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INFLUENCING TARGET GROUPS DURING POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

PhD thesis

Abstract

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The intensity of the campaigns', their strategically and tactical planning for the political parties and candidates have several differences. The main cause of this is that several political actor haven't recognized the changes in the voters thinking: the political marketing's instruments and methods thanks to the frequent repetition lost from their power and efficiency of conviction, this is why citizens with the right to vote started to turn from these campaigns. Those few weeks before the elections with a lot of events, the transparent and well-known vote-earning techniques are becoming inefficient. The political parties have to face a big challenge: they must transpose their campaigns. The main cause of this is that the persuasion based on traditional instruments of marketing communication became very common, and only by using these tools they cannot assure a convenient number of votes for the actors of the political competition.

To resolve this situation there are two possible ways to follow. For every campaign usually during the planning period the experts used to define all the target groups by the well-known demographic method, but it seems that it is more efficient to count during this process all the cultural elements and the decision making processes which determine the whole election. We have to focus even more on voters' problems, on those questions which are preoccupying them, and these element should be built in the main thematic of every election and political campaign. So near the more complex target-group segmentation the role of thematization gathers value and the proposals from the politicians' on resolving the voters real problems seems to become the future political campaigns' key components. This strategy cannot be used without the appearance of these themes in the media, so they must be presented and handled like valuable news to assess the agenda-setting process in an effective way.

It becomes essential to map all those processes which typify the voters' cognitional processes during these political events. By analyzing the heuristic decision making methods and their functioning we can understand that even if for someone it is not available all the information about the election process and the political sphere for a rational decision in its classical meaning, he can easily find intelligent and correct conclusions. The importances of the heuristics which define the human cognition were the major research problematic of Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky who by the way established the basics of the decision making. In their researches they demonstrated that in the moment of decision making those parts which rule the human memory are responsible for the final decision. This is why

sometimes we make irrational decisions: there are cases when these available elements can end in developing distortions. This means that people usually overestimate the probability of those events which have easily developable connections in the memory. It is a classic example the result of a research when American citizens were asked to guesstimate if the murders or the suicides are more common in the country. The majority of the questioned people said that murders are more frequent. Researchers explained this miss conclusion with the special nature of the agenda-setting process: the media talks about almost every murder, but suicides are not part of the news thematisation process. So in the decision making moment those information are available for the person in case which were defining the media's agenda, this is why these things are considered to have high probability.

Later Gigerenzer and his colleagues, and some other psychologists were trying to find out and to describe the cognitive processes behind the decisions. These results weren't harnessed enough on several different fields till the recent past. It seems that even for the political marketing this could be an important step to use these findings: in the human mind in the moment of decision making and the period right before it when we are gathering all the information we think need for a good final decision, and even the selection of the data and tracking this process could open a new horizon in the planning of political and election campaigns.

But what is exactly going on in the human mind when at the end of the election campaign we have to decide whether to vote, or not. What is the route which defines the citizens' information gathering period till he has a final decision which hopefully is rational or at least the best one from his perspective. The aim of this study is to get to know this procedure. The research project has three major parts and the scientific intention was to reinforce the basics of one important part of the political marketing process, the planning of the election campaigns and the basics of creating and transmitting election messages. The questionnaire basically prepared this research by identifying all those thematization opportunities in a election campaign which can ensure the closest relation between political parties and voters. The questionnaire can be considered as a SWOT analysis which prepared helped the two other pillars of the research. These can be considered two special and nonconventional methods in realizing the aim of the study. With the focus group we wanted to identify those characteristics which are crucial for the young voters. The candidate profiles realized by the students we could get to know the dimensions which should kept in front of us

during the planning process in an election campaign. We could sense very punctual what kind of qualities are important for this segment, and also what kind of themes should appear in an election program, which tends to reach young and young adult voters. Because we wanted to have useful information regarding the young voters' expectations we tested these profiles by using the MouselabWeb program, developed by an American and a Dutch psychologist. This program tracks the voter's information gathering process by measuring the time spent with this and the also at every stop. By this we can identify those elements which have special importance for the young voters, which they want to find also in real election campaigns also, and also those which can be deleted from the candidate's program. MouselabWeb helps us also to get to know exactly how intensive we have to deal with the different kind of campaign components, so basically we can have a frame for a more efficient campaign regarding the young voters. As a matter of fact it will be possible to plan energy efficient campaigns because we can focus on every target groups' special needs, special campaign contents.

One main question in researching the Romanian political and election campaigns is what is going on exactly behind the Romanian voters' votes. This can seem not a quit useful thing because during the last Romanian elections we found out that the prototype of the country's voter is not a favorable factor for this research. In general the Romanian voter is at least 50 years old male, who works in agriculture, lives in the provinces. This fact does not indicates a research on young voters, but still we consider that the rising number of university alumni and the present trend of young-making in case of the major Romanian political formations both indicate that the thesis' research direction is good. Candidates and parties both have to earn more votes in future elections because it seems that they cannot afford more vote-wasting attitude. For this they will need different messaging tactics for every target-group segment and this is why every scientific research considering voters' decision making processes and getting to know their needs is helpful in planning the future's political and election campaigns.

The aim of the thesis

In the case of the Romanian political and election campaigns it is more common to use those instruments, strategies and tactical solutions which seem to have success in the

American campaigns. During Obama's campaign back in 2008 Kwame Anthony Appiah the well-known philosopher from Ghana emphasized that classic target group segmentation models are not enough for the 21 century's campaigns. His major research field is the nature of the relation between individual and the state, and individual and the society. He thinks that these usually used models for delimitation are not dealing enough with the target groups' determination by culture, religion and mother tongue. The Romanian election context seems to have several common parts with the American one because Romanian voters are also characterizes by several cultural, religional and lingual attributes. Combining these element with the international psychological, economical findings regarding the human decision making process may afford the usage of these results in several other fields: if we know exactly what is going on in the human brain and we can identify those element which lead to good decisions then during the political campaign which anticipates the election campaign, but is more composed and not as intensive as the first one, and it's aim is not to earn votes but to get to know a cause or a candidate, affords politicians or parties to develop an election campaign which satisfies the electorate and by this assures enough votes in elections.

Thematization and the conscious manipulation of the media agenda is one of the most important parts of a campaign. As we saw earlier in a decisional situation usually we used to search in our memory the available information about the given problem. So it is obvious that those element count which could easily been accessed. In the case of the election campaigns at this moment scientific researches demonstrated that the major proportion of the votes is decided in the voting cabin. For manipulating these memory-elements or cognitive contents it is needed to shape consciously the media's agenda, but this can only be successful if we know exactly what are the different target groups' expectations.

So we wanted to describe these cognitive processes in the case of the Hungarian young voters in Transylvania by identifying the trends, processes, components of these voters' cognitive activities. This research's context is Transylvanian Hungarian voting environment but we would like to extend this on the Romanian one too. We consider that for testing this three-pillar method this research field is adequate. The Romanian Hungarian political sphere is extending> now we officially have three Hungarian political parties, so the competition will be though in the next local elections. So the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR), as well as the Hungarian Civic Party (HCP) and the Transylvanian Hungarian People's Party (THPP) are somehow forced to plan a more conscious campaign.

So we can say that the paper wants to get to know an important part of every election campaign which for the moment was somehow was forgotten till now and also we would like to introduce a new research methodology and perspective in the Romanian political marketing scientific field. The traditional questionnaires, content analyses, discourse analyses or focus group researches can be well completed by some computer based programs by which researchers can easily track the voters information gathering processes and can be identified all those elements which have priority for the segment in case. These information can be considered extremely helpful because by them we can draw up the major actual trends in the case of a target group. This is why we think that by this research method we help communication specialists to plan and develop a election campaign using exactly those contents which are important for the different segments.

The aim of this study was also to get closer to the voters decision making, because we consider that this part is far too neglected field. At the same time its purpose was to help future election campaigns especially those of the Hungarian parties' in Romania.

The hypothesis of the research

These aims are based on several hypothesizes which we wanted to answer with this three pillar research design:

H1 – From those Transylvanian young citizens with the right to vote (aged between 18 and 35) who are university students or they've just finished their study have special expectations and attitude about the political sphere and a special case are the election campaigns. The case of the presidential elections they have some special needs and expectations by them they create their candidate prototype which can be considered a main point of reference in evaluating real candidates. If we get to know these ideal candidate profiles we suppose that these segments' reaching and mobilization can became more efficient.

H2 – Political actors have to calculate and plan election campaigns with this voter segment's special needs for maximizing the results otherwise the tendency of not voting will

improve. For a punctually identifying this we need to obtain trustful data about this group's relations with the political situation, about their opinion regarding nowadays' politicians

H3 – The MouselabWeb program is a helpful tool to see young and young adult voters' information tracks, as well as the identifying of those special elements which are especially important for this segment. We consider that by using these information in future election campaigns these citizens will vote in a higher rate.

H4 – We think that there are major differences between male and female voters' preferences and the computer assisted research will help us in finding out these factors.

H5 – Nowadays' Romanian politicians are appreciated firstly not by their professional realizations, but by some personal, tabloid-like factors. We assume that these count more in politician evaluation than any other information.

H6 – According to the latest data regarding the presence at the voting cabins one can affirm that young voters are not preoccupied about politics, but we consider that by the appropriate candidate profile this rate can be enhanced. Practically we think that by these three pillared method can be considered a good instrument in realizing this.

So this is how the thesis wants to get closer to knowing better the voters and also wants to refresh political marketing's' research and campaigning instruments for better results. It is true that the real value of this research will be tangible if we'll have the possibility to test this theory and election campaign planning design in real election situation. We assume that using the results of this research it could be realized a campaign plan which could be used in future presidential elections. It is true that officially we must wait almost three years for this in Romania but we already can see several steps for reaching young voters. With the right information (target groups' expectations, what are the important elements for the different segments') and conscious planning it is worth to start in time designing these campaigns.

Methods used for the research

Traditionally political marketing is preoccupied by the strategical, tactical analyzes of political and election campaigns, by systematization of the instruments and tools used, and with measuring the efficiency of these, the candidates' and parties' image making processes. The aim of this study and the hypotheses presented justifies the use of this three pillared research method.

Because of the Romanian and by this the Hungarian election environment in Transylvania is a totally unknown territory regarding voters' decisions, so it was necessary to use and to combine several research methods which are not that common and well known.

This research can be handled as a project, so it was obvious that we had to start it with the first step: the position paper. For realizing this we used a questionnaire. The target group of this study motivated this method as we had nearly no data about the young Hungarian voters in Transylvania, about their expectations regarding politicians, political life, and their level of knowing about political happenings. Our findings at this level let us put our research in a proper frame and also showed that the main question of this research has it's purpose.

In this way the hypothesizes were placed in a reality-based frame. After the questionnaire we used the focus group method in a special way: we asked the students from the Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of Political, Administration and Communication Sciences, Department of Communication and Public Relations who were in their last study year in the 2010/2011 academic year to develop a politician's profile. We asked them to make this profile look like as their ideal politician, the perfect presidential candidate. We also suggested that this profile should also be about the perfect candidate for other young voters from Transylvania. Students were planning this in groups, each with 4 members. They developed the candidate's image, election program, and by presenting each this way born politician we realized a virtual election campaign. At the testing of these profiles the groups presented their politicians and after this all the students from the class (N=49) had to vote one of them. On the ballot they also had to motivate in one sentence their choice. This way we could identify a few tendencies and factors which define this target groups' voting behavior.

The third pillar of our research is defined by a computer assisted program which wasn't used before in analyzing the Romanian political marketing. Martijn C. Willemsen from the University of Technology from Eindhoven and Eric J. Johnson professor at Columbia University, New York, teaching marketing at the Columbia Business School, developed together a program which is available on the internet, and by using that almost every decision making situation can be analyzed from step to step. The MouseLabWeb¹ actually is a frame which can be used for several scientific researches because it can be shaped to fit almost any decision making research. The aim of this program is to track all kind of decision makers' information gathering processes. Before our study it wasn't used in Romania for political marketing analyses. According to its presentation it was tested before in economics, financial analyses, and some attitude researches also. So this thesis opens some new dimensions about the Romanian election campaigns, and we assume that our findings will help future election campaigns to be more voter-like.

The background of the voters. What do we know about voters' decision making? – Theoretical frame

Researches regarding voter decision making processes helped campaign planners to identify the major points and components for these political events. The problem is that these findings are based mostly on the American election context, but we consider the as a frame for our research also.

The study and the whole research project is based on several international researches:

- John W. Kingdon, professor at the Michigan University in his book *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* presents the powerful opinion and agenda setting function of the media. In his researches he was analyzing how the news in mass media are affecting the media users personal agenda. According to his findings we can affirm that voters do chose a political party or candidate by information available from media, and also they create their own list of problems which need to be solved according to the agenda. People with the right to vote used to like that political party

¹ More information about the program is available on <http://www.mouselab.org/index.html> webpage.

which seems to solve most of their own, personal problems. So it is important for any political actor to identify these expectations and then to form the agenda as they and the voters need to.

- Our decisions are made by the information available in our memory in the decision making moment. This means that those memory-components which with the help of repetition or by being close in time are more easy to find so these are influencing our decisions.²
- Iyengar, Peters and Kinder³ in their 1982 research wanted to find out if the agenda presented in the media has any role in defining people's thematic and opinion. During their experiment they asked the participants to rank every single issue on a list created by the research team. After this every participant was asked to watch news televisions' programs for four days. Then they were asked again to make a list, and the interesting thing was that this new one regarding the problems which need to be solved by the politicians contained almost just new elements which they saw on TV in the past days.
- The classic Michigan model, which identifies the party ideology as the most important element for voters to decide whom to vote for, cannot be concerned a reality. American researches proved that in the States the socialization process, the family's political ideology defined the votes. It became clear that beside this factor which manipulates voters in long term, the candidate's personality, and the issues which rule an election campaign are as important as the ideologies.⁴
- In political and election campaigns the usage of social media became a must. Researches attest⁵ that voters do handle these sites as trustful and important handrails for their decisions, even more important than traditional media. So planning a proper candidate profile is doubtless. This paper wants to identify those major factors which could be used in Romania for creating the perfect candidate profile by getting to know the Hungarian young voters' special needs in an election campaign and in the case of a politician.
- The Nobel prize winner Daniel Kahneman and his colleague Amos Tversky tried to test the validity of the subjective probability. By their thesis we can affirm that the more we meet a problem, an issue or a situation, the more likely is that we'll think that

² Hastie, Reid-Dawes, Robyn M. (2001), 76.

³ <http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/garson/PA765/agendasetting.htm>, 2008.11.17.

⁴ Stumpf István (2006), 136

⁵ Foux, 2006

the matter in hand is the most probable in that case. But frequency is not enough: it is also needed the easy recall, so it is important that in the decision moment the person in case has to have access to these components. The problem is that during the test experiment the participants failed in their decisions. When they were asked to answer the question: which is more common in English, words which begin with “k” and have three or more letters or those words in which this letter is on the third place, the respondents answered the first case. The explanation for this is that they could recall more examples from the first group; the rule of availability was working.⁶ The necessity of the candidates’ profile-research is intensified also by another fact: in another experiment they asked the participants to guesstimate a firm’s profit by reading a presentation about it. It is interesting that if this presentation contained mostly positive elements the firm was taught to have higher profit, but if the presentation was mostly negative one, then profit followed this logic, and even if the presentation was written in a negative way the expected profit decreased.⁷ According to Gigerenzer and his research team a common run of mankind’s cognitive abilities are very weak, so usually they use just a few information for making a decision and in almost every cases they do not calculate with any probability.⁸ The *less-is-more* rule is in their interpretation means that there are several cases when we can make better decisions using any or just a few data for it. Their finding also shows some important connections between the media agenda and the rate of our recognitions.

- In the case of the voter decision making Lau and Redlawsk defined five different ways of cognitive heuristic shortcuts.⁹ These problem solving methods or techniques in several cases aren’t conscious at all, but using them in some other situations with success, people used to make their election decisions also by using these.
- Different from the traditional decision making processes’ analysis Barker and Hansen wasn’t interested in identifying those parts which manipulates our decisions, but rather their research was motivated by the fact that they wanted to describe actually those processes which are going on in our mind during a decision making process. Their findings suggest that the conscious voter works more for a good decision. But we also have to mention that during their experiments they also had some cases when a few

⁶ Kahneman – Tversky, 1972, 451.

⁷ Kahneman – Slovic – Tversky, 1982, 8.

⁸ Gigerenzer et al., 1999, 57.

⁹ Lau – Redlawsk, 2001, 952.

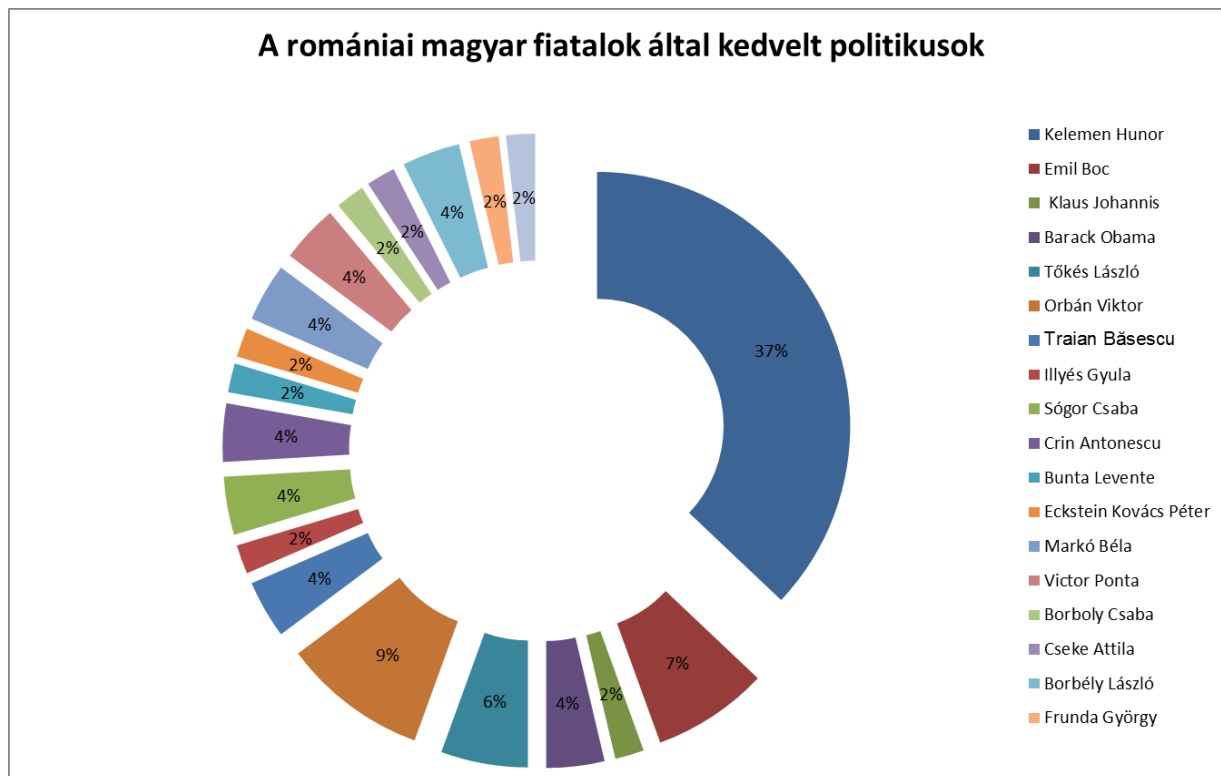
conscious voter had some serious problem: a kind of mental paralysis embarrassed them to make any kind of decision.¹⁰

¹⁰ In. Warner et al., 2010, 1-2.

The reality of the young Hungarians' in Transylvania

We know only a few things about the young Hungarians' reality, about those problems which define their life, about their expectations regarding a politician. A total of 200 students were asked (26% male, 74% female) between December 2010 and April 2011. According to the answers on the questionnaire we can affirm the followings:

- For young citizens some real tangible problems do count for real, they want these problems to be solved first.
- For these students it is more important to be these problems solved as soon as possible then those general questions which should be specific and important for the whole country. This emphasizes one of the most important things which could be used in planning a good campaign for this target group: without personal and actively mobilizing election campaign it is hard for any politician to get close to any segment, and this is especially true in the case of young voters.
- the aim of our questionnaire was to have a current picture about the Transylvanian election environment and to collect some punctual information about nowadays' politicians' adjudication. Beside the rates expressed in percentage we wanted to find exactly what kinds of factors do characterize a loved politician, and we also wanted to identify who are the most beloved politicians for young voters.



List with the most beloved politicians

- We wanted to have trustable data also about the young voters’ media usage. Their attitude, their manifestation in all kinds of political and election situations are strongly related with the rate which characterizes them in their general interest regarding the political sphere. We wanted to know how often do they catch up with political-oriented news in general, and our aim was also to identify the sources of these. The purpose of this research was to draw up a picture based on those values, characteristics, contents which can be considered delicate points for the young voters, which somehow can obtain their attention and are able to mobilize them.

- Firstly those newspapers count which are available only in their living area, the central newspapers are not that often read. In the case of the televisions those programs count which present mostly news, but it is interesting that the Hungarian channels are more often named in the answers than Romanian ones. This is why the young voters from Transylvania are more informed about the political events and issues in Hungary than back in their home land. This means that they have almost no information about all the political events going on in Romania, or they receive a special kind of information about these happenings: a very filtered one, sometimes with too many times.

The profile of the ideal presidential candidate. The Hungarian young voters' expectations in Transylvania

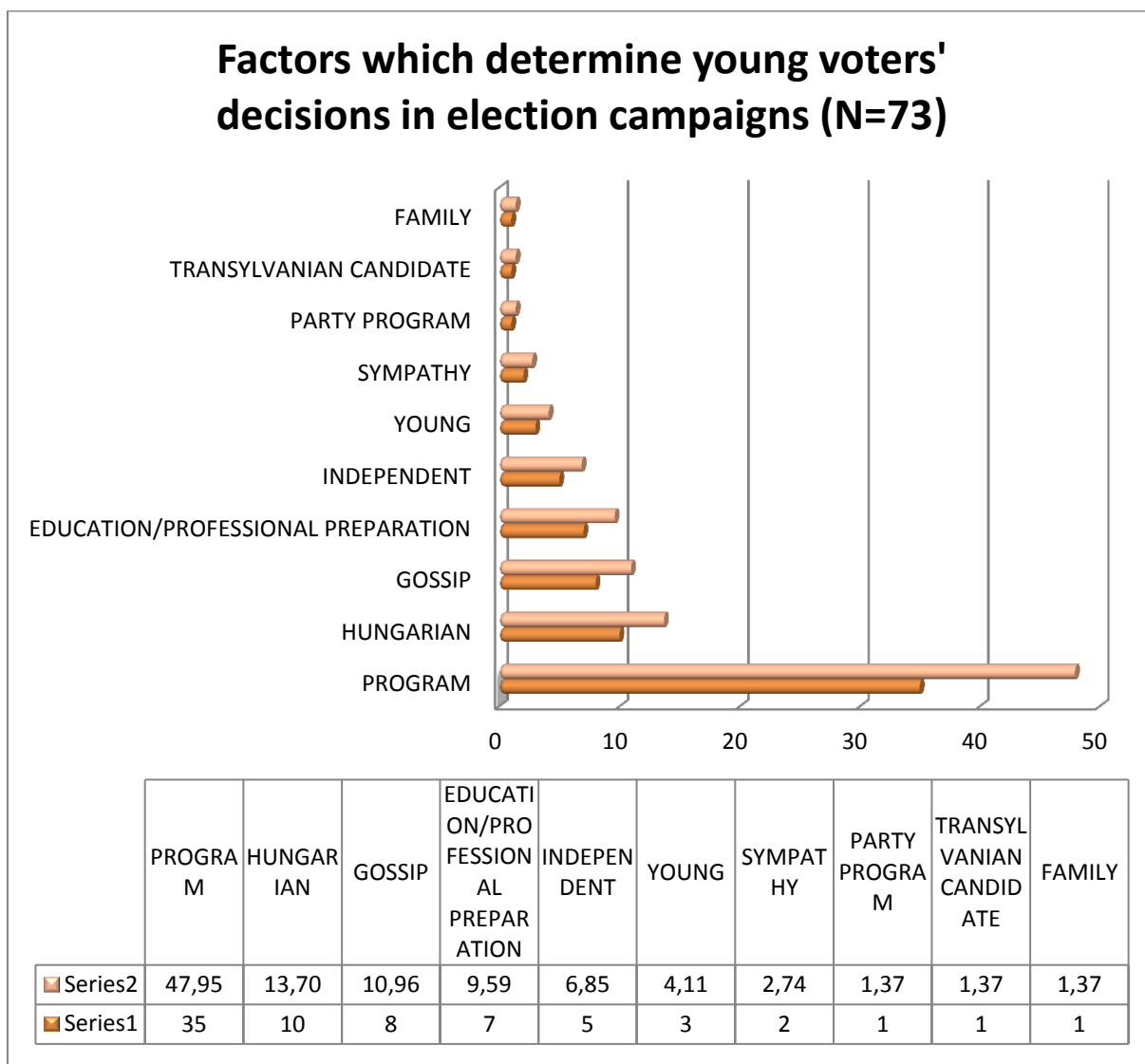
The project had a second chapter in which the participants were students at the Department of Communication and Public Relations in their third study year (2010-2011 academic year) who participated on the Political marketing seminar. Their assignment was to create a fictive presidential candidate profile. In this focus group research the participants, who were university students, had to create a candidate profile about whom they thought that their colleagues and other voters from their age-group would happily vote for. After presenting every presidential candidate students participating on this seminar had to vote their favorite one mentioning on the ballot why that person was the winner for them. This is how we had six candidate profiles with the most votes. The winner candidate, according to the young voters, was just like their ideal politician, his image was perfect because he was relatively young, in his program he had some special issues regarding young voters, and also he had experience, and his appearance and election program suggested that he is a creditable and authentic person.

The cognitive mechanisms of the Hungarian young voters in Transylvania in election campaigns

- With the computer assisted experiment we wanted to observe how young voters do handle a election decision making situation, and also to track the information gathering process and steps. The MouselabWeb program basically creates some boxes and behind them we could hide all the information regarding the candidates form this virtual election campaign. These boxes had different labels but all the same categories in the case of every candidate out of five. These labels did not tell any detail about the politicians, they can be considered like attribute labels. A person who participated in this experiment had to use the mouse and to click on the box needed and in this manner the box in case opened, and the information was free to read.
- In this MouselabWeb experiment there were a total number of 50 participants from two university departments from Cluj-Napoca. The students were studying at the BBU's Faculty of Political, Administration and Communication Sciences, Departments of Communication and Public Relations and Journalism and they were in their first and second year (2010-2011 academic year). Participants had a easy task: they had to register on the first page by entering a name.
- The data of this experiment show that young voters do pick the starting point of their information gathering process accidentally. In almost all the cases this was a box which appeared somewhere in the center part of the monitor. It is a generally strategy to start with the names of the candidates, but there were also some situations when the picture, the gossip or the personal data were the firstly accessed boxes. Time spent with orientation was quite short; in general it doesn't exceed 100 seconds.
- Especially female voters are more systematic and they were opening almost every information box presented and their route was usually longer than the male participants'. It is true that this systematism differed from participant to participant, but we can see clearly that female young voters choose or the vertical or the horizontal direction to get to know the candidates, and they tried to access almost every box available. There is no difference in gender in the fact that the pictures and the name of the candidate are two very important elements for this target group which are opened in the first part of the gathering process. After this they used to open some other boxes

with the program, the information about the political party in the case of the most liked candidate.

- In motivating their choices participants said that the most important thing which affects their decisions was the candidate’s election program. This somehow astonished us, because in our hypothesis we assumed that pictures, personal data or the gossips available about every candidate will count. According to the answers we have a totally different situation: the candidate’s election program affected in a number of 48% the decisions (35 answers out of 73). So let’s see what factors are behind the young Hungarian voters’ decisions (the answers were categorized):



Factors which determine young voters' decisions in election campaigns

- At the election organized after the focus group pillar the winner candidate was Ernő Zafir, but in the MouselabWeb elections the winner was somebody else. For the participant in the third part of our research project, young voters decided by election program, nationality and gossip. From this last category especially those information had success which can be characterized with a positive manner: sport activities, and other hobbies. The negative ones were neglected. There are some other important issues like the professional preparation of the candidate, the education, and also it is good if the politician is an independent one. Dávid Lázár's success can be explained by the fact that his program fitted the target group's expectations and also because he was the only Hungarian independent candidate.
- It is an important result of our research that male and female young voters have different kind of information searching manner. The boys from the total number of 35 available boxes opened an average of 15, and at the same time girls needed much more information for their decisions: in their case this number is 42 which means that they opened a few boxes more than one time. This fact by the way was also anticipatory from the time spent with orientation. It is also another major finding that the motivation behind the votes differs in the two gender-groups. After totalizing all the 50 answers on the question which referred on the motivation behind every vote, we found out that competence appears in a number of 44 times and the gossip-like contents just for 21 times. It is interesting also to analyze the differences between genders in the case of these answers. A number of 10 boys (N=16) said that they made their decision based on the candidate's professional information. Female voters (N=34) answered different. Only 19 of them said that they were deciding whom to vote dealing just with professional oriented issues. In percentage this means that boys decided using only information regarding the candidate's professional life in a total rate of 62,5%, and the girls just in 55%. It seems that in planning a campaign we should be conscious in making a candidate's profile and also in thinking on what kind of and how many information to share and publish, because it differs by gender also what voters need.

Conclusions

Citizens beside the visual part of every campaign more often are looking for content and election program. This should contain mostly realizable and reality-like elements. According to our results content is an important campaign tool even for reaching young voter.

We can affirm according to our findings realized with the help of the MouselabWeb program that the goods which are offered by the politicians, the election program based on professionalism has to be one of the most important part of future's election campaigns.

Our results proved that even in the case of reaching the young electorate we have to deal with the usage of proper campaign thematic because in the process of information gathering about the candidates the elements concerning election program are major decision influencing factors. We could see at the virtual elections that the Hungarian students in Cluj-Napoca have decided which candidate to vote especially by the program.

It is extremely important that the target group has to feel and know that in change of the vote the politician gives real realizations.

Voters' information gathering track's identification is a huge step in planning an election campaign which is building in consciously some components by knowing exactly what kind of reaction we'll have from different segments of voters. As a matter of fact by this way it became designable to have positive reactions on a campaign.

As we so in our hypothesizes it is proved that male and female voters do differ regarding the important campaign elements, and also in that fact that we need to emphasize different kind of issues: for female voters gossip-like information are more important, they have more patience, spend more time with orientation as male voters do. Male young voters usually are searching for a short period of time, they decide more quickly (the average time spent with decision making was 1 minute 35 seconds in the case of female voters, and 1 minute 21 for male voters). The steps made till the final decision is significantly higher in the case of female voters. So we can affirm that it is worth to plan differentiated

campaign not only by age or other traditional target group segmentation criteria but also by information gathering strategies.

The gossips about the candidates are important as we suggested at the beginning but they are not that important as we thought when formulating hypotheses. The computer based experiment demonstrated that weather alone or combined with some other elements the election program, the candidate's professionalism his or her issues, aims and action plan are more important than other information for the Hungarian young voters in Transylvania.

It is also proved that in the case of evaluating active politicians not the profession-like issues do matter rather the personal, gossip-like ones do. This creates somehow a strange situation but this can be explained by the fact that young voters are not too much updated with the actual political events and news.

One of the most important realization of this thesis is that it showed from different angles that in the case of the Transylvanian Hungarian young voters it is exaggerated to affirm that they are totally passive about the political events and happenings. They want to be up to date regarding these news but we have to know exactly what kind of components do create positive reactions, which mobilizes them so different kind of aims could be reached like this.

Possible ways to continue the research

Because in an election campaign we have to deal with several target group segments it would be necessary to test this three pillar research project in the case of some other segments also. The ideal situation would be to gain information regarding all possible Romanian segments of the electorate about their decision making's background. It is possible that we'll have different kind of information gathering strategies depending on target groups. It is possible that these processes differ from one nationality to another.

This research presented could be the proper starting point for another more complex research project which could be one representative one for the whole Romanian electorate.

This project has its aim because for the next presidential elections it would be recommended to have reliable information about the voters. It also could be tested next year in the local election campaigns. In political marketing it is obvious that we need some new perspective: our results and also some other election campaigns from the past, several opinion polls affirmed that more professionalism is needed.

Beside this the future's election campaign will have a more accentuated online part. This is why it seems a possible way of continuing this research to test some candidate profiles in the online sphere: just by themselves or in a real election campaign with the real candidates' profiles. This could work by using one of the well-known social media sites where our fictive candidate could act as a real one, so he could be compared with them, and also the real politicians' reactions could be tracked. It would be also interesting to check the real candidates' reaction on a situation like this.

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