

# **From Rationality to Emotions in Media and Advertising Communication**

Habilitation Thesis

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present paper aims to comprehensively present my academic and scientific evolution after the moment of receiving the PhD. In 2010, I have received the PhD title in Sociology, Faculty of Sociology and Social Assistance, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. The title of the PhD thesis is *Fezabilitatea introducerii votului pe internet in Romania. Studiu de caz: Cluj-Napoca* (*The feasibility of introducing internet voting in Romania. Case study: Cluj-Napoca*).

The PhD habilitation thesis is composed of two main parts. The first one represents the academic, professional and scientific achievement. The second one reflects on the future perspectives of academic and scientific career. Both parts of the paper aim to emphasize the logical transition from the PhD context to nowadays interests.

The educational lay-out is formed of an interdisciplinary approach. Having a bachelor degree in Political Science, the master degrees have been achieved, in the country and abroad, in the domains of Political Organizations' Management, Advertising, and Political Science. As a logical follow up, the PhD in Sociology enlarged the knowledge background and offered a new dimension in understanding social phenomena. The main topics that have been studied during educational years, from bachelor, through MAs, to PhD, have been the following ones: electoral participation and individual opinion, the image and the promotional process of electoral candidates, Rational choice theory and Game theory, the perception and impact of advertising, Internet as a political tool, and Internet voting in the context of new media communicational tools.

Currently being a lecturer, the main disciplines I teach at both bachelor and MA levels are the mainly related to strategic communication in advertising, to creativity in advertising and to the main research methods that can efficiently be used in media communication and advertising. While some of the courses are held at the bachelor level and some at the master level, some of them are developed in English. During every course or seminar, I combine the passion for teaching with the passion for research. Therefore,

students are systematically and permanently involved in research activities in the studied domains.

The continuous involvement of students in different intra and extra-curricular research projects have the aim of accustoming them with the rigor of research, with the use of methodological instruments, with the rules of academic writing and with the importance of results' dissemination. Having the opportunity to study at an American university, I have learnt modern teaching techniques. Thus, aiming to permanently improve the academic interaction with students, I have applied innovative teaching elements. Besides using the already classical technology, the accent is on interactivity, on developing games, on conducting small experiments from which the students can practically understand the theory, and on reaction papers which help them develop their critical thinking.

Based on the academic and professional evolution, the scientific involvement logically completes the main research interest. Thus, the core research topics I have worked on are the following ones: Rational choice theory, Game theory, political communication, media communication, online communication, Future Internet, intelligent advertising, neuromarketing and decision making process.

Having a strong background in political science, studying new topics, as advertising and media communication or advertising strategies, has been a challenge. However, the way political science combines with communication science have made the transition among them as being a natural, a logical and an extremely beneficial one. An in-depth study of advertising and mass-media based on a background of political science, has opened the perspectives and has added an interdisciplinary dimension to my interests. Thus, an interdisciplinary feature characterizes, to a large degree, the personal research conducted till the present moment. Communication and advertising domains are combined with computer science and neuroscience.

Considering the topic of my PhD as a very interdisciplinary one, the following research interests aim to further build a combination of fascinating domains in order to fully understand the wide communication field. By combining Rational choice theory, Game theory and political communication, I have discovered the role of individualism within the decision making process, the importance of values people have in persuasion intentions and the differences in perceptions when it comes to cultural features.

Based on the research conducting in media communication domain, I have better comprehended two major issues. First, I have understood how journalists are perceived by individuals and the main differences between local and national levels. Second, I have once again realized the major impact media can have on shaping opinions and on influencing behaviors.

One of the major steps in my research pathway has been the approach of the very technical domain of computer science. Starting from analyzing the online tools used in public administration, a major interest has developed for all technological evolution means. Thus, studying the broad domain of Future Internet, its applicability in advertising has started to fascinate me. Therefore, augmented reality has become one of my main interests.

Planning to understand the domain of neuroscience in a more in-depth manner, neuromarketing is likely to remain one of my main interest domains for long term. Randomly discovering it, through my literature reviews and my research, I have understood the important role of un-distortional assessing biological reactions in developing communication and advertising strategies. At the same time, I have discovered the complexity of human being, of the brain and of all the variables that can influence us in making decisions. In this context, the role of subliminal messages and emotions is still to be researched.

Being constantly preoccupied by answering to research questions, by discovering new information on the most interesting topics within the communication domain, I have become interested in both conducting research and help others to disseminate their results. In this context, a part of the thesis is presenting my editorial contribution, my awards and my research grants.

It is a natural desire to evolve both humanly and professionally. Therefore, considering the above presented academic and research experience, and the nowadays societal and technological evolution, it is imperious to further develop myself, to update the information I communicate with students, and to upgrade the research topics I follow.

In the attempt to describe the scientific evolution, this thesis, based on each research interests, describes the main papers published in each domain. The future professional perspectives are very much linked with the present interests. From the point of view of my teaching context, I will further develop my courses. My previous experience and the need of new knowledge facilitate the perspective of improving the topics for each class.

The scientific and research activity should follow two directions. First, the interaction with the scientific world can be materialized through a continuous publication attempts in order to disseminate the obtained results. In addition, the participation in international conferences is as equally important for dissemination and for receiving professional feedback. Second, in this context, developing research projects in collaboration with other entities is beneficial for creating international scientific relationships and for increasing the quality of empirical data.

Although the research topics developed till this moment are diverse, there is a permanent predilection to study certain interdisciplinary domains in the future. There are two main such domains: new technologies (intelligent advertising and the use of new technologies by elderly) and neuromarketing (with all its sub-domains, as emotions in advertising, the role of subliminal messages, the decision making process).