

English Abstract

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In this Thesis, I submit my scientific contributions and research directions, in the context of the current stage attained by knowledge and specified in the literature. I focus on the most significant areas of my research activity in the fields of *electoral sociology*, *political communication sociology* and *community development sociology*. The connection between these scientific fields consists in the responsible and professional application, interpretation and publication of the opinion-poll results. My future plans include the development of an integrative research model about social capital and social problems intended for the systematic study of the voting behaviour.

The first part of the Thesis includes an overview of my research activities and scientific publications achieved after obtaining the Scientific Degree of Doctor (PhD), as an argument demonstrating the essential role of my previous experience as a basis for my future research agenda, described in the second part. The preamble of the Thesis likewise includes a brief presentation of my professional path, which demonstrates my capacity to develop an independent academic, scientific and professional career, with an emphasis on the reorientation of my research interests from the analysis of the influences exercised by macro-social factors, to the identification of contextual particularities.

In the section dedicated to the contributions in the field of *electoral sociology*, I submit a theoretical-methodological model of systematic study on the voting behaviour, providing an insight into: the use of a micro-macro-type approach; influence of the value orientations to the detriment of ideology influence; influence of the political context and macro-economic context; impact of the trust in candidates and political institutions; impact of absenteeism; use of the voters' typologies (motivational profiles and stability index). The main conclusion states the impossibility to predict the voting behaviour long before the election date; it's only about the electoral capital that exists at a given moment in time. In order to make predictions, the results will be adjusted according to theoretical hypotheses referring to the turnout of voters and to its structure based on the trends observed during previous polls.

In the section dedicated to the contributions in the field of *political communication sociology*, I submit, on the one hand, some theoretical contributions achieved by synthesis studies on relations and mechanisms specific to the mediated public sphere (with an emphasis on

modern electoral practices and political-communication credibility); and, on the other hand, a series of methodological contributions to the research on political discourse, political image and management of political-communication campaign (with an emphasis on the elaboration of the electoral candidates' typologies, on the measurement of the political image by means of the *Q-sort* procedure, on the measurement of the negative-campaign effects and calibration of political communication based on the opinion-poll results).

The presentation of the contributions in the field of *community development sociology* mainly refers to: development and application of a complex methodological scheme regarding the map of social problems; social-capital operationalization and measurement; analysis of the social-capital types from the cultural-historic perspective and in terms of their implications upon the community development policies; and study of the effects created by the adhesion to and integration in the EU.

As regards the contributions to optimizing the use of opinion polls, in order to increase the credibility of their results, I elaborated on the modality of maximizing the effects of functions such as mediation (adjustment), electoral situation assessment and political communication orientation, and of minimizing the manipulative results of the opinion poll publication in the mass-media.

The main direction of my future scientific activity envisages advanced researches in the thematic areas associated to social problems and social capital. In terms of the study of social problems, I intend to: embed a constructionist perspective into the theoretical-methodological model, study their maturation over time, use complex data-analysis methods and advanced techniques and instruments, in order to achieve the maps of social problems. In terms of social capital, I set out: to refine the conceptualisation and operationalization scheme; to diversify the analysis levels; to test new hypotheses regarding predictors and effects; and to apply advanced statistic data analysis methods.

With reference to the study of the complex relations between social problems, social capital, social development and their implications on the voting behaviour, my short-term goals are: to study the particularities of the economic vote, at community level in Braşov; the medium-term goals are: to locally validate a systematic-study model of the voting behaviour including the social-capital and social problem measurement; and the long-terms goals are: to elaborate a tactical model for the use of the research results on the voting behaviour, political communication, social capital and social problems in developing local strategies and policies of sustainable development.