

## **Citizens Beyond Troika: Media and Anti-Austerity Protests in Portugal**

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The evolution of Portuguese civil society after the postrevolution period (1974) is framed in a normalization of the concept of democracy, significantly reducing civic participation. In a period of severe austerity (2011–14), civic and social movements emerged strongly in Portuguese society and organized protests throughout the country and abroad. Anchored to the values of the Carnation Revolution, civil society took to the streets to claim the end of austerity. In September 2012, the government withdrew one of the proposed austerity measures after a million demanded it in the largest demonstration since the time of the April Revolution. This article analyzes and discusses the representations of the protests and activists in mainstream digital media and how social movements used Facebook to engage with different publics and promote civic participation.

*Keywords: social movements, civic participation, social media, Facebook, media coverage*

The digital media ecosystem evolved into a “hybrid public space” (Castells, 2012). Changes in the media environment and a collaborative perspective promoted by Internet empower shared consumptions of information. Furthermore, it also enhances the distribution of content through alternative media by “prosumers.” Within this new media environment, more than a means to organize social movements, social media (e.g., Twitter) and online social networks (e.g., Facebook) are tools for disseminating information that can take the form of a facilitator of change because it fosters communication channels to promote actions in networks.

One of the intersections between micro- and macropolitics relies upon audience action, which depends on the use of technology. Bimber (2017) notes that the digital media environment is, itself, a change in the context for action. Therefore, it increases opportunities for action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Kavada, 2016).

The anti-austerity protest cycle (Accornero & Pinto, 2015; Fonseca, 2018) in Portugal is contextualized in the waves of mobilization of the world protests motivated by the severe economic crisis. This fact originated the escalation of different forms of contentious politics (Accornero & Pinto, 2015). Although collective action and social movements are weak in Portugal (Fonseca, 2018; Nunes, 2014), the European Social Survey shows that the percentage of participation in demonstrations increased significantly

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from 3.7 in 2008 to 6.8 in 2012 (Accornero & Pinto, 2015). The contemporary protest space is hybrid (Campos, Pereira, & Simões, 2016), resulting from actions in online social networks and street demonstrations (Estanque, Costa, & Soeiro, 2013). The number of demonstrations in the city of Lisbon rose from 244 in 2010 to 298 in 2011 and 579 in 2012 (Accornero & Pinto, 2015).

In 2011, Portuguese civil society activists started to organized massive public demonstrations. In March, more than 1 million people have mobilized all over the world to protest against the situation of the young unemployed. In 2012, the Portuguese government announced a harsh austerity measure to apply to all workers. The population took to the streets to protest, and the government withdrew the bill.

Portuguese mobilizations can be understood as part of a bigger picture of worldwide protests (Baumgarten, 2013), mainly by the connection through the digital agora. Independent protest events and social movements platforms emerged on alternative media (online social networks, social media, Web logs, and forums). Although the impact of social media on democracy and public debate is high on the agenda, mainstream digital media still retain the role of gatekeepers for society in general. Based on the assumption that the media dilutes the events into their narratives (Ricoeur, 1986), modeling them through news frames (Goffmann, 1974), the mainstream digital media builds representations of events, making them social constructions dependent on their media coverage. However, the current configuration of media space calls other participants to the process to the gatekeeping process (Singer, 2013), in a democratization of the practices that Couldry (2010) defined as “voice as process” (i.e., the recognition of publics’ ability to influence public debate and political action). Previous research shows that this cycle of protest created new forms of collective mobilization in the country using online social networks (Campos et al., 2016; Estanque et al., 2013; Fonseca, 2018), which was validated by the media (Accornero & Pinto, 2015).

Considering the demonstrations in Portugal in 2011–13, this article aims to understand the representations of the protests and activists in mainstream digital media and how social movements used Facebook to disseminate their message and promote civic participation. I hypothesize that civic engagement with social movements stems from mainstream digital media representations of their discourses and protagonists. As such, this article departs from the following research questions:

*RQ1: How do social movements use Facebook to disseminate their discourses and promote social mobilization?*

*RQ2: Does mainstream digital media coverage reframe the public debate?*

To put it forward, this study analyzes the most significant demonstrations in Portugal between 2011 and 2013 (March 12, 2011, September 15, 2012, and March 2, 2013) during the anti-austerity protest cycle through (a) media representations in the Portuguese daily newspapers *Diário de Notícias* and *Público*, (b) Facebook pages from the two main Portuguese social movements (12M—formerly *Geração à Rasca*—and *Que se Lixe a Troika*).

The article starts by discussing how digital activism turned collective action into digital network action within social movements and contentious politics. The second and thirds sections introduce social

movements in Portugal and the anti-austerity protest cycle. The subsequent sections present the empirical study, along with the discussion of results and final conclusions.

### **Digital Activism: From Collective Action to Digitally Networked Actions on Facebook**

As technology is shaping the structure and identity of social movements (Loader, 2008; Murru, Amaral, Brites, & Seddighi, 2018), publics have the chance to channel their ideas through Internet behaviors (Hwang, Schmierbach, Paek, Gil de Zúñiga, & Shah, 2006). When theorizing about the notion of civic participation, several authors emphasized the rising of individualized engagement and new styles of citizenship induce by technological, social, and economic changes (Barnidge, Macafee, Alvarez, & Rojas, 2014; Bennett, 2008; Bennett & Segerberg, 2011). Citizenship and engagement in individualistic terms (Barnidge et al., 2014) is a direct consequence of different (online and off-line) communication patterns that influence individuals to have particular behaviors toward civic involvement.

Digital activism began with the uprising of the Zapatista movement in 1994. What was initially a local struggle for more rights and the autonomy of the indigenous people of Chiapas became a global network of solidarity that echoed the protests (Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010). The first appropriations of social media as a tool of dissemination of political uprising were #moldova and #iranelection, regarding the demonstrations in Moldova and Iran in 2009 (Amaral, 2016). It is important to understand the role of social media and online social networks as platforms for activism. For instance, in the case of the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street, the role played by Facebook seems to have been a tool for disseminating information and promoting civic participation. Therefore, this idea contrasts with the belief that the social platform was used to organize the protests (Amaral, 2014). Online social networks and social media sites are intermediate spaces that are not disconnected from the off-line world. However, despite the fact that technologies reinforce so-called social media activism, individual action and the expression of the self can be observed more frequently (Amaral, 2016). Therefore, digital activism "collapses the distinction between political communication and political action, as the communication itself becomes a form of activism" (Miller, 2017, p. 4). Digital platforms do not need a collective identity or formal organization to bring together individuals toward causes (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

When considered from a collective perspective, Bakardjieva (2015) notes that identity is a critical element of contention. In fact, the theorists of the "new social movements" conceptualize the issue of "collective identity" within an approach intrinsically linked to the idea of "collective action" (Nunes, 2014), mainly in structuralist and poststructuralist models (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). Anchored to Touraine's (1985) theory, Melucci (1995, 1996) considers that collective action results from a constructed orientation within social relations that take place in a system of possibilities and constraints.

In the context of contentious action, Cammaerts (2012) proposes the logic of "mediation opportunity structure" to explain the integration of social movements in the digital world. The author defines this structure as "semi-independent from the political opportunity structure, and comprised of the media opportunity structure, the discursive opportunity structure and the networked opportunity structure" (p. 119). In this regard, Bakardjieva (2015) notes that the continuous transformations in communication technologies and practices have profoundly affected the mediation opportunity structures that contemporary

social movements envisage as protagonists. From the technologies of the self, Cammaerts (2015) conceptualized "technologies of self-mediation" to "theorize the interplay between the affordances and constraints of social media for protests movements and activist" (p. 88). Furthermore, "Internet-mediated participation" and "ICT-mediated resistance practices" (Cammaerts, 2012) of collective subjects rely on "technologies of self-mediation," which may enable social movements to become self-conscious (Cammaerts, 2015).

Large-scale action networks based on the Internet (Amaral, 2016; Bennett & Segerberg, 2012) are prominent in contentious politics (Murru et al., 2018) and can transform the traditional conceptualization of social movement into organized connective individual actions. Digital media encourages "individualized forms of political action" (Kavada, 2016, p. 8). Therefore, it transforms the concept of collective action as well as the traditional definitions of the political agency (Kavada, 2016).

In the contemporary era, the process of individualization is articulated in personalized action formations (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). Micheletti (2003) proposes that the concept of individualized collective action is more spontaneous than the collectivist collective action, which is reflected in participation and implies involvement (Micheletti, 2003; Murru et al., 2018). As the interaction between micro- and macroparticipation, social movements are a consequence of a collective action and also of individual participation (Brites et al., 2018). Indeed, contemporary societies are characterized by "structural fragmentation and individualization" (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, p. 743). This shift in the social and political engagement of individuals can be enabled by communication technologies, resulting in "digitally network actions."

The rise of digitally networked action relies on the intersection between personal action frames, which are individualized orientations that express personal expectations and grievances (van Haperen, Nicholls, & Uitermark, 2018), and social media networks (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). Therefore, collection and connective actions can be associated with different social dynamics within social media and online social networks. The "logic of collective action" is anchored in classical theories focused on organizations and their capacity to gather resources to promote action among the individuals that support a common cause (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). The emerging alternative model of the "logic of connective connection" reflects new forms of collective action that arise with digital tools (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012), and emphasizes the sharing of personal action frames instead of collective action frames (van Haperen et al., 2018).

The impact of connective action networks can be explicit in promoting social movements from a micro rather than a macro perspective of participation. As "individualized collective action" (Micheletti, 2003) is materialize in "digitally network actions," the idea arises that the digital environment enhances new types of social movements (Castells, 2012).

### **Social Movements in Portugal: From the Carnation Revolution to a Weak Civil Society**

The collective protest action in Portugal derives from the Revolution of April of 1974 (also called the Carnation Revolution), which ended with the dictatorship of Estado Novo (1926–1974). The evolution of civil society postrevolution went through different stages of dependent political instability and socioeconomic conditions. The years of transition to democracy record "high levels of participation, a wave of associational

formation, the birth of social movements and the generalization of protest" (Fernandes, 2015, p. 1077). Gradually, participatory democracy has taken its place in the renewal of the country's social and political life (Mendes & Seixas, 2005). This progressive democratization of the state postrevolution allowed the democratization spaces where political discourse, civic and vindicating, is stated (Pinto, 2006).

Considered a weak civil society (Baumgarten, 2013) with little autonomy in the exercise of citizenship within an analytical frame of action structure (Santos, 1995), Portugal relies on autonomy and strong ties in the so-called community space where bonds extended the actions of protest (Mendes & Seixas, 2005).

Barreto (2004) notes the four decades of democracy in Portugal have shown a normalizing perspective of democracy (i.e., democracy that has simple rules and is not based on the imperative of participation; Mendes & Seixas, 2005). This is indeed a shared theory: Cabral (2000) found a distance between society and political power. His thesis connects to the country's total disinvestment in education, until 1960. This idea loses strength with the current reality, in which the country has invested in education.

Considering that spontaneous participation is not frequent in Portugal, Barreto (2004) registers two contradictory processes: an increase and development of political activity, electoral participation, trade unionism, and associations, and a decrease in traditional forms of voluntary and local-based cultural and social involvement (Barreto, 2004; Mendes & Seixas, 2005).

### **Anti-Austerity Protests in Portugal**

In 2011, civil society activists started to organized massive public protests. The mobilizations were against austerity measures and demanded participatory and deliberative democracy. The mainstream digital media coverage was extensive, and new actors of the civil society used social media. In a logic of complex interaction between social movements and different types of civic participation, Portugal began a broader cycle of intense protest in March 2011 that lasted until 2013 (see Campos et al., 2016). However, and as Baumgarten (2013) points out, "Portuguese mobilizations starting in 2011 are to be seen as part of a larger picture of worldwide protests" (p. 459).

Several activist groups and platforms were part of the organizational structure of the demonstrations during 2011–13. Baumgarten (2013) divided these groups into "(a) 'classic' activist groups, primarily fighting for specific, more or less already defined rights; and (b) groups promoting predominantly civil society participation and public debate; groups that do not have fixed goals but prefer openness, the construction of 'alternatives' and a joint process of finding solutions" (p. 462).

International inspirations, such as the Arab Spring, were evident. Direct links to Spanish movements such as Indignados and Democracia Real Ya have been taken over by activists (see Baumgarten, 2013). In fact, the slogan "Spain! Greece! Ireland! Portugal! Our struggle is international!" was present in the 2011 and 2012 demonstrations.

The first demonstration against austerity took place on March 12, 2011. The protest movement was called *Geração à Rasca* ("The Desperate Generation") and was "nonpartisan, secular and peaceful." It was the first demonstration in the country to be organized by civil society activists. The *Geração à Rasca* manifesto was published as an event on Facebook and encouraged participation in a demonstration of the "unemployed, '500 euros generation' and other poorly paid, disguised slaves, subcontractors, term contract employees, false self-employed, intermittent workers, trainees, research fellows, student workers, mothers, fathers and children of Portugal" (2011, para. 1) The protest filled the main avenue of Lisbon, and estimates for the number of people present range between 200,000 and 300,000. There were demonstrations in 11 other Portuguese cities and abroad. On April 15, 2011, the organizers of the *Geração à Rasca* protest created the movement 12M. From 2013, the movement integrates the *Plataforma Academia Cidadã* ("Citizen Academy Platform"). Between March 12, 2011 and September 15, 2012, there were increasingly intense protests in Portugal (see Baumgarten, 2013; Baumgarten & Díez García, 2017; Estanque et al., 2013).

The economic crisis worsened in 2012 with the financial rescue of the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank, and the European Commission. "Troika" was the name by which the three entities became known. Campos et al. (2016) explain that the protests "emerge as a significant turning point in public participation landscape relatively insignificant, inaugurating what may be called" a new containment cycle "characterized by a new political opportunity structure" (p. 28). In this regard, Baumgarten (2013) argues that these mobilizations assume as antecedents "protest against the involvement of the International Monetary Fund in Portugal in 1983, against Portugal joining the European Union in 1986 and mobilization of the global justice movement (GJM) after 1999 including the Social Forums" (p. 460).

In the summer of 2012, the Portuguese government announced severe austerity measures that were to apply to all workers. On September 15, the population went to the streets to protest, and the government withdrew the proposals. It was the largest demonstration since the Carnation Revolution in 1974. A small group of activists from different political and ideological backgrounds created the *Que se Lixe a Troika* ("Screw the Troika") movement and named the demonstration on September 15 "Screw the Troika, we want our lives!" The group's manifesto stated that "criminal austerity at the behest of the Troika and its Governments is unconcerned about each and every one of us, about the structure of our society, about our rights, our schools, our hospitals, our water, our culture, our art, our whole life" (2012, para. 2) The message of the movement was clear, objective, and transversal to the whole society, and it called on all social, age, and professional classes to demonstrate against austerity policies. The growing protest movement that began on March 12, 2011, gave rise to an unprecedented protest in Portugal, with different generations on the street in a total break with the policies proposed by the government, which days later withdrew the measures.

The protests continued in Portugal after the September 2012 demonstration. In October 2012, police suppressed demonstrators outside the Parliament. It was the first time that police acted against the protests. After that, *Que se Lixe a Troika* decided to shorten their manifestations and addressed members of the government directly. These small protests posted on Facebook continued until the 2015 legislative elections.

The last significant manifestation of this cycle occurred on March 2, 2013. Hundreds of thousands of Portuguese returned to the streets to protest austerity. This protest extended, like the previous ones, to several cities inside and outside the country. Again, people of all generations and social classes took to the streets. In the protest of 2011, the song "Que parva que sou" ("How Stupid I Am"), by the band Deolinda, was the motto used by the younger generations to protest against the precariousness. In the demonstrations of March 2013, the emblematic music of the April Revolution, "Grandôla, Vila Morena," by the singer and revolutionary Zeca Afonso, was echoed by hundreds of thousands of people.

Portugal has high rate of social media use<sup>1</sup>—predominantly Facebook and YouTube, although specific groups of activists have also used Twitter. After the March 12, 2011, demonstration, the level of mobilization by civil society actors increased. As the Internet is becoming a world of mediated social interactions, where communication recontextualizes because of disaggregated distribution in different forms of streaming, Facebook and Twitter were the alternative media platforms most used by protest leaders in the Portuguese protests—mainly to mobilize people through events created on Facebook and to publish information, especially visual content (photos and videos), on social media like Twitter and YouTube. Ordinary citizens have mainly used Facebook. Without being connected to any protest group, active citizens have also interacted and published on Facebook and YouTube. The use of alternative media occurred mainly during the protest's events through social media. However, activists and other actors regularly updated social media profiles with content. The Internet was the main channel, although video streaming has also been used on the protest's events—predominantly in mobilizations in Lisbon and by the Que se Lixe a Troika movement.

The two social movements remain active and update their Facebook pages. They maintain public intervention and publish international solidarity messages, but have not returned to organizing massive public protests.

### Method

This article aims to answer the following research questions:

*RQ1: How do social movements use Facebook to disseminate their discourses and promote social mobilization?*

*RQ2: Does mainstream digital media coverage reframe the public debate?*

Therefore, the objectives of this article are to analyze (a) the representations of the protests and activists in mainstream digital media and (b) how social movements used Facebook to engage with different publics and promote civic participation. Relying on the theoretical framework, my hypothesis is that civic

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<sup>1</sup> According to the communication agency We Are Social, in January 2018, 6.60 million Portuguese (64% of the total population) were users of social media. Retrieved from <https://wearesocial.com/global-digital-report-2019>

engagement with social movements stems from mainstream digital media representations of their discourses and protagonists.

The empirical research focuses on quantitative and qualitative Web content analysis considering the significant demonstrations in Portugal between 2011 and 2013 (March 12, 2011, September 15, 2012, and March 2, 2013). I collected the data from the websites of two Portuguese daily newspapers (*Diário de Notícias* and *Público*) and Facebook pages from the two main Portuguese social movements (12M—formerly Geração à Rasca—and Que se Lixe a Troika) in the context of anti-austerity protests.

From the newspapers' websites, I collected all informative texts referring to the demonstrations or activists during the following periods: March 11, 2011–March 13, 2011; September 14, 2012–September 16, 2012; March 1, 2013–March 3, 2013. From social movements' Facebook pages, I collected all the posts (published by the pages or by users) for the following time periods: September 14, 2012–September 16, 2012; March 1, 2013–March 3, 2013. The only record on Facebook concerning the manifestation of March 12, 2011, is no longer online.

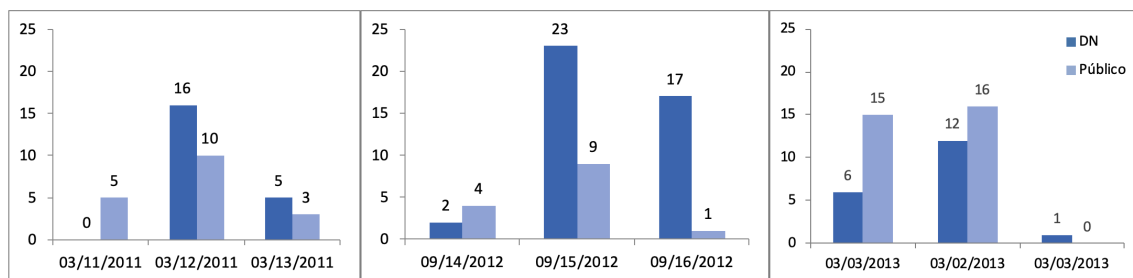
The methodological approach operationalized in this study was the content analysis, crossing the quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Data analysis was made using webQDA software.

## Results and Discussion

### *Portraits of Protests and Activists in Mainstream Digital Media*

The news articles under analysis are from daily newspapers of reference in Portugal. The study of the media coverage of the 2011–13 events involved the collection of data from all the news articles published on the websites of the newspapers *Diário de Notícias* ( $n = 82$ ) and *Público* ( $n = 63$ ).

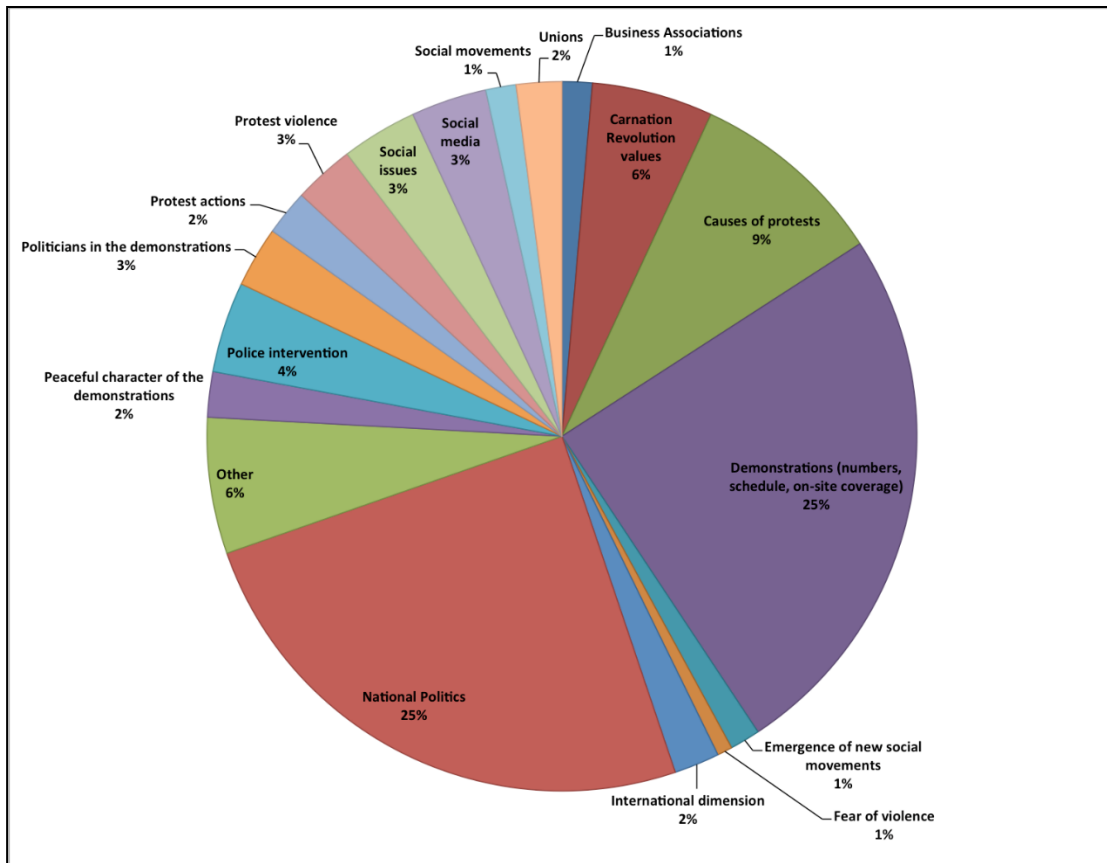
*Diário de Notícias* covered the demonstrations more consistently and had more intense reporting of the protest of September 15, 2012, as shown in Figure 1. *Público* produced more videos, photo galleries, and accompanied the demonstrations in the logic of breaking news. This explains the lower number of articles. *Público* had more significant coverage of the manifestation of March 2, 2013.



**Figure 1. Mainstream digital media coverage of the protests, 2011–13.**



Mainstream digital media report the data on demonstrations and political reactions (government and opposition), as shown in Figure 2. The media coverage of the first demonstration focuses on young people and political consequences. Activists are the main protagonists of the news. From the second manifestation, references to social media and the convening of events from Facebook are common. The perspective of collective action presents from the surprising numbers of demonstrations in the country and abroad. In this second moment of protest, activists are no longer the protagonists. This role is assumed by anonymous voices who have manifested themselves, politicians, and personalities of public life. Political analysis begins to anticipate the end of government. At the March 2013 demonstration, the media assume a perspective of an intergenerational protest. Being the most massive demonstration after police repression in October 2012, the press reported the fear of violence. The scenario of the manifestation is the continuity of a cycle of protest that will only end with the end of austerity.



**Figure 2. Topics in mainstream digital media coverage of the protests, 2011–13.**

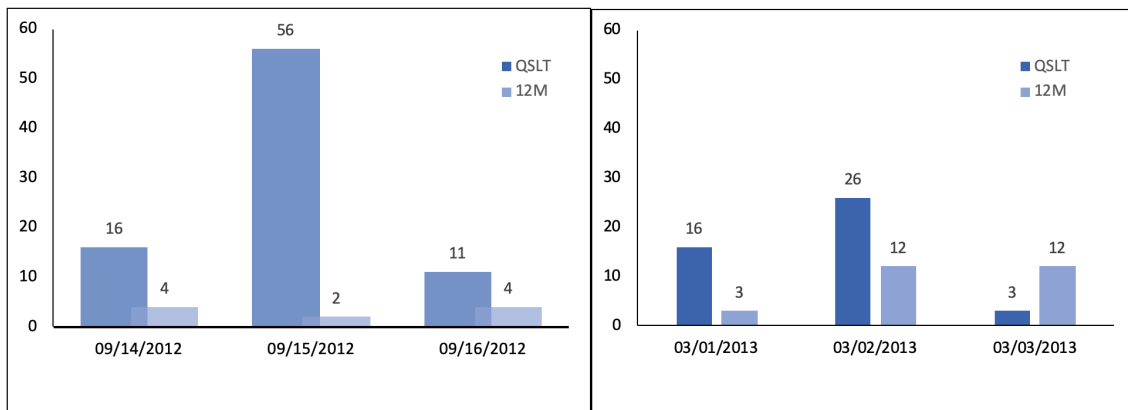
As Figure 2 demonstrates, mainstream digital media coverage reframes the public debate, which gave credibility to the demonstrations and promoted social mobilization. The public discussion started to focus on the alternatives to austerity, which lasted until the legislative elections of October 2015. Along with politicians, activists and anonymous voices have entered the public debate.

The results are in line with previous research developed by Accornero and Pinto (2015), who concluded that "movements such as Geração à Rasca and Que se Lixe a Troika have been the focus of media attention, which identifies them as a new form of civic and political engagement and as the principal civil society response to austerity measures" (p. 505).

### ***Facebook as Technology of Self-Mediation***

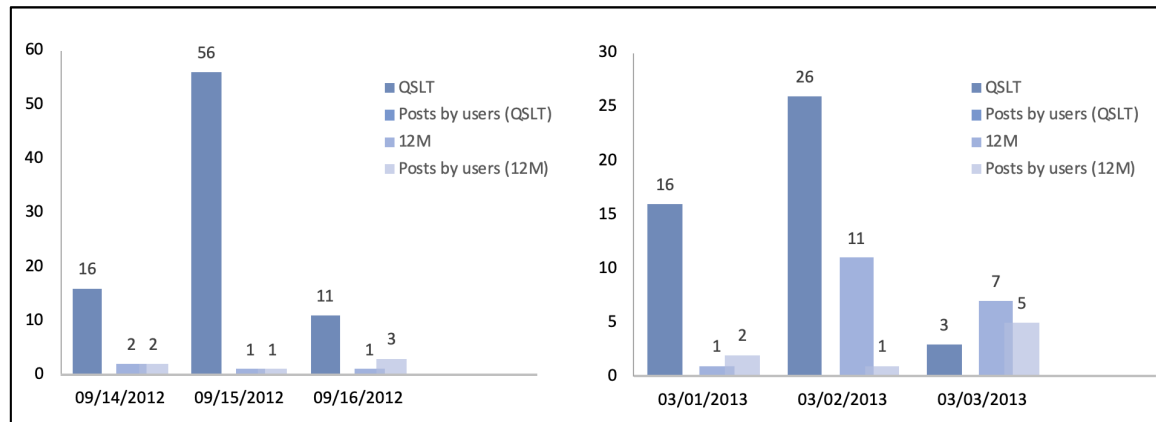
To understand how social movements used Facebook to disseminate their messages and narratives, I carried out a quantitative analysis of the contents of the posts published by Que se Lixe a Troika and 12M.

Que se Lixe a Troika posted intensively on Facebook ( $n = 128$ ) in the periods under analysis, mainly during the protest of September 15, 2012 ( $n = 83$ ). The Facebook page of 12M's showed remarkably reduced online participation ( $n = 37$ ), mostly in the manifestation of September 2012 ( $n = 10$ ), as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3. Facebook pages of social movements Que se Lixe a Troika (QSLT) and 12M during the periods in the analysis.**

Figure 4 shows the intensity Que se Lixe a Troika's posts, in particular on the days of the demonstrations (September 15, 2012; 43.8%; March 2, 2013; 20.3%). It is important to note that in none of the days in the analysis did users post the page. Concerning the 12M movement, the number of users' posts ( $n = 6$ ; 60%) is higher than that of 12M ( $n = 4$ ; 40%). The situation is reversed in the manifestation of March 2nd, 2013, with 12M making 70.4% of the posts.



**Figure 4. Publications on Facebook pages of social movements Que se Lixe a Troika (QSLT) and 12M during the periods in the analysis.**

As shown in Table 1, users often interacted on Que se Lixe a Troika's page, particularly in convening other events (at the meeting of the Council of State, for example) or sharing images and information about the demonstrations that were taking place in various cities in the country and abroad. I assess that there are more likes ( $n = 30,618$ ) than shares ( $n = 12,918$ ), but both practices have significant numbers. Comments are lower ( $n = 2,258$ ) compared with other figures of interactions. I also found that the number of likes and shares increases exponentially in the review period in March 2013, especially on the day of the rally (March 2, 2013). On that day, the number of likes in the posts on the Que Se Lixe a Troika's page was 14,411 and 669 in the posts on the 12M movement's page. The interaction on Que se Lixe a Troika's page focuses mainly on likes and shares, and comments decrease during this period, even without a significant difference between the days of the demonstrations of 2012 ( $n = 720$ ) and 2013 ( $n = 706$ ). It is also verified that the number of likes, shares, and comments in this page is not directly proportional to the number of posts, but rather to their content and typology, as shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 1 also shows that the interaction on 12M's page is much smaller. The number of comments is scarce ( $n = 135$ ), and the shares ( $n = 1,986$ ) are higher than the likes ( $n = 1,491$ ). I must highlight that user interaction intensified on March 2, 2013 (12 posts, 669 likes, 67 comments, 1,178 shares). It is also worth mentioning that on the day of the September 15, 2012, demonstration, no posts received any comments.

**Table 1. Publications and Engagement on Facebook Pages of Social Movements Que se Lixe a Troika and 12M During the Periods in the Analysis.**

Day	Que se Lixe a Troika				12M			
	Posts	Likes	Comments	Shares	Posts	Likes	Comments	Shares
Sept. 14	16	2,266	329	1,995	4	397	61	542
Sept. 15	56	6,967	720	1,749	2	53	0	41
Sept. 16	11	2,762	301	885	4	47	2	40
<i>N</i>	83	11,995	1,350	4,629	10	497	63	623
<i>M</i>	27.67	3998.33	450.00	1,543.00	3.33	1,65.67	21.00	207.67
<i>SD</i>	24.66	2582.87	234.25	582.97	1.15	200.36	34.66	289.54
March 1	16	2,971	170	1,894	3	20	0	26
March 2	26	14,411	706	5,849	12	669	67	1,178
March 3	3	1,241	32	546	12	305	5	159
<i>N</i>	45	18,623	908	8,289	27	994	72	1,363
<i>M</i>	15	6,207.67	302.67	2,763	9	331.33	24	454.33
<i>SD</i>	11.53	7,156.76	356.05	2,756.23	8.85	375.15	34.02	603.10

The results demonstrate that the use of Facebook refers to the concept of technologies of self-mediation (Cammaerts, 2015), in a logic in which self-organizing connective action networks (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012) operate. It follows that the focus is on networked individualism (Castells, 2003; Recuero, 2009), using technology as a way of disseminating information and propagating alternative discourses to the dominant ideology, but promoting individual actions that contribute to the social movement as a whole network (Bakardjieva, 2015). Thus, the objective is to generate microparticipation to spread the movement—the so-called individualized collective action (Micheletti, 2003).

### **Internet-Mediated Participation**

During the period in the analysis of September 2012, links are the type of content most posted on the pages of Que se Lixe a Troika and 12M (44.6% and 40%, respectively), as shown in Table 2. The total number of posts is substantially different ( $n = 83$  vs.  $n = 10$ ). Therefore, it is impossible to establish a direct comparison of engagement.

Results on the Que se Lixe a Troika page show that photos have the most likes (40.9%) and shares (51.2%). Links garner more comments (32.8%). Although posts are fewer in number ( $n = 3$ ;  $n = 7$ ), the total engagement ( $\Sigma = \text{likes} + \text{comments} + \text{shares}$ ) around events and videos is scarce. It is particularly noteworthy that seven video publications (845) resulted in an even smaller engagement than three event publications (1,127).

**Table 2. Type of Content Published and Engagement on Facebook Pages of Social Movements Que se Lixe a Troika and 12M in September 2012.**

	<i>N</i>	%	Likes	%	Comments	%	Shares	%
Que se Lixe a Troika								
Events	3	3.6	709	5.9	93	6.9	325	7
Links	37	44.6	3147	26.2	443	32.8	1,250	27
Photo	13	15.7	4,904	40.9	344	25.5	2,369	51.2
Status	23	27.7	2,757	23	360	26.7	428	9.2
Video	7	8.4	478	4	110	8.1	257	5.6
Total	83	100	11,995	100	1,350	100	4,629	100
12 M								
Events	1	10	8	1.6	1	1.6	5	0.8
Links	4	40	56	11.3	4	6.3	46	7.4
Photo	3	30	380	76.4	57	90.5	531	85.2
Status	1	10	1	0.2	1	1.6	0	0
Video	1	10	52	10.5	0	0	41	6.6
Total	10	100	497	100	63	100	623	100

The results demonstrate that engagement on 12M's page is low. The photos generate greater participation in all practices of appropriation of the technique (76.4% of the likes, 90.5% of the comments, and 85.2% of the shares). The remaining types of content are not statistically significant.

In the period of analysis for March 2013, I gauged that there is a significant change in both pages compared with the previous period, as shown in Table 3. The Que se Lixe a Troika page published only photos ( $n = 44$ ) and status ( $n = 1$ ), contrary to the diversity of content in the period from September 14, 2012–September 16, 2012. However, the number of likes and shares increased exponentially, as shown previously in Table 1.

The 12M movement has more posts in this period, with photos being the most published type of content ( $n = 19$ ; 70.4%) and generating more engagement (93.5% of likes, 73.6% of comments, 97.8% of shares). Other types of content are not statistically significant.

**Table 3. Type of Content Published and Engagement on Facebook Pages of Social Movements Que se Lixe a Troika and 12M in March 2013.**

	<i>N</i>	%	Likes	%	Comments	%	Shares	%
Que se Lixe a Troika								
Events	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Links	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Photo	44	97.8	18,152	97.5	828	91.2	7,863	94.9
Status	1	2.2	471	2.5	80	8.8	426	5.1
Video	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	45	100	18,623	100	908	100	8,289	100
12M								
	<i>N</i>	%	Likes	%	Comments	%	Shares	%
Events	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Links	4	14.8	36	3.6	12	16.7	15	1.1
Photo	19	70.4	929	93.5	53	73.6	1,333	97.8
Status	2	7.4	29	2.9	7	9.7	15	1.1
Video	2	7.4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	27	100	994	100	72	100	1,363	100

User interaction from likes in the comments is more significantly expressed in the posts about the March 2013 protests. In proportion to the number of comments, Table 4 shows that the 12M movement promotes more of this kind of interaction than the Que se Lixe a Troika movement does.

**Table 4. The Interaction Between Users Through the Page (Likes in Comments).**

Month	Social Movement	<i>N</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
September 2012	Que se Lixe a Troika	1,345	0	17	1.16	1.86
	12M	61	0	61	30.50	43.13
March 2013	Que se Lixe a Troika	960	0	159	24.87	38.05
	12M	113	0	102	4.19	19.59

These results reflect the concept of Internet-mediated participation (Cammaerts, 2012). The appropriation of the technique for interaction with the contents is not intense. This refers to the Facebook pages more as repositories of information on the manifestations rather than as spaces of civic and political participation. Engagement with different audiences occurs through posts targeted at varied audiences with information about government proposals, alternative discourses, and incentives for online (information sharing) and off-line (street protests) social mobilization. Engagement of the posts reveals a response to the proposals of the social movements to spread the word and promote adherence to massive street protests.

Engagement through the practices of likes and shares demonstrates the adhesion to the proposal, which took place on the streets. I must emphasize that the two social movements used social media and

popular assemblies as the central elements of interaction. As the two movements are admittedly acentric, this possibility of expanding through the Internet was evidence of the adhesion to the manifestation of March 2nd, 2011. From this moment, the two regularly updated Facebook pages appeared, and social media was used to mediate participation in microscales with the purpose of creating decentralized macrostructures.

### ***Digital Repertoires of Contentious Politics***

To assess how social movements used Facebook to promote social mobilization and civic and political participation, I carried out a qualitative analysis of the content of 165 posts (Que se Lixe a Troika:  $n = 128$ ; 12M:  $n = 37$ ) published during the referred periods of the study. As Table 5 shows, the corpus examined allowed us to identify four categories of digital repertoires on the Facebook pages of both social movements, which fit into two macrodimensions: political and social.

**Table 5. Digital Repertoires on Facebook Pages of Social Movements Que se Lixe a Troika and 12M During the Periods in the Analysis.**

Category	Dimension	<i>N</i>	%
Social mobilization	Political	118	71.5
Protests against government	Political	19	11.5
Struggle for social rights	Social	12	7.3
Transnational solidarity	Social	16	9.7
Total		165	100

Table 5 shows that the political dimension (83%) predominates in the digital repertoires of contentious politics identified in the Que se Lixe a Troika and 12M Facebook posts of social movements in the periods under analysis. The four categories of digital repertoires identified are as follows:

- 1) Social mobilization—mobilize to participate in street demonstrations, encourage online microparticipations, promote civic and political participation in public initiatives and protests.
- 2) Protests against the government—demand political change, advocate the defense of democracy, demand the end of the financial rescue, denounce the interference of international organizations in the country's governance.
- 3) Struggle for social rights—claim workers' rights, rights of the elderly, and youth rights.
- 4) Transnational solidarity—present international solidarity with social movements against austerity in Europe, and demonstrate solidarity with people from countries in financial difficulties.

Social movements used Facebook as alternative media to urge protests to revolt against austerity policies. The digital repertoires of contentious politics were anchored to information sharing of the mainstream digital media as a way to give information credibility and encourage social mobilization. A narrative that shows a diverse society united around the international fight against injustice always presents

the demand for change. Young people, migrants, the elderly, the disabled fill in the photos, and the posters shared. Encouraging individual actions off-line is galvanized with significant numbers of demonstrations in the country and abroad. Transnational solidarity is always present to demonstrate that the struggle is larger than the Portuguese government.

### Conclusions

This article aimed to analyze the representations of the protests and activists in mainstream digital media and show how social movements used social media to engage with different publics and promote civic participation to answer the research questions (RQ1) How do social movements use Facebook to disseminate their discourses and promote social mobilization? and (RQ2) Does mainstream digital media coverage reframe the public debate?

Social-media-based discourses were an alternative to the narrative of austerity and were used to increase the visibility of social movements in the public sphere. However, mainstream digital media also spread the discourses of anti-austerity and reframed the public debate.

As media simultaneously inform and reflect society, their narratives coconstitute the 2011–13 anti-austerity protests. Agenda-setting theory gives greater emphasis to media's power in the importance degree of a particular topic by its presence or absence in media agendas. In this regard, the analysis shows that mainstream digital media coverage has put the protests on the public agenda in the three events (news articles: 2011,  $n = 39$ ; 2012,  $n = 56$ ; 2013,  $n = 50$ ).

The surprise effect of the first demonstration is visible in the diminished coverage of anticipation of the protest. However, the demands of activists in the Geração à Rasca movement echoed in the media, as did the reactions of the government and the opposition. In the "age of mediated visibility" (Thompson, 1995), media discourses focused on the portrait of a young generation who felt compelled to emigrate for lack of job opportunities and precarious conditions, contrasting with the lack of political solutions from the government and the opposition.

After the first protest, centered in Lisbon, the remaining two demonstrations were echoed throughout the country and in the diaspora. Media coverage of the events anchored to the narrative that the protest was intergenerational and the country was out on the streets. It was at this time that the media reframed the public debate for discussion of alternative policies to austerity. The protagonists of the news were the anonymous people and personalities of public life who manifested. The "place of speech" of politicians (government and opposition) delimited to reactions to the protests. The reframing of the public debate is evidence in the main topics of the news articles: demonstrations (25%), national politics (25%), causes of the protests and social issues (12%), Carnation Revolution values (6%), and actions of protest and social movements (6%). The results are in line with earlier studies that demonstrated that the protests anchored to the values of the Carnation Revolution and to the social rights acquired in the process of transition to democracy (Accornero & Pinto, 2015; Baumgarten & Díez García, 2017; Lobo, Pinto, & Magalhães, 2016). The visibility to anonymous people who protested links them to the children of April and the generations who made the Revolution.



Analyzed media discourses do not reproduce the hegemonic idea concerning the need for measures of austerity. Despite this, the analyzed journalistic pieces convey media narratives producing the presence of the demands, reconstructing the image of social movements in Portugal, previously anchored to professional classes and student struggles.

As civil society is traditionally slightly active in Portugal, the use of tools like Facebook has opened the communication to broader groups of citizens. Therefore, activists and protests leaders started to use this platform to recruited citizens to their cause(s) against austerity. The discourses and slogans of the protests were broadly published on the platform by social movements and other gatekeepers such as ordinary users who started to share the content of the pages. The new actors used Facebook as a space for the excluded discourses from the mainstream digital media—namely, the convening of protests throughout the country and diaspora.

The data discloses the micropractices of the users in terms of engagement, which refers to the concept of individualized collective action (Micheletti, 2003). The appropriation of the contents of the two pages focuses significantly on practices of validation (likes: *Que se Lixe a Troika*,  $n = 30,618$ ; 12M,  $n = 1,491$ ) and dissemination (shares: *Que se Lixe a Troika*,  $n = 12,918$ ; 12M,  $n = 1,986$ ). Therefore, Facebook operated as a technology of self-mediation (Cammaerts, 2015) where connective action networks (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012) propagated alternative discourses to austerity. Consequently, the results also reproduce the concept of Internet-mediated participation (Cammaerts, 2012), which reveals an awareness of the message by microparticipation practices such as like and sharing.

The digital repertoires of contentious politics used to promote adherence to the cause focus on four categories: social mobilization (71.5%), protests against the government (11.5%), struggle for social rights (7.3%), and transnational solidarity (9.7%). These results echo recent work on anti-austerity protests that highlights new forms of collective mobilization (Campos et al., 2016; Estanque et al., 2013; Fonseca, 2018), which the data show that promote collective action and digitally networked action. Furthermore, these actions rely on social media networks (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012), through the spreading of personal action frames rather than collective action frames (van Haperen et al., 2018).

From these results, my hypothesis is proven: Civic engagement with social movements stems from mainstream digital media representations of their discourses and protagonists. The main conclusion is that the media coverage of protests reflects a reframing of the public debate on contentious action by validating the repertoire of actions, which supports the collective mobilization to social movements through digitally networked action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

The main limitation of this study lies in the period analyzed. Future studies will examine the media representation of social movements from its inception (2011) to the post-austerity era (2019) to understand their life cycles in the media and their framing on the public agenda.

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