Bogdan Ivașcu *

Revolucije društvenih medija: Usporedba između egipatskih i moldavijskih online društvenih pokreta

Sažetak

Tehnološke inovacije u IT i u poljima mobilne komunikacije su transformirale sredstva komunikacije između pojedinaca. Ova činjenica je omogućilo rast prilagodljivosti pojedinca na nepredviđene situacije unutar modela umreženog društva (Castells , 1996 : Van Dijk : 2006). S nastankom internet, ovaj novi tip društva je započeo pokazivati fleksibilnost koja se nije nikada susretala u prijašnjim društvenim modelima.

Ponašajući se poput socijalnog barometra, društveni mediji nude pojedincu mogućnost djelovanja na društvenu stvarnost unutar umjetne zone. Dakle, svjedoci smo rađanja mehanizma koji ima potencijal za generiranje utjecaja u procesu građanskog angažmana za dobrobit društva i pojedinca. U posljednji godina, društveni pokreti i grupe podrške su našle unutar društvenih medija novu sredinu izražavanja iz koje mogu izraziti svoje ciljeve i kordinirati svoje postupke bez potrebe za prostornom blizinom.

Imajući ovu novu društvenu stvarnost kao polazište, ova studija predlaže da se utvrde neki aspekti odnosa između građanskog angažmana i uloge koju imaju društveni mediji, posebno društvena stranica Twitter, tijekom društvenih pokreta u Moldaviji (travanj 2009.) i Egiptu (siječanj 2011). Studija će također pružiti usporedbu između Twitterovih uloga i u Moldaviji i Egiptu. Osim toga, analiza nudi novi pristup nedavnim

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društvenim pokretima, pridonoseći akademskoj literaturi koja se bavi proučavanjem povećanja građanskog i političkog korištenja Twittera, izvan njegovog primarnog djelokruga. Kako bismo ovo učinili, prvo smo predložili teorijsko objašnjenje da bismo pojasnili ključne pojmove.

Ključne riječi: društveni mediji, Twitter , građanski angažman, umreženo društvo

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Social media revolutions: A comparison between Egypt and Moldova's online social movements

Summary

Technological inovations in the IT and mobile communication fields transformed the means of communication between individuals. This fact allowed the growth of the individual's adaptability to unforseen situations within the network society model (Castells:1996, Van Dijk: 2006). With the emergence of the internet, this new type of society began manifesting a flexibility never before encountered in previous societal models.

Behaving like a social barometer, social media offers to the individual the possibility of action upon social reality from within an artificial zone. Thus, we witness the birth of a mechanism that has the potential to generate leverage in the process of civic engagement, for the benefit of society and individuals alike. In recent years, social movements and support groups found within social media a new environment of expression, from where to voice their objectives and coordinate their actions without the need of spatial proximity.

Having this new social reality as a starting point, this study proposes to identify some aspects of the relation between civic engagement and the role played by social media, specifically the social networking site Twitter, during the social movements in Moldova (April 2009) and Egypt (January 2011). The study will also provide a comparison between Twitter's roles in both Moldova and Egypt. Additionally, the analysis offers a new approach of recent social movements, contributing to the academic literature studying Twitter's increasing civic and political usage, beyond its

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initial socializing scope. In order to do so, we first propose a theoretical incursion to clarify key concepts.

Key Words: social media, Twitter, civic engagement, network society

Theoretical framework of the research

The network society and the Information Age

One of the most frequent namings for the current social development stage is „the Information Age". Manuel Castells (1996) considers its apparition possible largely due to the co-existence of three elements: 1. The unprecedented development of the information technology, 2. The crisis of the capitalist and communist systems and 3. The apparition of significant social movements, with potential of development and transformation of the social construct (such as environmentalism and feminism). Together, the three processes (technological, economic-political and social) co-operate towards designing a new social construct: the network society. „Functions and processes of the Information Age are organised incrementally in networks. Networks represent the new social morphologies and the diffusion of the network logic modifies substantially the mechanics and the result of the production, experience, power and culture processes. Although the network shape of social organisation existed in other times and spaces, the paradigm of the new information society offers the premise of its expansion in the totality of social structures" (*idem.*).

The network society paradigm describes a series of changes that occur inside the socio-cultural structures due to the development of networks and information technologies. Chronologically, the first usage of the „network society" term belongs to Dutch researcher Jan Van Dijk (2006). For Van Dijk, the network society underlines „the form and organization of information processing and exchange. An infrastructure of social and media networks takes care of this. So the network society can be defined as a social formation with an infrastructure of social and media networks enabling its prime mode of organization at all levels (individual, group/organizational and societal). Increasingly, these networks link all

units or parts of this formation (individuals, groups and organizations)." (Van Dijk: 2006, p. 20).

The conceptualisation of the network society is further shaped in connection to the definition of power in the information society. Castells considers power is no longer concentrated in institutions (the state), organisations (private companies) or symbolic controllers (churches, mass-media). It is diffused within the global networks of power, information and images, that flows within a variable geometry and disembodied geography (Castells: 1997). According with this interpretation, the new power is no longer the asset of institutions, but of informational and visual codes produced by networks. These codes and images reflect the dominant logic of the network society. As macro-level transformations work faster, movements of individual or cultural identity at micro-level are more engaged, either civically, politically or economically.

Civic engagement and social media

Literature review on the concept of civic engagement

Sociological and political research perspectives of civic engagement fail to offer a unique definition of the concept. Traditionally, the idea of citizens united to cooperate in order to reach a common social goal stems from Alexis de Tocqueville's seminal analysis of American civil life, *Democracy in America* (2010). Tocqueville saw in the voluntary associations specific to American townships an alternative to the centralized, absolutist European governments of the time. It is precisely this decentralized nature of the associations, Tocqueville argued, as well as the voluntary participation of their members, which gives power to the democratic system. Tocqueville's analysis distinguishes three forms of association: industrial associations, religious associations and legal or voluntary associations. Another integral part of the system's efficiency is the freedom of expression that Tocqueville found to be most evident in the prominence of newspapers.

However, "civic engagement" is never used by Tocqueville as a term describing voluntary associations in early 19th century America. Later research made the connections, either including civic engagement within

the broader concept of social capital, or by analyzing the role of voluntary associations in modern America, as well as worldwide (Putnam, Leonardi, Nanetti: 1993, Putnam: 1995, Skocpol: 1997). The American Psychological Association's definition provides a synthetic definition of civic engagement, which is described as "individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual voluntarism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy" (Delli Carpini, http://www.apa.org/education/undergrad/civic-engagement.aspx).

Ehrlich (2000, p. *iv*) emphasizes the role of civic engagement as a community developing process: "Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes". Social movements for democratization in developing countries, such as those in Moldova and Egypt, may be included under this particular interpretation of civic engagement, as socio-political change can be considered a form of enhancing the quality of life.

Analyzing civic engagement from the citizen's perspective, Keeter et. all (2002, p. 23) describe the quality of being „civically engaged" as depending of the participation in two or more of the following activities: regular volunteering for an organization other than a candidate or political party, working with others to solve a community problem, raising money for charity, through a run/walk and actively participating in a group or association.

Levine (2008, pp. 119-120) points towards three arguments in favor of civic engagement's necessity in generating and maintaining what the author calls "a good society". Firstly, civic engagement stimulates institutions into working more efficiently. The strength of civic engagement determinates the way a government interacts with its citizens. Active citizens check corruption and mismanagement. On the other hand, strong governments with weak civil societies are, without exceptions, corrupt and tyrannical. Secondly, social outcomes are more likely to be just

when participation is equitable. Thirdly, some crucial public problems can only be addressed by people's direct public work, not by legislation.

According to Milner (2009, pp. 821-824), civic engagement is channeled through three forms of citizenship: informed, purposeful and active citizenship. Informed citizenship implies the basic understanding of the reasons for democratic decision making, and of citizenship within a global context. Purposeful citizenship refers to a citizen's ability of self-identifying his personal sense of civic identity and purpose, and understanding the diversity of beliefs and values of other individuals and groups. Active citizenship represents the ability to collaborate effectively when participating in group inquiries and community activities, as well as demonstrating knowledge of different types of citizenship participation and involvement.

Social media as catalyst for civic engagement

The evolution of information technologies and the rise of the Internet has enable the emergence of new means of manifestation of civic engagement. Communities and associations are no longer dependent of spatial proximity, ideas are shared through networks of online information, in addition to offline participation. New and diverse forms of communication appear, influenced by new technologies, and social sedia is one of them.

The term „social media" is, certainly, very vast. The way it integrates, like an umbrella-concept, many forms of online communication generated a diversity of definitions. Lon Safko and David K. Brake offer a general definition of social media – the totality of activities, practices and behaviors of groups and communities of the online medium, more precisely those activities and practices that generate and broadcast information through Web 2.0. Safko and Brake use the term „conversational media" to describe those elements of Web 2.0 that facilitate the creation of informational content, traditionally known as User Generated Content: words, images, video and audio sequences or combinations of all (Safko & Brake: 2009, p. 6). We can assimilate to this description aplications such as YouTube or Flickr, that allow the interactive transfer of videos, images and posting comments on those materials, interactive encyclopedias (Wikipedia) or blogging platforms such as Wordpress. However, Safko and Brake consider the social networking

sites, such as MySpace, Twitter and Facebook, as the most significant representants of the social media concept.

Boyd and Ellison (2007, p. 1) define social networking sites as "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system." In other words, social networking allows the individual to articulate online his offline social connections. While this definition doesn't convey the relationship between social networking sites and civic engagement, it outlines the basic functions that allow for civic action to be directed through these sites. Analyzing social networking sites, Ellison, Lampe and Steinfield (2009) identified two more usage trends, beyond their main function of managing and connecting users' social networks. First, there is the need of discovering information about the others; the public identity information displayed in user profiles functions as an area of commonality with acquaintances, lowering interaction barriers. Second, social networking usage mobilizes action. Social network sites can assist in coordinating and mobilizing offline social action and adding a new layer of engagement to pre-existing civic engagement structures.

Briggs (2008) analyzes social media through the Tocquevillean perspective of civic life in the United States. He points out that the pre-social media internet of the 1990's is closer to the role Tocqueville attributed to the newspaper: a decentralized method of spreading information without the need of physical interaction. Social media, with its collaborative frame, easy-access tools that allow users to become content creators and the ability to easier maintaining relationships, is closer to Tocqueville's description of the American township. Users do not just relay information from one to another, but also become more actively involved in organized group activities through social media use.

Social media usage for civic and political purposes has become more pronounced in the past five years. Civic engagement movements in support of emergent democratic systems have demonstrated a predilection for social media use in support of their objectives. Analyzing social media in relation to the 2009 Guatemalan protests against the alleged government sanctioned murder of journalist Rodrigo Rosenberg, Harlow (2011, p. 14) indicates that the topical subframe of most online comments about the movement was protest-related and the functional subframe a call for

action, illustrating that the online component of the movement was focused on generating offline participation. Using Facebook as the main communication tool, users posted comments to mobilize an online and offline movement, organize protests, showcase photos of protests, and actively show their support for the movement.

However, it was Moldova's 2009 protests, triggered by accusations of rigging elections by the ruling Communist Party, that decisively attracted the attention of media and analysts on the relationship between social media and civic engagement. Morozov (2009) points out a few specifics regarding Twitter's role in the Moldovan social movement. First, while Twitter usage inside the country is rather low, Moldovans abroad played an important role by participating in the protests remotely, via Twitter. Second, the choice of Twitter played itself an important part, as it is one of the most used social networking sites. Third, the use of Twitter has been *limited* to mobilization of some local supporters and raising international awareness. It didn't really help much in coordinating actions of people who were protesting in the square, in part because they were offline.

Dubbed by some commentators "the Twitter revolution", the movement was characterized by "the involvement – sometimes far from the centre of Chişinău, in front of a computer connected to the internet – of a group of educated young people and of ascending professionals capable to use new media and communicate within the networks with their peers and with the representatives of the general public" (Negură: 2010, p. 102).

Tunisia and Egypt's social movements of 2011, soon followed by fellow Arab states, challenged the repressive, anti-democratic nature of their respective regimes. Social media, along with online bloggers and mobile telephony, all played an important role in communicating the events and coordinating the movement, while at the same time providing an information alternative to the state controlled national media. Noticeably, Arab youth adoption of social media represented a key factor in its usage as a civic platform.

Addressing the issue of civic engagement through social media usage, Cottle (2011, p. 650) argues that "Young people, plugged into western media and immersed in wider cultural flows that normalize democratic practices and civil rights as well as conspicuous consumption, have become an established communications backdrop in much of the

Arab world notwithstanding the tensions and contradictions this poses to 'embattled' religious authorities and patriarchal structures of domination."

Research methodology

Research questions

The study's objective was the analysis of the connection between civic engagement and the role played by social media, specifically the social networking site Twitter, during the social movements in Moldova (April 2009) and Egypt (January 2011).

Two research questions were designed in order to reach the proposed objective:

RQ1: Taking into consideration Briggs' (2008) analysis of online engagement, are Egypt and Moldova's Twitter messages more likely to be classified as a form of newspaper, or township council?

RQ2: What kinds of engagement topical categories are identifiable in the two social movements' Twitter messages?

Research method

In order to understand the phenomenon of civic engagement through social media, we used the research method of content analysis. The analysis focused on Twitter, as it has been the main social media platform in Moldova and one of the most important platforms, besides Facebook and blogs, in Egypt. Messages from the main Twitter hashtags (community-content tags) used by the two movements, #pman (Moldova) and #jan25 (Egypt), were taken into consideration as units for the analysis. The time frame during which the hashtags were analyzed corresponds with the two movements' offline peak: April 7 to April 12, 2009 in Moldova and January 25 to February 6, 2011 in Egypt. A convenience sample of 100 messages/day was selected for the study.

The first research question followed Briggs' (2008) classification of online engagement through Toqueville's perspective: either as a form of information disseminator (newspaper), or as a form of township council.

In order to do so, the Twitter messages were coded into four thematic frames, two for each form of classification: an agency frame (participation or inciting action), a values frame (high-level abstraction ideals of justice, democracy, national security, patriotism, familial safety, or good of the community), an adversarial frame (portraying the movement as good versus evil, or specifying heroes and villains), a reflective frame (discussions of antecedents, consequences, or media coverage) (Noakes and Johnston: 2005). The agency and values frame are closer in their description to the roles and functions of the township. Reflective and adversarial frame, with their narrative and informative attributes, are closer to Tocqueville's definition of the newspaper. Messages that couldn't be included in either category were classified as "other".

The second research question focused on the engagement topical categories identifiable in the Twitter feeds, expanding on Harlow's topical categories concerning the Guatemalan social media protests (2011): call to action/protest, informational – media sources, informational – personal, informational – concerning Internet access, anti-president/government, solidarity with movement, government censorship, related to other movements, comments on media coverage and other.

Research limitations

The main limitation for the analysis of the Egyptian Twitter messages was the language barrier, as none of the authors were fluent in Arabic and a considerable part of the analyzed messages were written in that language. Therefore, the Arabic language messages included in the research were classified in the "Other" category. Further study of these messages is recommended, provided an English translation.

Also, the medium itself could be considered limitative. Twitter is but a part of the social media phenomenon, with its specific way of engaging individuals, as a text-based micro-blogging platform. Other components of social media, such as Facebook, blogs, LinkedIn etc., have different tools for interaction and user content creation, as well as different usage reasons. Due to those factors, the results of this study cannot be extended towards social media as a whole, even if they do offer an in-depth look of Twitter usage for civic engagement purposes.

Data analysis

Results for RQ 1

The content analysis showed that 50% of the Moldovan messages within the sample fell into the reflective frame category (discussions of antecedents, consequences, or media coverage), while 16% were classified as „other", 13,25 % agency frame (participating or inciting action), 10% values frame and 9,83% adversarial frame, as seen in figure 1.

Thematic frames Twitter Moldova

50%   16%   13,25%   10%   9,83%

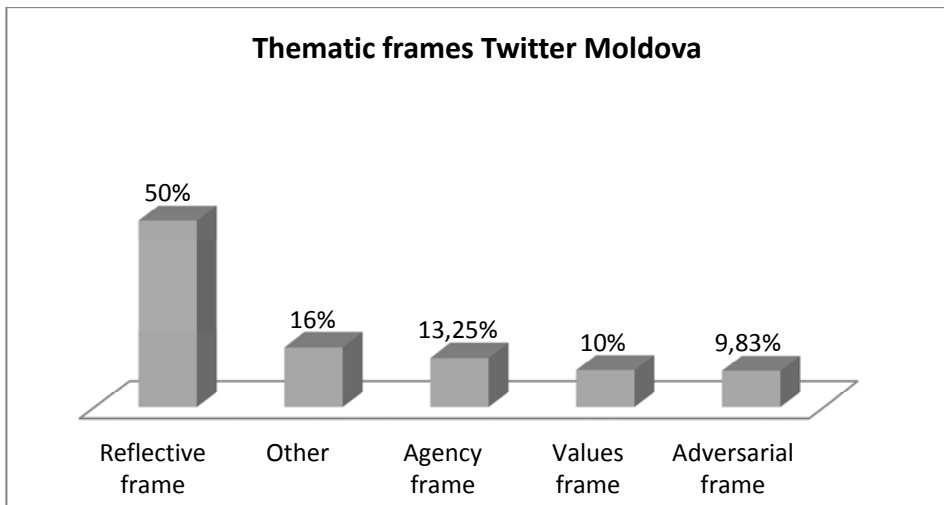Reflective frame   Other   Agency frame   Values frame   Adversarial frame

Figure 1 Frequencies Moldova (%)

Daily percentages show that messages within the reflective frame were highest on the April 9 and 10, with 88% and 84%, respectively. Agency frame messages had their highest percentage on April 8, the second day of protests, with 22,5%. Adversarial and values frame, although with lower percentages, had their peak on April 11 and April 12, respectively, both with 18,5%. Overall, an inverse-proportional relationship can be noticed between agency and reflective frames – with action-inciting messages stronger in the first days of protest, and a considerable increase of reflective messages in the third and fourth day (see Figure 2).

Day	Agency frame	Reflective frame	Values frame	Adversarial frame	Other
07.apr	12,50%	47%	11%	10,50%	19%
08.apr	22,50%	26,50%	14%	13,50%	23,50%
09.apr	6%	88%	2,50%	0,50%	3%
10.apr	5,50%	84%	3%	3,50%	4%
11.apr	19%	29%	13%	18,50%	20,50%
12.apr	14%	26,50%	18,50%	12,50%	28,50%

Figure 2 Daily percentages thematic frames Moldova

Egypt's Twitter messages have a similar configuration, however the reflective frame frequency is higher than the Moldovan counterpart, with 74,35%. Messages who couldn't be coded in any frame have a frequency of 15,1%. This category included tweets in Arabic or other foreign languages that the authors didn't master (i.e. German, Spanish), information not directly related to protests (such as "thank you for your support" tweets) and information completely unrelated to the protests, but included in the message trends. Agency, adversarial and values frames percentages were lower than those in Moldova.
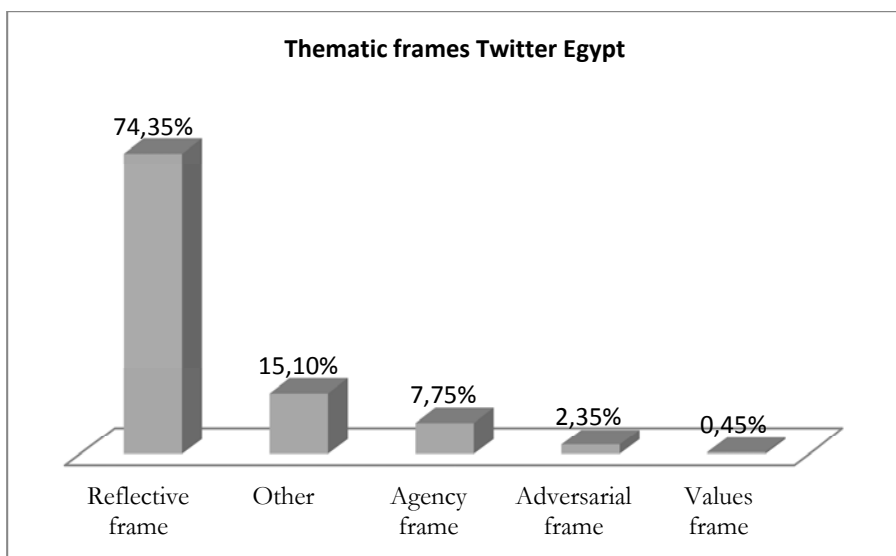

Figure 3 Frequencies Egypt (%)

As for daily percentages, the same inverse-proportional relationship between action-inciting and informative frames as in the Moldovan Twitter posts was identified: agency and values frame were higher during the first two day of protests, while reflective frame was higher starting from the third day of protests.

Day	Reflective frame	Values frame	Agency frame	Adversarial frame	Other
25 jan	68,00%	1,00%	18,50%	3,00%	9,50%
26 jan	48,50%	1,50%	10,50%	3,50%	36%
29 jan	83%	0,50%	5,50%	1,50%	9,50%
30 jan	72,50%	0%	10,50%	0,50%	16,50%
31 jan	76%	0%	8%	1,50%	14,50%
01.feb	80%	1%	2%	0,50%	16,50%
02.feb	74,50%	0,50%	8%	7,50%	9,50%
03.feb	79,50%	0%	5,50%	3%	12%
04.feb	81%	0%	6%	0,50%	12,50%
05.feb	80,50%	0%	3,00%	2,00%	14,50%

Figure 4 Daily percentages thematic frames Egypt

Results for RQ 2

Content analysis of engagement topical categories for the Moldovan #pman hashtag showed that informative content was predominant, with 29,5% of the messages falling in the informative – media sources category, followed by informational – personal, with 25,67%. The only informational topic that scored less than 5% was the one concerning internet access during the media blackout – only 2%. Information classifiable as "other" (unrelated to any topic) amounted at 23,08%. Topical categories related to direct action and debating consequences and causes of the protests had the lowest frequency percentage, 5% or less.
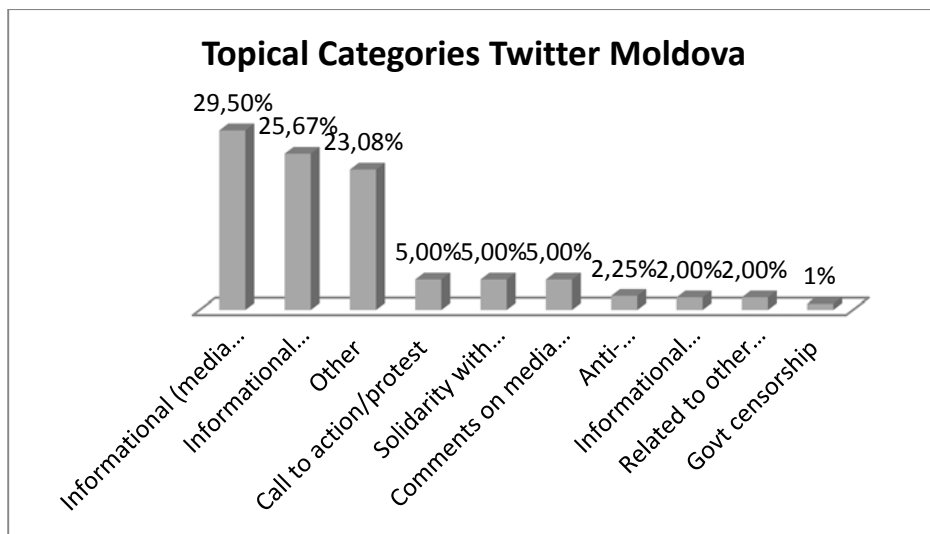
Figure 5 Frequencies Moldova (%)

Conveying information was the main topical category of the Egypt messages as well, either by relaying media links or quotes (35,05%), or by relating events as they happened from the demonstrations (26,95%). 19,7% of the messages were classified as "other", however it should be noted that, in the case of the Egyptian tweets, the language barrier contributed to some of these messages being classified as such, being in Arabic, without translation. Call to action/protest messages amounted to 4,7%, almost the same percentage as in Moldova. Informational – concerning internet access scored the lowest, with 1,4%.
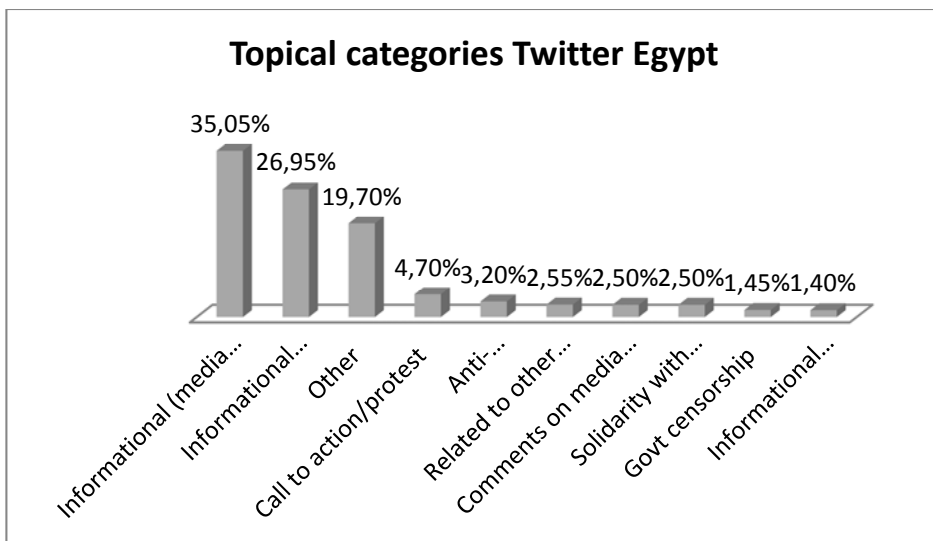
Figure 6 Frequencies Egypt (%)

Discussion

In relation to RQ1, the content analysis results indicate that the messages from both Twitter hashtags are predominantly classifiable within the reflective frame (50% #pman - Moldova, 74,35% #25jan – Egypt). As stated in the research method section, the reflective and adversarial frame, with their narrative and informative attributes, are closer to Tocqueville's definition of the newspaper. Although the adversarial statements had a smaller percentage (2,35% in Egypt, slightly higher in Moldova – 9,83%), together with the reflective frame messages constitute the majority.

The results suggest Twitter had primarily an informative function during the two social movements. Reported to RQ1, these results reveal that civic engagement during Moldova and Egypt's social movements is predominantly classifiable as a form of newspaper. The social media tool was used to spread information about the recent developments of the protests. An important characteristic of the messages within the reflective frame is the adaptation of the user's speech to closely mirror journalistic speech. A large number of reflective tweets in the #jan25 hashtag used the "Breaking" or "Breaking news" expression in the beginning of a message which was considered important information-wise. To exemplify, a tweet

dated January 30 states: "*Breaking: Al Jazeera Arabic issues new coordinates for NileSat: 10949 Vertical FEC 3/4 Tell others now*". Likewise, some reflective messages were structured as flash news, like in this example: "*the villagers of Corjeuti are being guarded by soldiers with AK47-s, nobody is allowed to leave - commies block people from leaving*". Adversarial tweets conveyed their "good versus evil" content by using descriptive phrases similar to journalistic titles. One of the Egyptian adversarial tweets stated: "*Unbelievable video of Egyptian protesters staring down a police water cannon http://t.co/ALhOC7F*". This is but an example of the Twitter users increased proficiency in a journalistic approach of their messages during the two social movements.

Overall, the analysis of RQ1 parameters reveals some new information regarding the thematic frames used to code the two forms of engagement, in report with previous studies. Unlike Harlow's study (2011) of Guatemalan social media civic movements, which revealed the agency frame (related to participating or inciting action) to be predominant, Moldova and Egypt Twitter messages were preponderantly reflective. Although this might suggest a contradiction between the two sets of research data regarding civic engagement through the use of social media, we consider that the results suggest a specialization of social media tools usage for civic purposes. While this study analyzed Twitter usage, the Guatemalan social movement used primarily Facebook. Twitter, being a text-based micro-blogging website, facilitates by design an informative, reflective, almost journalistic approach of user generated content, making it closer to Tocqueville's definition of the newspaper. Facebook, being a more complex and engaging social networking site, were text, pictures and videos all interact to offer the user a constantly updated virtual interface of its various social networks, is more prone to call for action messages. This type of active, person-to-groups social interaction brings Facebook closer to the township form of engagement first identified by Tocqueville. This specialization of social media tools usage constitutes a direction for future research, which could be applied to movements where Facebook and Twitter were used in conjunction, such as the ones in Egypt and Tunisia.

The results for RQ2 enforce the premise that Twitter is primordially an informative tool for engagement. Two informational topical categories ("media links and sources", personal) had the highest percentage for both social movements. This comes to at least partially confirm Morozov's statement that Moldova's "Twitter Revolution" has been limited to mobilization of some local supporters and raising

international awareness, but didn't really help much in coordinating actions of people already on the square (2009).

Extending this argument to both movements, data from the content analysis does indeed show that the primary goal of the Twitter messages was awareness, accomplished through the use of informative topics. Media links and quotes, as well as personal accounts from the protests posted by users, indicate that Twitter's main functions were to convey information and activate support for the two hashtags. Another topic, "solidarity with movement", although with lower percentages, was mostly present in the second part of the protests' timeline, indicating international support and awareness as result of initial informative efforts by participants in the movements.

However, "call to action/protest", which is essentially a mobilizing topic, was the fourth ranking for both movements. Its percentages were also significantly lower (5% in Moldova, 4,7% in Egypt), suggesting a lesser effectiveness in rallying support for the causes, contradicting the mobilization function implied by Morozov's study.

Conclusions

Overall, data resulting from both research questions point towards several conclusions. First, the prominence of informative topics points out that Twitter is still in the "newspaper" (as defined by Tocqueville) phase of online civic engagement. Twitter is primarily used to inform in a decentralized manner about the latest developments of social movements. It doesn't have the attributes of a Tocquevillean township, partially because its format simplifies interaction to text-based communication. The impact of the format upon engagement could constitute a potential direction for future research

Second, the usage reasons and topical categories of the two social movements are quite similar. This implies an equal degree of "social media literacy" in both countries, and a potential for future coordination of offline movements through social media tools in the years to come.

In both countries, Twitter usage showed another important aspect of social media's impact. Individuals that posted messages concerning both movements showed a certain degree of proficiency in the journalistic

discourse. Three elements specific to journalistic discourse are identifiable in the two movements' messages: 1. Users managed their information flow, removing irrelevant information and broadcasting only information they considered to be meaningful in the context of the protests; 2. The speech used in the tweets mimicked, to a certain degree, journalistic reporting. This is particularly relevant in the messages falling in the "informational – personal" topical category (e.g. - "*Breaking: Al Jazeera Arabic issues new coordinates for NileSat: 10949 Vertical FEC 3/4 Tell others now*"). Other messages mimicked press headlines ("*Unbelievable video of Egyptian protesters staring down a police water cannon http://t.co/ALhOC7F*"); 3. Users cited their sources in their tweets. This implies that Twitter can be used as a platform for citizen journalism.

The image resulted from this study is reductible to only a small part of the social media phenomenon, Twitter. However, the findings show an increasing usage of Twitter, as a social media tool, for civic purposes, an aspect of social media that is imperative to be further studied.

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