bibliography and selected sources

Books

Almond, Gabriel A. and Coleman, James S. *The Politics of Developing Areas*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960

Bott, E. *Family and Social Networks*, London: Tavistock, 1957

Dunn, Elizabeth. *Money, morality and modes of civil society among American Mormons*, in Hann, Chris, and Dunn, Elizabeth ed., *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models*, London: Routledge, 1996

Frazer, E. *The Problem of Communitarian Politics. Unity and conflict*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999

Gibson, C., *From inspiration to participation: A review of perspectives on youth civic engagement*, New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2000

Goffman, E. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of the Experience*, New York: Harper Colophon, 1974

Hansen, Mogens Herman. *The Athenian Assembly in the Age of Demosthenes*, Blackwell, 1987

Harper, E. H. and Dunham, A. *Community Organization in Action. Basic literature and critical comments*, New York: Association Press, 1959

Lee, D. and Newby, H. *The Problem of Sociology: an introduction to the discipline*, London: Unwin Hyman, 1983

Linz, Juan José and Stepan, Alfred C. *Problems of democratic transition and consolidation: southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1996

Putnam, R. *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000

Siani-Davies, Peter. *The Romanian Revolution of 1989*, Cornell University Press, 2005

Tănase, Stelian. *Elite şi societate: Revoluţia ca eşec*, Polirom, Iaşi, 1996

Willmott, P. *Community Initiatives. Patterns and prospects*, London: Policy Studies Institute, 1989

Articles

Adler, Richard P. and Goggin, Judy. "What Do We Mean By "Civic Engagement"?", *Journal of Transformative Education* 3, No. 3 (2005)

Diller, Elisa C. "Citizens in service: The challenge of delivering civic engagement training to national service programs". *Washington, DC: Corporation for National and Community Service,* July 17, 2001

Kligman, G. "Reclaiming the public: a reflection on recreating civil society in Romania", *Eastern European Politics and Societies*, 1990

McCarthy, John D. and Zald, Mayer N. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory", *The American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 6 (May 1977)

Nelson, T. E., Clawson, R. A., and Oxley, Z. M. "Media framing of a civil liberties conflict and its effect on tolerance". *American Political Science Review* 91 (1997)

Ronan. B. Testimony at the White House Conference on Aging Public Forum on Civic engagement in an Older America, Phoenix, Arizona, February 25, 2004

Schmitter, Philippe. "On Civil Society and the Consolidation of Democracy: Ten Propositions", mimeograph, Stanford Department of Political Science, July 1995

Snow, David A. and. Benford, Robert D. "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment", *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000), pp. 611-639

Snow, David A. and. Benford, Robert D. "Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization." *International Social Movement Research* 1 (1988)

Snow, David A., Rochford, R. Burke Jr., Worden, Steven K. and Benford, Robert D. "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation." *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986): 464-481

Van Benshoten, E. *Civic engagement for people of all ages through national service*, Unpublished manuscript, 2001

Weber, M. "The three types of legitimate rule", *Society and Institutions* 4, no. 1 (1958)

Online articles and sources

 "400 de oameni au protestat sambata in Piata Universitatii. Manifestantii au primit bonuri de ordine", *sterileprotv.ro*, January 21, 2012, available from: http://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/actualitate/a-noua-zi-de-proteste-aproape-100-de-protestatari-s-au-adunat-la-universitate-in-ciuda-ninsorii.html

"800 de oameni protesteaza in Piata Universitatii. "Monarhia salveaza Romania"", personal blog entry, January 22, 2012, available at: http://calatorprintrevise.wordpress.com/2012/01/22/live-acum-800-de-oameni-protesteaza-in-piata-universitatii-monarhia-salveaza-romania/

"A 10-a zi de proteste in Piata Universitatii din Bucuresti s-a incheiat fara incidente", *stirileprotv.ro*, January 22, 2012, available at: http://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/actualitate/a-zecea-zi-de-proteste-in-piata-universitatii-au-inceput-sa-soseasca-manifestanti.html

"A 18-a zi de proteste în ţară: manifestanţii îndură gerul pentru a-şi striga nemulţumirile", January 30, 2012, available from: http://www.rtv.net/a-18-a-zi-de-proteste-in-tara-manifestantii-indura-gerul-pentru-a-si-striga-nemultumirile_13281.html

"A 41-a zi de proteste. Victor Socaciu: Sunt unul dintre ciumpalacii pe care, din când în când, îi veţi vedea în piaţă", *Antena3.ro*, February 2, 2012, available from: http://www.antena3.ro/romania/a-41-a-zi-de-proteste-victor-socaciu-sunt-unul-dintre-ciumpalacii-pe-care-din-cand-in-cand-ii-veti-vedea-in-piata-156499.html

"A cincea zi de proteste în toată România: Peste 200 de tineri care se îndreptau spre Piaţa Unirii au fost opriţi de jandarmi", *Antena3.ro*, January 16, 2012, available from: http://www.antena3.ro/romania/o-noua-runda-de-proteste-in-bucuresti-manifestantii-au-inceput-sa-se-stranga-in-piata-universitatii-151701.html

"Aproximativ o sută de oameni au protestat la Universitate, pentru a 15-a zi, în ciuda gerului", *Gandul.info*, January 27, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/news/proteste-in-romania-aproximativ-o-suta-de-oameniau-protestat-la-universitate-pentru-a-15-a-zi-in-ciuda-gerului-9183067

"Au reînceput protestele în Piaţa Universităţii. Vezi aici nemulţumirile manifestanţilor", *Antena3.ro*, April 11, 2012, available from: http://www.antena3.ro/romania/au-reinceput-protestele-in-piata-universitatii-vezi-aici-nemultumirile-manifestantilor-163131.html

"Baconschi, despre demitere: Am primit un telefon de la Boc. Nu regret ce am scris", *Realitatea.net*, January 23, 2012, available from: http://www.realitatea.net/baconschi-despre-demitere-am-primit-un-telefon-de-la-boc-nu-regret-ce-am-scris_906825.html

"Băsescu a retras Legea Sănătăţii. Proteste la Cotroceni", *Ziuaveche.ro*, January 13, 2012, available from: http://www.ziuaveche.ro/actualitate-interna/politica-interna/ce-vrea-ponta-dupa-ce-basescu-a-retras-legea-sanatatii-68958.html

"Băsescu renunţă la Legea Sănătăţii", *Ziuaveche.ro*, January 13, 2012, available from: http://www.ziuaveche.ro/actualitate-interna/politica-interna/basescu-renunta-la-legea-sanatatii-68939.html

"Băsescu retrage proiectul noii legi a sănătăţii. Boc şi Ritli au operat de urgenţă schimbarea", *Gandul.info*, January 13, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/news/basescu-retrage-proiectul-noii-legi-a-sanatatii-boc-si-ritli-au-operat-de-urgenta-schimbarea-9145694

"Băsescu şi politicienii, huiduiţi în peste 60 de oraşe", *Realitatea.net*, January 17, 2012, available from: http://www.realitatea.net/proteste-in-piata-universitatii-demonstranti-ridicati-politicieni-huiduiti-live-tv_904952.html

"Bilanţul Protestelor de luni - 13.000 de manifestanţi în 52 de localităţi. "Un întreg arsenal", descoperit la protestatari din Capitală", *Mediafax.ro*, January 17, 2012, available from: http://www.mediafax.ro/social/bilantul-protestelor-de-luni-13-000-de-manifestanti-in-52-de-localitati-un-intreg-arsenal-descoperit-la-protestatari-din-capitala-9152022

"Boc a demisionat: Am depus mandatul Guvernului pentru a detensiona situaţia politică şi socială din ţară", *Mediafax.ro*, February 5, 2012, available from: http://www.mediafax.ro/politic/boc-a-demisionat-am-depus-mandatul-guvernului-pentru-a-detensiona-situatia-politica-si-sociala-din-tara-9209410

"Bulgaria protests: New self-immolation in Sofia", *BBC News Europe*, March 13, 2013, available from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-21771229

"Claudiu Crăciun in the European Parliament on the University Square Protests", video available from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjX9nljXGgU

"Defining Civil Society", *WorldBank.org*, February 8, 2013, available from: http://go.worldbank.org/4CE7W046K0

"Emil Boc l-a demis pe Teodor Baconschi din functia de ministru de Externe pentru jignirea manifestantilor" *HotNews.ro*, January 23, 2012, available from: http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-politic-11308155-ultima-ora-emil-boc-revocat-din-functie-ministrul-externe-teodor-baconschi.htm

"Greva profesorilor – minivacanta pentru elevi", *stirileprotv.ro*, October, 2009, available from: http://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/social/greva-profesorilor-minivacanta-pentru-elevi.html

"Journalists under fire"*, The Economist Online*, September 1, 2012, available from: http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2012/09/press-freedom-romania

"Mihai, membru ONG: "Sunt vierme, inept, incult şi ciumpalac. Cine mi se alătură?"", *Gandul.info*, January 19, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/revolutions/proteste-bucuresti-mihai-membru-ong-sunt-vierme-inept-incult-si-ciumpalac-cine-mi-se-alatura-9159219

"Petiţie: Raed Arafat trebuie să participe la noua lege a sănătăţii! Semnează şi tu", *Realitatea.net*, January 12, 2102, available from: http://www.realitatea.net/semneaza-si-tu-pentru-ca-raed-arafat-sa-participe-la-noua-lege-a-sanatatii_903625.html

"Piata Universitatii - sustin monarhia", January 26, 2012, available from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQwBh4DYsc0

"Piaţa Universităţii, a 28-a zi de proteste. Sâmbătă, ACTA ocupă kilometrul 0", *rtv.net*, February 10, 2012, available from: http://www.rtv.net/piata-universitatii-a-28-a-zi-de-proteste-sambata-acta-ocupa-kilometrul-0_15344.html

"Piata Universitatii, cele mai violente proteste de la mineriade. Jandarmii acuza ca mitingul pro-Arafat s-a transformat in lupta ultrasilor din fotbal", *HotNews.ro*, January

14, 2012, available from: http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-11216836-noi-mitinguri-loc-sambata-pentru-sustinerea-lui-raed-arafat-bucuresti-alte-orase-din-tara.htm

"Protest în uniforma militară, în Piaţa Universităţii: Acum sunt liber spiritual, vedem mâine dacă mai sunt liber şi fizic", *Antena3.ro*, January 23, 2012, available from: http://www.antena3.ro/romania/protest-in-uniforma-militara-in-piata-universitatii-acum-sunt-liber-spiritual-vedem-maine-daca-mai-sunt-liber-si-fizic-152655.html

"Proteste Bucuresti 2012 (15.01)", *Realitatea.net*, January 15, 2012, available from: http://www.myvideo.ro/watch/8409675/Proteste_Bucuresti_2012_15_01

"Proteste Violente în Bucureşti! Jandarmii au trimis oamenii acasă, după ce i-au ameninţat cu folosirea forţei", *Antena3.ro*, January 14, 2012, available from: http://www.antena3.ro/romania/proteste-violente-in-bucuresti-protestatarii-s-au-luat-la-bataie-cu-jandarmii-live-video-151508.html

"Proteste violente în Capitală! Manifestanţii au provocat incendii în Piaţa Unirii", *gsp.ro*, January 15, 2012, available from: http://www.gsp.ro/gsp-special/diverse/proteste-violente-in-capitala-manifestantii-au-provocat-incendii-in-piata-unirii-297450.html

"Protestele au continuat în Piaţa Universităţii", *rtv.net*, February 27, 2012, available from: http://www.rtv.net/protestele-continua-in-piata-universitatii_18165.html

"Protestele au intrat în a treia săptămână. Oamenii cred că până la urmă vor ieşi învingători", *Antena3.ro*, February 3, 2012, available from: http://www.antena3.ro/romania/protestele-au-intrat-in-a-treia-saptamana-oamenii-cred-ca-pana-la-urma-vor-iesi-invingatori-154000.html

"Protestele continuă în întreaga ţară. Românii cer demisia lui Băsescu", *Antena3.ro*, February 8, 2012, available from: http://www.antena3.ro/romania/protestele-continua-in-intreaga-tara-romanii-cer-demisia-lui-basescu-154572.html

"Protestele împotriva lui Traian Băsescu şi a Guvernului Boc continuă în mai multe oraşe", *Antena3.ro*, February 2, 2012, available from: http://www.antena3.ro/romania/protestele-impotriva-lui-traian-basescu-si-a-guvernului-boc-continua-in-mai-multe-orase-153968.html (accessed April 10, 2013)

"Protestele profesorilor se extind în toată ţara", *cotidianul.ro*, November 14, 2011, available from: http://www.cotidianul.ro/protestele-profesorilor-se-extind-in-toata-tara-163745/

"Revolutia SMURD incepe la Targu-Mures! Peste 3.000 de oameni au cerut demisia lui Basescu!", *Ziarul de Iaşi*, January 13, 2012, available from: http://www.ziaruldeiasi.ro/national-extern/revolutia-smurd-incepe-la-targu-mures-peste-3-000-de-oameni-au-cerut-demisia-lui-basescu~ni82k0

"Revoluţie 2012. Proteste împotriva lui Băsescu la Bucureşti, Timişoara, Braşov şi Sibiu", *Ziuaveche.ro*, January 14, 2012, available from:

http://www.ziuaveche.ro/actualitate-interna/politica-interna/revolutie-2012-proteste-impotriva-lui-basescu-la-bucuresti-timisoara-brasov-si-sibiu-68974.html

"Sânziana Dobre, membră ONG: "Vreau o ţară mai bună pentru băiatul meu"", *Gandul.info*, January 19, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/revolutions/proteste-bucuresti-sanziana-dobre-membra-ong-vreau-o-tara-mai-buna-pentru-baiatul-meu-9159240

"Scăderea salariilor şi a pensiilor a provocat cel mai amplu miting sindical din ultimii 19 ani", *Monitorulsv.ro*, May 19, 2010, available from: http://www.monitorulsv.ro/Ultima-ora/2010-05-19/Scaderea-salariilor-si-a-pensiilor-a-provocat-cel-mai-amplu-miting-sindical-din-ultimii-19-ani

"Several people hurt in Bucharest anti-austerity protest", BBC News Europe, January 15, 2012, available from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-16565123

"Talmeş-balmeş în a şaptea zi de proteste: Orban, Mazăre, "Ştiinţa nu moare" şi Ţinutul Secuiesc", *Adevarul.ro*, January 19, 2012, available from: http://adevarul.ro/news/eveniment/talmes-balmes-saptea-zi-proteste-orban-mazare-Stiinta-nu-moare-Tinutul-secuiesc-1_50ad69417c42d5a66394a3c4/index.html

"The Romanian Democracy - Political abuse and citizens' reaction", European Parliament hearing, January 31 2012, Brussels, full video available from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_xnpUT8F-0

Alexandrescu, Daria. "Protestele se prelungesc până pe 15 februarie", *ExpressdeBanat.ro*, January 30, 2012, available from: http://expressdebanat.ro/protestele-din-centrul-resitei-se-prelungesc-pana-pe-15-februarie

Anderson, Lisa. "Demystifying the Arab Spring." *Foreign Affairs*, 2011, available from: http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67693/lisa-anderson/demystifying-the-arab-spring

Are We All Now Idiotai? Remembering the Meaning of Democracy, December 23, 2011, http://www.andmagazine.com/content/phoenix/11657.html

Arsenie, Dan. "Povestea Occupy România. Tinerii care au ocupat Piaţa Universităţii după 20 de ani", *Realitatea.net*, December 15, 2011, available from: http://www.realitatea.net/exclusiv-povestea-occupy-romania-cine-sunt-tinerii-care-au-ocupat-piata-universitatii-dupa-20-de-a_895545.html

Baconschi, Teodor. "Opoziţia socialistă a trecut în sfârşit la fapte", Personal blog entry, January 16, 2012, available from: http://baconschi.ro/opozitia-socialista-a-trecut-in-sfarsit-la-fapte/

Cabrera, Michaela. "Clashes in Bucharest anti-austerity protest", *Reuters*, January 15, 2012, available from:http://uk.reuters.com/video/2012/01/15/clashes-in-Bucureşti-anti-austerity-

prot?videoId=228595720&feedType=VideoRSS&feedName=MOSTPOPULAR&video Channel=2603

Ciobanu, Laura and Vulpe, Marius. "Puterea şi Opoziţia nu s-au înţeles. Boc, de acord numai cu sesiunea extraordinară a Parlamentului", *evz.ro*, January 17, 2012, available from: http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/puterea-si-opozitia-se-aseaza-la-masa-negocierilor-962024.html

Civicus, "Bridging the gaps: Citizens, organisations and dissociation", *Civil Society Index summary report: 2008-2011*, available from: http://www.civicus.org/downloads/Bridging%20the%20Gaps%20-%20Citizens%20%20Organisations%20and%20Dissociation.pdf

Crăciun, Claudiu and Poenaru, Florin, *Protestele din Piaţa Universităţii – "extraordinare" sau "fără viziune"*?, January 14, 2013, available from: http://totb.ro/protestele-din-piata-universitatii-extraordinare-sau-fara-viziune/

Crăciun, Claudiu. *Scurt ghid pentru un protest paşnic!*, January 15, 2012, available from: http://www.criticatac.ro/13245/scurt-ghid-pentru-un-protest-pasnic/

Dinu, Clarice, Popescu, Adrian and Andrei, Cristian. "Protest la Cotroceni. Manifestaţii anti-Băsescu în Bucureşti, Braşov, Timişoara şi Sibiu", *Gandul.info*, January 13, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/news/video-protest-la-cotroceni-manifestatii-antibasescu-in-bucuresti-brasov-timisoara-si-sibiu-9146134

Dragomir, Anca. "Profesorii se pregătesc de grevă generală", *romanialibera.ro*, January 18, 2012, available from: http://www.romanialibera.ro/actualitate/locale/profesorii-se-pregatesc-de-greva-generala-250574.html

Emilian. "Protest Universitate 26 feb 2012 – discutii in contradictoriu (pol19)", personal blog entry, March 6, 2012, available from: http://ceicunoi.wordpress.com/2012/02/27/protest-universitate-26-feb-2012-discutii-in-contradictoriu-pol19/

Emilian."Noutati proteste piata Universitatii Bucuresti 5 martie 2012 (pol21)", personal blog entry, March 6, 2012, available from: http://ceicunoi.wordpress.com/2012/03/06/noutati-proteste-piata-universitatii-bucuresti-5-martie-2012-pol21/

Fati, Sabina. "Virgil Măgureanu: "Protestele nu sunt spontane"", *romanialibera.ro*, January 30, 2012, available from: http://www.romanialibera.ro/opinii/interviuri/virgil-magureanu-protestele-nu-sunt-spontane-251759.html#top_articol

FreedomHouse. *Freedom of the press 2012 – Global Press Freedom Rankings*, available from: http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Global%20and%20Regional%20Press%20Freedom%20Rankings.pdf

Gheorghiţă, Elvira. "Raed Arafat le cere oamenilor să nu mai iasă în stradă. "Mulţumesc pentru susţinere, dar îi rog pe toţi să nu se lase manipulaţi politic"", *Gandul.info*,

January 13, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/news/raed-arafat-le-cere-oamenilor-sa-nu-mai-iasa-in-strada-multumesc-pentru-sustinere-dar-ii-rog-pe-toti-sa-nu-se-lase-manipulati-politic-9145688

Ghioca, Cristina "Cartel Alfa şi-a amânat protestele", *politicaromaneasca.ro*, September 17, 2010, available from: http://www.politicaromaneasca.ro/cartel_alfa_si_a_amanat_protestele-1193

Ilie, Ana. "A zecea zi de proteste - ziua pro-monarhie", *Ziare.com*, January 22, 2012, acailable from: http://www.ziare.com/stiri/proteste/a-zecea-zi-de-proteste-romanii-din-tara-si-din-afara-au-iesit-iar-in-strada-live-1146418

Intact Media Group history, available from: http://www.intactmediagroup.ro/en/about-us/history/

Ionel, Corina. "Circa 150 de persoane au protestat, in Londra, in semn de solidaritate cu romanii care au iesit in strada", *HotNews.ro*, January 18, 2012, available from: http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-diaspora-11264039-circa-150-persoane-protestat-londra-semn-solidaritate-romanii-care-iesit-strada.htm

Learn about #Occupy, available from: http://www.occupytogether.org/aboutoccupy/#issues

Lumezeanu, Lucian. "Raed Arafat revine in functie la Ministerul Sanatatii", *Ziare.com*, January 17, 2012, available from: http://www.ziare.com/raed-arafat/legea-sanatatii/arafat-revine-in-functie-la-ministerul-sanatatii-1145505

Mitan, Mădălina, Stroie, Livia, Robu, Diana and Nistor, Alexandru, "A saptea zi de proteste - fumigene, violente si zeci de oameni retinuti", *Ziare.com*, January 20, 2012, available from: http://www.ziare.com/stiri/proteste/doua-proteste-paralizeaza-capitala-mii-de-oameni-asteptati-in-strada-live-1145886

Pavel, Dan. "Noul fenomen „Piaţa Universităţii"- falsa democraţie şi pseudorevoluţia", *Ziua de Cluj*, January 17, 2012, available from: http://ziuadecj.realitatea.net/editorial/noul-fenomen-piata-universitatii--falsa-democratie-si-pseudorevolutia--82006.html

Petkova, Mariya. "Protests in Bulgaria and the new practice of democracy", *AlJazeera.com*, February 21, 2013, available from: http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/02/201322163943882279.html

Piaţa Universităţii, ziua 42 de proteste, February 24, 2012, available from: http://curaj.tv/reportaj/civic/protest/piata-universitatii-ziua-42-de-proteste/

Preda, Cristian. *E altceva*, January 17, 2012, available from: http://cristianpreda.ro/2012/01/18/e-altceva/

Preda, Diana. *"BNS and CNSLR Frăţia merger plan postponed"*, *EIROnline*, November 9, 2004, available from: http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2004/11/inbrief/ro0411101n.htm

Protestul din 5 februarie 2012 împotriva AIE organizat de către Comitetul pentru Apărarea Constituţiei şi a Democraţiei, February 5, 2012, available from: http://www.privesc.eu/Arhiva/8789/Protestul-din-5-februarie-2012-impotriva-AIE-organizat-de-catre-Comitetul-pentru-Apararea-Constitutiei-si-a-Democratiei

Radu, Ştefan-Cristian, "Stima, Admiratie, Respect – Raed Arafat!!!", Public Event for Romania Bunului Simt, available from: https://www.facebook.com/events/207426876014642/?ref=14

Restea, Mircea and Deaconescu, Vali. "Occupy Bucharest: Cum a decurs protestul "indignaţilor" din Bucureşti", *romanialibera.ro*, October 15, 2011, available from: http://www.romanialibera.ro/actualitate/bucuresti/foto-occupy-Bucureşti-cum-a-decurs-protestul-indignatilor-din-bucuresti-241208.html

Sandu, Cristiana Geanina. "Primăria Capitalei a aprobat 16 proteste şi marşuri în perioada 23-31 ianuarie", *Gandul.info*, January 20, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/news/proteste-bucuresti-primaria-capitalei-a-aprobat-16-proteste-si-marsuri-in-perioada-23-31-ianuarie-9164069

Shah, Anup. *Public Protests around the World*, November 7, 2011, available from: http://www.globalissues.org/article/45/public-protests-around-the-world

Stancovici, Diana. "Aproximativ o sută de protestatari au mărşăluit pe străzile Sibiului, oprindu-se la un ceai", *Gandul.info*, January 28, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/stiri/proteste-in-romania-aproximativ-o-suta-de-protestatari-au-marsaluit-pe-strazile-sibiului-oprindu-se-la-un-ceai-9185029

The Romanian Association for Measuring Ratings (ARMA), television ratings for January 2012, data available from: http://www.arma.org.ro/ro/audiente

The Romanian Transmedia Audit Bureau (BRAT), newspaper circulation ratings for January 2012, data available from: http://www.brat.ro/audit-tiraje/cifre-de-difuzare/year/2012/trimester/10-12/order_by/vanzari/order/desc/per_page/all

Urban, Iulian. "Mentalitate de viermi care nu vor absolut nimic, dar se plang de tot ce-i inconjoara", personal blog entry, January 13, 2012, available from: http://www.urbaniulian.ro/2012/01/13/mentalitate-de-viermi-care-nu-vor-absolut-nimic-dar-se-plang-de-tot-ce-i-inconjoara/

Vârlan, Corina. "Proteste la Londra. Peste 100 de persoane "s-au adunat" pe Facebook pentru a demonstra în faţa Ambasadei României", *Gandul.info*, January 18, 2012, available from: http://www.gandul.info/news/galerie-foto-proteste-la-londra-peste-100-de-persoane-s-au-adunat-pe-facebook-pentru-a-demonstra-in-fata-ambasadei-romaniei-9156361

Vasilcoiu, Cristian Ştefan. "Protestul din Bucureşti a devenit ca cel de la Baia de Arieş", *evz.ro*, January 27, 2012, available from: http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/ziua-a-15-a-protestul-din-bucuresti-a-devenit-ca-cel-de-la-baia-de-aries-963652.html

Zidărescu, Ana and Postelnicu, Alexandra. "Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu este noul premier desemnat de Traian Băsescu", *evz.ro*, February 6, 2012, available from: http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/mihai-razvan-ungureanu-este-noul-premier-desemnat-de-traian-basescu-live-text-965183.html

Zoltan, Petru, Raducanu, Mara and Ionescu, Cristian. "Cine sunt viermii şi ciumpalacii din Piaţa Universităţii", *jurnalul.ro*, January 24, 2012, available from: http://jurnalul.ro/special-jurnalul/cine-sunt-viermii-si-ciumpalacii-din-piata-universitatii-602396.html