

The electoral campaign through Social Media.

Case Study – 2014 Presidential elections in Romania

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Abstract

Developing a real network-society, the political communication through Social Media is no longer performing unidirectional, the political actors and the journalists do not have the same influence on the masses, as they had in the classic systems of political communication and the online opinion leaders have become key-factors in all this equation. In this sense, the main purpose of online campaign staff is to empower fans to interact with the posts of the candidate. Thus, any kind of feedback – like, comment or share – decentralizes the political message in social groups of fans, where he has a greater influence than the political actor. Once the message is discussed in social groups, strong ties (friends) of the fans are persuaded to become, in their turn, fans of the political actor and the conversion rate increase and this process will continue as long as interaction rate is high. In this paper, we aim to analyse the communication process through Facebook in the electoral campaign for the 2014 Romanian Presidential Elections and to compare the level of support for candidates on Facebook and for the real vote.

Keywords

political communication; Social Media; Presidential elections; Facebook; interactions

Introduction

The electoral communication through social networking sites (SNSs) has experienced an increasing professionalisation from the Romanian's parliamentary elections in 2008 – when it was introduced for the first time the electoral communication strategies, in Romania – until the Presidential elections in 2014.

Developing a real network-society, the political communication through Social Media is no longer performing unidirectional, the political actors and the journalists do not have the same influence on the masses, as they had in the classic systems of political communication and the online opinion leaders have become key-factors in all this equation. If at the parliamentary elections in 2008 and 2012, Social Media were used only as unidirectional media¹, the candidates were not fully empowered the new resources of web 2.0, at the presidential election in 2014 most candidates understood that not the parties have the control in Social Media, but the online political citizens (OPC²).

1 Tănase TaseŢe, „Social Media and Political Communication. Case study – The Parliamentary Parties in Romania”, *Sfera Politicii*, Vol XXI, 174 (2013)

2 Tănase TaseŢe, *Comunicarea politică prin Social Media și reacțiile publicului online* (București: Universitara, 2014).

Furthermore, the communication staffs understood much better in 2014 that the Facebook pages of the candidates (sources of the political message) is not necessarily a space for debate, but rather a source of message dissemination in the social groups of their fans, where it is debated between friends (strong ties). In other words, in Social Media, the communication process is conducted by the online political citizens (Facebook fans of the politician) that personalizes the political message, share and debate it through interpersonal communication in their social groups, and the percentage of generating standardized opinions streams is higher.

In this sense, the main purpose of the online campaign staff is to empower fans to interact with the posts of the candidate. Thus, any kind of feedback – like, comment or share – decentralizes the political message in the fans' social groups, where they have a greater influence than the political actor. Once the message is discussed in social groups, the strong ties (friends) of the fans are persuaded to become, in their turn, fans of the political actor and the conversion rate will increase. The new fans will bring, in their turn, other fans and this process will continue as long as interaction rate is high.

If we analyze from the perspective of the substance of the communication process, the political communication through Social Media follows the „americanization“ trend – in fact, the „americanization“ phenomenon is much higher in this informational age – the speech quality has considerably decreased, the style used by politicians on Facebook is mostly colloquial, the topics used by political actors in social networks are mostly non-political and the political issues, mostly, are presented by them as entertainment news (infotainment).

The „Obama 2008“ pattern, implement in 2014 Romanian Presidential election

The most visible involvement of social media in political and electoral communication strategies was observed in the presidential campaign in the United States in 2008. As Maria Magdalena Jianu stated, „not TV channels like CNN or ABC have brought Obama decisive advantage, but the SNSs, like Facebook, Myspace, forums, blogs, generally frequented by students (Obama had 320, 000 online supporters, compared to Hillary Clinton – 5,300)“³.

Thus, we find that the supremacy of the television in political communication, as we know it from the early stages of professionalization of the political communication systems, is over, and it was replaced by the SNSs, that offer unprecedented opportunity to exploit a public, overlooked so far by other means of mass communication: youths. Moreover, Obama has recorded an unique performance among young people – 18-29 years old.

The communicators from his staff have succeeded, thanks to the implementation of effective strategies of communication through Social Media, without replacing the traditional media, to stimulate and mobilize social groups of youths, otherwise considered, from the point of view of elections, a critical category, lukewarm and skeptical about the effectiveness of any proposed political program. The method whereby Obama's strategy managed to „raise“ the youths was to satisfy their needs of interaction, to update constantly the information and to diversify the online channels of mass communication.

We have to specify that Obama's communicators have used all Social Media's components: from Facebook, Youtube, Flickr, Twitter, to social network

³ Maria Magdalena Jianu, Elena Jianu, „Aspecte ale comunicării politice actuale“, *Analele Universității „Constantin Brâncuși“ din Târgu Jiu, Seria Litere și Științe Sociale* 3(2009):27.

for professionals, LinkedIn, to stimulate including occupational groups. The huge success of Obama from 2008 has mobilized many political actors to use online social networking platforms for presentation and promotion of the electoral message and they have heavily relied on meeting the needs of debating, that customizes the online audience.

Even in Germany, a country where, according to studies conducted in 2008, „most German politicians can not stand political communication through social media“⁴, Obama's success due to social networks recorded between 2010 and 2012, according to a study conducted by three researchers, Stefan Stieglitz, Tobias Brockmann, Linh Dang Xuan⁵, a significant increase (5-8 times higher in 2012 compared to 2010) of the interest of German citizens, specially of the political parties on this new way to convey the political messages and to interact with voters.

Also in Romania the interest of politicians to use Social Media in electoral campaigns and in usual political communication with voters is recent. The first election campaign analyzed by researchers in Romania are those of the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2008 and 2009. Among them, we recall a study entitled „Social Media and political communication. Case study – Romania's parliamentary parties“⁶, which shows that Romania's parliamentary parties in moderate proportion use Social Media to spread political messages and interaction with voters. The same study shows that political parties which had a great support in Social Media (both in terms of number of fans, and especially the interaction) were successful in the 2009 parliamentary elections, managing an electoral score that allowed accession to government.

Also, the political parties which have exploited the benefits of promoting the image and political messages through social networks, have received an active participation from the supporters on their Facebook sites, generating a very high rate of interaction and engagement to their posts.

In fact, the interaction has become the main aim of all campaign strategists. The success of political communication through Social Media was translated, first of all, by the degree of adherence to the political messages of the political actors and by the degree of interaction that these messages can provide.

If the interaction was ensured, the secondary aim is inviting the social media users to participate in promoting the campaign message in their social groups – if we talk about electoral campaign, but also for collective decision making, if we talk about the government processes.

However, the usage level of social media in political communication in Romania is still very small compared to the US electoral processes online. Diana Cismaru notes that, comparing with American examples, in Romania the politicians and the communicators still do not understand „the specific of the network, which consists in focusing on the public interest, accessibility and interaction“⁷. Also, it is found that politicians from Romania do not have constant activity in Social Media (ex. Iohannis has built his Facebook page on May 29, 2014, just four months before the start of the campaign), and if they have a Facebook page for more than 2 years, they use it more for unilateral communication (ex. Victor Ponta, 2012).

4 Stefan Stieglitz, Tobias Brockmann, Linh Dang Xuan, „Usage of Social Media for Political Communication“, *PACIS 12 Proceedings*, <http://aisel.aisnet.org/pacis2012/22>

5 Stefan Stieglitz, Tobias Brockmann, Linh Dang Xuan, „Usage of Social Media for Political Communication“, *PACIS 12 Proceedings*, <http://aisel.aisnet.org/pacis2012/22>

6 Tănase Tasește, Ciucu Nicoleta, „Social Media and Political Communication. Case Study – The Parliamentary Parties in Romania“, *Sfera Politicii*, 174 (2013): 147-160

7 Diana Cismaru, *Social Media și Managementul reputației* (București: Tritonic, 2012), 48.

Case study: The electoral campaign through Social Media for the 2014 Presidential Elections

Aims

1. Analysing the communication process through Facebook in the electoral campaign for the 2014 Romanian Presidential Elections
2. Comparative analysing the level of support for candidates on Facebook and for the real vote.

Hypothesis

It is assumed that the political actor who manages to involve their fans more in commenting and sharing the political message, he will generate a higher conversion rate, which will lead to increased confidence vote.

Methodology

For achieving the objectives, we have used the quantitative analysis. We have centralized and comparative analyzed data from two dimensions: the real vote dimension and the support and interaction of Social Media dimension

In order to monitor the activity in Social Media, we have analyzed the evolution of the number of fans between 7th of November to 16, 2014, we have quantified the number of likes, comments and shares on each post and the total of the daily interactions, we have analyzed the types of posts and topics used by the candidates in the social network to compare them according to the engagement rate they are generating. We also calculated the conversion rate of the common users in fans, based the interactions of the main fans. We have used multiple sources of data centralization, among which the candidates' Facebook pages and the social media analysis website, www.socialbakers.com.

For data centralization from voting, we have used to the www.bec2014.ro website and we have analyzed the following indicators: the number of votes in Romania and the number of votes the Diaspora countries with the most votes.

Data centralization

a. Data centralization from the vote

According to the *Minutes regarding counting votes in the elections for President of Romania – 16th of November, 2014*⁸, the situation looks as follows:

1. In Romania, the total number of valid votes was 11,176,501, of which Klaus Iohannis has received 5,949,896 votes, representing 53.24% and Victor Ponta has received 5,225,605 votes, representing 46.76%.
2. In the Diaspora, the total number of valid votes was 377,651, but we will present only those countries with the highest voter turnout:
 - a. Italy (96,600 votes) – Klaus Iohannis received 85,579 votes, representing 88.59% and Victor Ponta has received 11,021 votes, representing 11.40%
 - b. Spain (82,744 votes) – Klaus Iohannis has received 74,995 votes, representing 90.63% and Victor Ponta has received 7,749 votes, representing 9.36%
 - c. Germany (17,506 votes) – Klaus Iohannis has received 16,816 votes, representing 96.05% and Victor Ponta has received 690 votes, representing 3.94%.
 - d. United Kingdom (25,850 votes) – Klaus Iohannis has received 24,533 votes, representing 94.90% and Victor Ponta has received 1,317 votes, representing 5.09%

⁸ <http://www.bec2014.ro/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Anexa-3-tur-2.tif>

e. Moldova (35,543 votes) – Klaus Iohannis has received 27,933 votes, representing 78.58% and Victor Ponta has received 7,610 votes, representing 21.41%.

f. United States (17,683 votes) – Klaus Iohannis has received 16,388 votes, representing 92.67% and Victor Ponta has received 1,295 votes, representing 7.32%

g. France (16,053 votes) – Klaus Iohannis has received 15,004 votes, representing 93.46% and Victor Ponta received 1,049 votes, representing 6.53%.

b. The data centralization in Social Media

On 28th of April 2014, when the last report⁹ of the number of users of Facebook users has been made, in Romania were about 7.2 million people accessing this social network, the Facebook penetration rate among the general population was 35.78%, and the Facebook penetration among Internet users in Romania was 74.67%.

Relating to the age groups, the most users (30.1%) were aged between 25 and 34 years old, followed by 18-24 years old (27.2%), 35-44 years old (17.4%), 45-54 years old (7.3%), 55-64 years old (3.4%) and those over 65 years old (1.3%). The audience aged between 13 to 17 years, meaning the people who do not vote, are representing 13.4% of total users. Relating to gender, 63.93% are male and 36.07% female.

The distribution of the Facebook fans of the two candidates, by geographical area, is as follows:

Victor Ponta (total no. of fans, 16 th of November 2014 – 715, 226)			Klaus Iohannis (total no. of fans, 16 th of November 2014 – 848, 419)		
Country	No. of fans	% from total no. of fans	Country	No. of fans	% from total no. of fans
Romania	644,418	90.1%	Romania	681,280	80.3%
Italy	15,734	2.2%	Italy	44,117	5.2%
Spain	6,437	0.9%	Spain	22,907	2.7%
Germany	4,291	0.6%	Germany	21,210	2.5%
U.K.	5,006	0.7%	U.K.	16,119	1.9%
Moldova	2,145	0.3%	Moldova	7,635	0.9%
U.S.A.	2,145	0.3%	U.S.A.	6,787	0.8%
France	2,145	0.3%	France	6,787	0.8%

As a consequence of monitoring the Social Media activity of the two candidates, we have centralized the following indicators that will help us to achieve correlations and comparisons of the performance of Victor Ponta and Klaus Iohannis in this channel of communication.

Thus, we have centralized the following indicators: the number of fans by days, the number of posts by days, the number of likes, comments and shares, the total number of interactions and the engagement rate by days.

⁹ <http://www.facebrands.ro/demografice.html#evolutie>

Victor Ponta's Facebook activities in electoral campaign – summarizing table

Date	No. of fans	No. of posts	No. of like	No. of comments	No. of shares	Total interactions	Users Engagement rate / days
7.10.2014	659,303	1	9,673	752	659	11,084	1.68%
8.10.2014	660,407	0	0	0	0	0	0%
9.10.2014	662,397	5	37,070	3,789	92	45,245	1.36%
10.10.2014	664,978	7	68,553	6,595	7,091	82,239	1.77%
11.10.2014	668,020	11	108,449	16,267	11,273	135,989	1.85%
12.10.2014	672,310	9	120,508	15,937	10,539	146,984	2.43%
13.10.2014	676,378	8	116,071	18,377	10,620	145,068	2.68%
14.10.2014	681,063	14	140,370	16,266	13,612	170,248	1.79%
15.10.2014	686,734	14	190,780	18,847	16,063	225,690	2.35%
16.10.2014	715,226	5	103,332	25,871	4,123	133,326	3.73%
TOTAL		74	894,806	122,701	78,366	1,095,873	2.18%

Klaus Iohannis' Facebook activities in electoral campaign – summarizing table

Date	No. of fans	No. of posts	No. of like	No. of comments	No. of shares	Total interactions	Users Engagement rate / days
7.10.2014	484,289	5	102,989	3,128	22,037	128,154	5.29%
8.10.2014	491,660	6	104,898	4,085	27,039	136,022	4.61%
9.10.2014	506,223	5	108,578	6,078	39,838	154,494	6.10%
10.10.2014	520,927	4	92,308	4,992	33,264	130,564	6.27%
11.10.2014	543,910	11	246,080	17,178	37,280	300,538	5.02%
12.10.2014	565,718	18	397,804	24,211	40,464	462,479	4.54%
13.10.2014	586,602	16	169,913	9,726	31,963	211,602	2.25%
14.10.2014	606,179	10	274,853	12,383	64,810	352,046	5.81%
15.10.2014	662,968	6	233,075	11,199	22,701	266,975	6.71%
16.10.2014	848,419	21	1,773,722	78,287	179,931	2,031,940	11.40%
TOTAL		102	3,504,220	171,267	499,327	4,174,814	5.80%

Data analysis

The Evolution of the number of fans

During the monitoring period, November 7 to 16, the candidate Victor Ponta has generated a growth rate of fans of 7.82%. On the other hand, Klaus Iohannis has generated a growth rate of 42.92%. The last one, as we can see in the chart below, has managed to overcome the first, on the voting day, 16th of October, 2014, succeeding an increase of 242,240 fans in just two days. We must specify that the Facebook page of Klaus Iohannis was built on 29 May 2014, about 4 months before the start of the election campaign and the Facebook page of Victor Ponta was built on 22 December 2010.

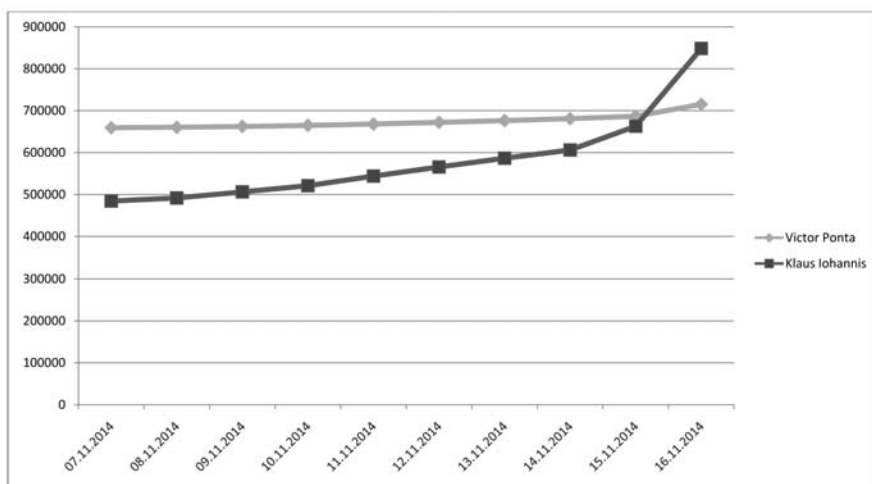


Figure 1 – The evolution of the number of fans of the two candidates, from 7 to 16 November 2014

Types of posts

The campaign team of Iohannis used a wider range of posts than Victor Ponta's team. If Victor Ponta has used photos as their principal means of communication through Facebook (81.10% of total posts), Klaus Iohannis has used videos in a proportion of 30.70%, photos – 29.70%, links – 19.80% and statuses – 18.80%. Videos and links have been used in a proportion of 10.80% and 8.10% in the case of Victor Ponta and events, in 1%, in the case of Iohannis.

Regarding the engagement of the fans at different types of post, the situation is shown in the following way:

- Iohannis has generated the highest rates of engagement to videos, 8.23%, to photos – 7.44% and statuses – 5.31%. Links and events have generated a low rate of engagement, 2.02% and 0.90%
- Ponta has generated the highest engagement rate to photos, 2.38%. The posts in which he has used videos, the rate was 1.30%, and links – 1.29%.

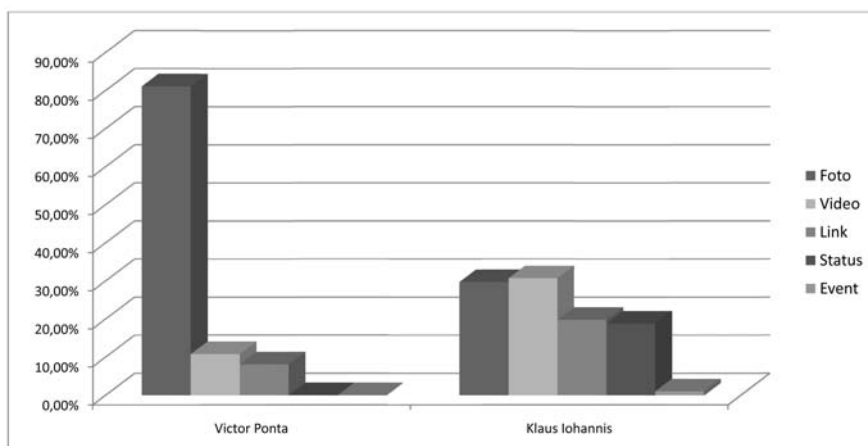


Figure 2 – Types of posts used by the two candidates

The subjects used in posts

The electoral communication of Victor Ponta in Social Media was focused on messages of support came from several personalities (40.54%), among which we mention: Dorel Vișan, George Ivașcu, Gabriela Szabo, Helmuth Duckadam, Titi Aur, Ilie Năstase, Leonard Doroftei, Anghel Iordănescu, Tudor Gheorghe, Radu Beligan, Matteo Renzi (the Prime Minister of Italy), Ioan Holender, Martin Schulz (The President of European Parliament), Sigmar Gabriel (Vice Chancellor of Germany), Sorin Oprescu, Gianni Pittella (leader of the Social Democratic Party in the European Parliament), Raed Arafat, Sorin Ilfoveanu, Marius Bodochi și Pavel Năstase (Rector of the Academy of Economic Studies from Bucharest). On this segment, the engagement rate was on average 2%, below his overall average engagement of 2.18%. News and announcements of the Premier activities represented 21.57% of all posts, political statements represented 16.22%, references to competing candidate – 14.87, birthdays – 4.06%, religious holidays and campaign activities – 2.70% each.

On the other hand, the Social Media campaign team of Klaus Iohannis focused on commercial postings (political advertising) – 25.74%, resulting a high engagement rate (7.55%) – well above his overall average of 5.80%. The references to the competing candidate represented a percentage of 24.75% of the total number of posts, notifications about radio and TV appearances – 24.75%, political statements – 22.77% and campaign activities – 1.98%. The references to the competing candidate amounted to an engagement rate of 5.15%, below the general average of 5.80%. Political statements and notifications generated a very low rate of engagement, compared with the overall average.

Categories topics	Candidate	
	Victor Ponta	Klaus Iohannis
Messages of support from personalities	40.54%	0%
Advertising election	0%	25.74%
Political statement	16.22%	22.77%
References to the competing candidate	14.87%	24.75%
Government Activity	21.57%	0%
Campaign activities	2.70%	1.98%
Birthdays	4.06%	0%
Religious celebrations	2.70%	0%
Notifications	0%	24.75%

The evolution of interactions and engagement rates of the fans

Klaus Iohannis has managed to engage better its online audience for interactions than Victor Ponta. Iohannis achieved an overall performance of 3.81 times more interactions than Ponta, with the remark that on day of vote, 16th of November, Klaus Iohannis managed to persuade his fans to interact 15.24 times more than his opponent.

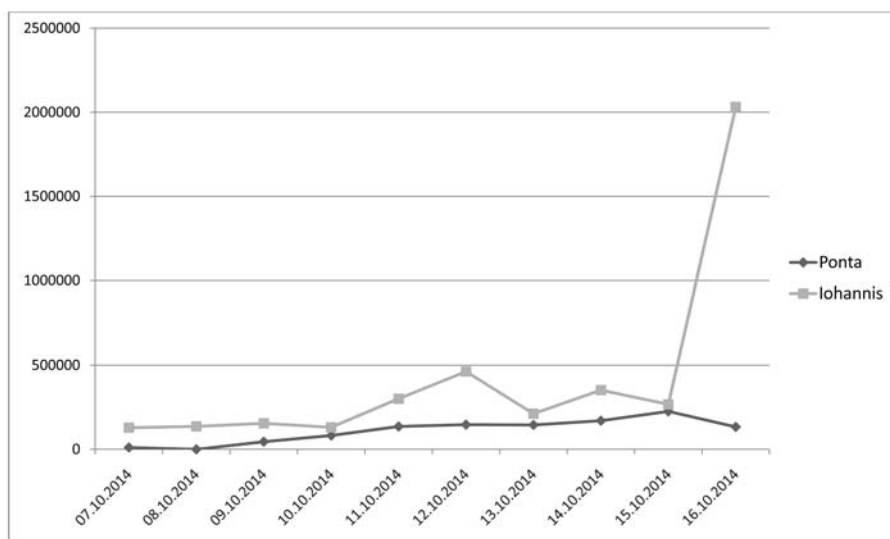


Figure 3 – The evolution of the interactions

During the monitoring period, we have observed between the numbers of comments submitted by fans of the two candidates, there is a relative equality. The difference is made on the voting day (16th of November), when the number of comments on Klaus Iohannis' Facebook page increased from an average of about 10.000 comments to 80.000 (8 times more).

On Victor Ponta's Facebook page there was some constancy on the number of comments, ranging from 16.000 to almost 26.000 between 11th to 16th of November 2014.

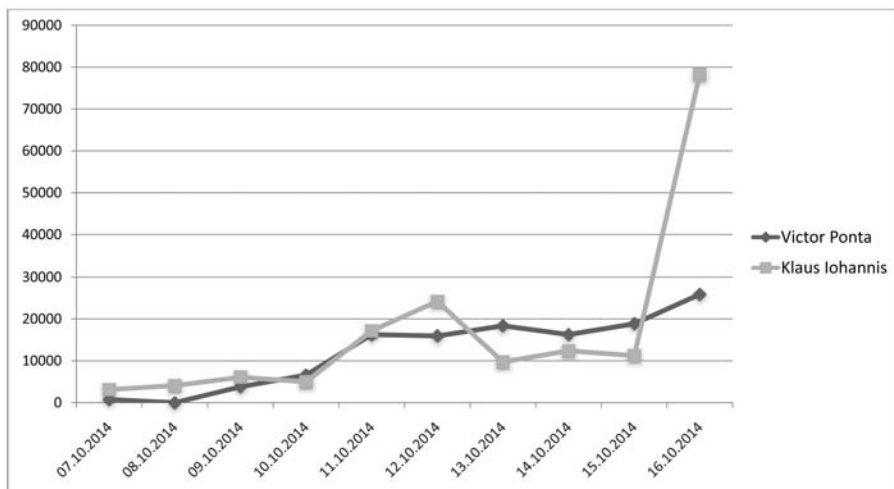


Figure 4 – The evolution of the number of comments

The difference between the two candidates is made by the number of shares, the indicator that sends the information the fastest in social groups of fans and generates the fastest conversion of regular Facebook users in fans or online political citizens. In the chart below we can see that the political information on Klaus Iohannis page is shared by fans 62 times more than the information displayed on Victor Ponta's Facebook page.

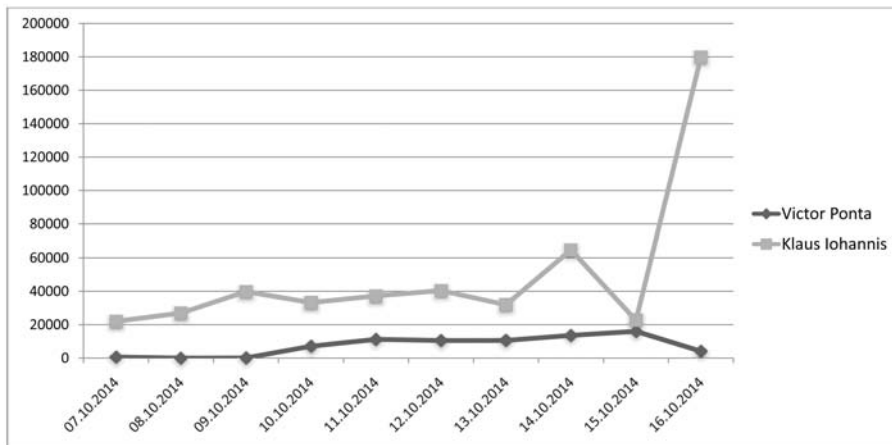


Figure 5 – The evolution of the shares

Regarding the engagement rate, Klaus Iohannis managed to engage better his Facebook supporters on commenting and sharing the posted information, compared to Victor Ponta. Iohannis achieved an average engagement rate of 5.80% versus 2.18% as recorded on Ponta's page. Even if he generated a downward trend during the period 7 to 13 November 2014, Klaus Iohannis managed to mobilize his supporters on Facebook on 14-16 of November, generating an increase of 9.15 percent of the engagement rate. On the last day, 16th of November, Klaus Iohannis registered an engagement rate of 11.40%, almost 2 times higher than the overall average. On the other hand, Victor Ponta has generated a relatively constant engagement rate throughout the lap 2, which fluctuated between 1.3% and 2.68%. On the last day, November 16, his engagement rate increased to 3.73%.

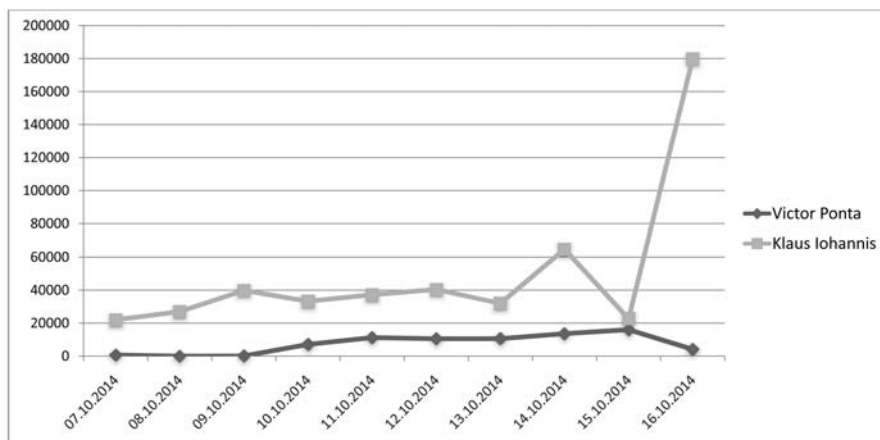


Figure 6 – The evolution of the engagement rate

The evolution of the conversion rate

Calculating the conversion rate based on fans interactions, as vectors of information communication in social groups, we note that, due to the large number of interactions, Klaus Iohannis managed to transform many common users from the social groups of his fans or online political citizens (OPC). The new fans will bring also other fans and this process will continue as long as the interactions rate is high. We can observe that the average rate of conversion of Iohannis is 9.37%. about 2 times higher than Victor Ponta's rate (4.68%).

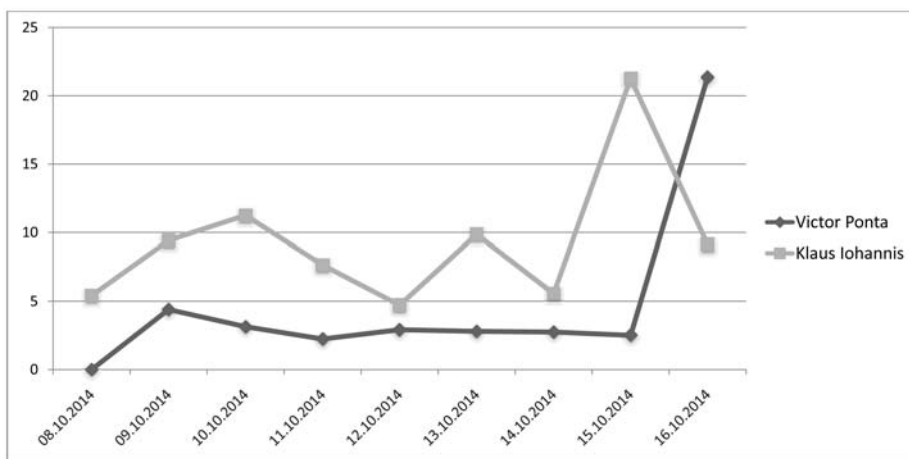


Figure 7 – The evolution of the conversion rate

Comparative analysis of the key-indicators of Social Media

	VICTOR PONTA	KLAUS IOHANNIS
Increase fans no.	7.82%	42.92%
Total posts	74	101
Political/nonpolitical topics	89.19% – political topics; 10.81% – nonpolitical topics	92.08 – political topics; 7.92% – nonpolitical topics
Topics posts by categories	40.54% – messages of support from personalities 16.22% – political statement 14.87% – references to competing candidate 8.11% – Government economic news 6.76% – Premier message 4.06% – birthdays 2.70% – campaign activities. 2.70% – external meetings 2.70% – religious holiday	25.74% – political advertising. 24.75% – references to competing candidate 24.75% – notifications 22.77% – political statement 1.98% – campaign activities
Total no. of likes	894,806 likes	3,504,220 likes
Total no. of comments	122,701 comments	171,267 comments
Total no. of shares	78,366 shares	499,327 shares
Total no. of interactions	1,095,873 interactions	4,174,814 interactions
The average engagement rate	2.18%	6.14%
The average conversion rate	4.68%	9.37%

Comparative analysis of the percentages of the vote and the support on Facebook – Romania and Diaspora

Summarizing and analyzing the data obtained from the Central Electoral Bureau and those obtained from the social media analysis website, www.socialbakers.com, we have realized correlations that can help us to understand some similarities between the virtual environment and the support of the real environment. Thus, we can observe in the table below that are relatively small percentage differences between Facebook support and vote support. Klaus Iohannis won 53.24% of the vote on Romanian territory, compared to Victor Ponta, who received 46.76%, from 96.83% which represent the valid votes only in Romania, without Diaspora. Relating to online support, Klaus Iohannis has 681,280 Facebook fans from Romania, according to data from socialbakers.com, compared to Victor Ponta, who has 644,418 Romanian fans. On Facebook, the ratio of the two candidates is 48.61%, support for Victor Ponta and 51.39% – support for Iohannis.

The same correlations we have made also for some Diaspora countries. Thus, in Italy, the real situation of vote was 11.40% (Ponta) and 88.95% (Iohannis), and the ratio on Facebook was 26.29% (Ponta) and 73.71% (Klaus Iohannis). Votes from Italy represented 0.81% of the total valid votes.

COUNTRY	No. of votes	% voting	REAL VOTES				SOCIAL MEDIA			
			Victor Ponta		Klaus Iohannis		Victor Ponta		Klaus Iohannis	
			Votes	%	Votes	%	Fans	%	Fans	%
Romania	11553152	96.83%	5225605	46.76%	5949896	53.24%	644418	48.61%	681280	51.39%
Italy	96600	0.81%	11021	11.40%	85579	88.95%	15734	26.29%	44117	73.71%
Spain	82744	0.69%	7749	9.36%	74995	90.63%	6437	21.94%	22907	78.06%
Germany	17506	0.15%	690	3.94%	16816	96.05%	4291	16.83%	21210	83.17%
UK	25850	0.22%	1317	5.09%	24533	94.90%	5006	23.70%	16119	76.30%
Moldova	35543	0.30%	7610	21.41%	27933	78.58%	2145	21.93%	7635	78.07%
USA	17683	0.15%	1295	7.32%	16388	92.67%	2145	24.01%	6787	75.99%
France	16053	0.13%	1049	6.53%	15004	93.46%	2145	24.01%	6787	75.99%

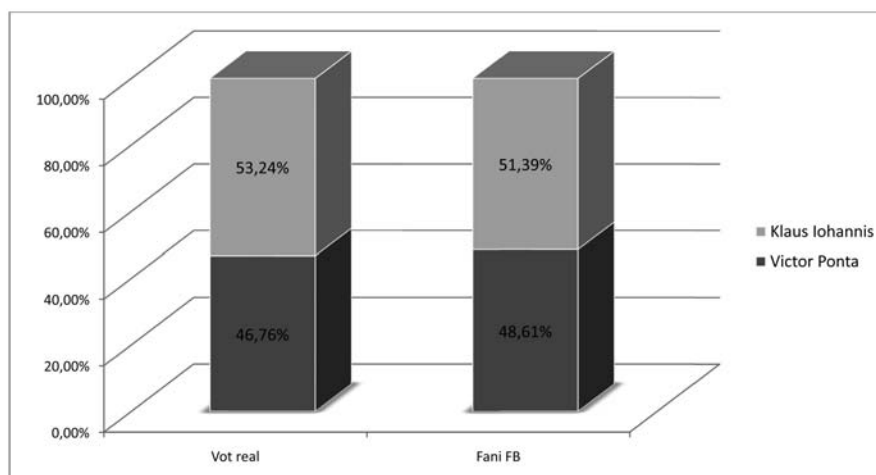


Figure 8 – Comparison between the real vote situation and the Facebook support (voters from Romania – 96.83% of the valid votes)

Conclusions

According to this study, comparing it with the 2012 parliamentary elections, we can observe a high increase of the professionalism of the electoral communication through Social Media in 2014.

While in the previous elections, the political actors have focused on their message rather than on the feedback it generates, in the 2014 elections, the candidates have focused on interaction and the fact that their online supporters can become a very important communication vectors, as they have a greater influence than politicians in the social groups to which they belong.

Moreover, it was found that the politician who connects to multimedia resources and transmits the most comprehensive range of categories of posts, generates a greater engagement rate, that means a higher conversion rate. For example. Klaus Iohannis used mostly videos for transmitting his electoral message – means that invites Facebook users to interaction. Also, he used photos, links and statuses. Victor Ponta focused his online communication strategy only on text and photo posts.

Also, Victor Ponta lost his influence in the online environment because he didn't focused his communication strategy on the online public typology, mostly young users. From the analysis, it was found that his strategy of winning image capital due to the support from cultural and political personalities, failed to generate a high engagement rate. This strategy may influence an older audience, but not on a younger audience.

On the other hand, Klaus Iohannis adapted his communication strategy to the typology of the Facebook public and he has focused his communication on advertising messages – in which only the qualities were highlighted –, on messages that attack the opponent, on message announcing the presence to radio or television program or on political statements. Moreover, Klaus Iohannis managed to generate almost 4 times more interaction than Victor Ponta and this aspect increased the conversion rate from day to day.

All this Social Media indicators were compared with the voting confidence and our assumption is confirmed – according to which the political actor who manage to generate debate around his political message, will generate a higher conversion rate (from common users to fans) and also a higher confidence vote.

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