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# The Broadcasting of Political Agents and Actors on TV News in the 1996 Elections in Romania

BY BRUNO STEFAN

## Introduction

**T**HE measurement of tv's involvement in election campaign is a usual thing in the western countries. Each important TV station has a research department which monitors the presence of electoral agents and competitors on the TV screen, in order to rationally divide broadcasting time. In the meantime, the research

institutes make measurements for all TV studios, taking into account much more variables which are meant to reveal the ways a television can influence the electoral behaviours in the expected direction.

In Romania, the problem of measuring the TV's implications in the electoral campaign had not existed until the 1996 elections. The main reason

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was that, until this elections, the debates between electoral candidates were broadcast almost exclusively by the Romanian Television - SOTI studio had, in its short existence a weak audience, because of the late hours and the restricted area of broadcasting. The criticisms brought to the TVR involvement in the campaign for Ion Iliescu's party were numerous and solidly proved, and they had an important role in building the programs of private TV stations which appeared after 1993. Since Tele 7abc, Antena 1 and PRO TV have become alternative sources of information, the Public Television had to change its discourse, and the support for the same political forces became more subtle.

The research below began in October 1995, when the attempts of manipulation through the impartial news presentation became more obvious. In the same news program one could see on TVR how Ion Iliescu was welcomed with cheers, flowers, bread and salt in a village of Giurgiu, and immediately after, a piece of news was showing some students contesting Emil Constantinescu because they wanted a "capable rector". On Tele 7 abc, the same day, the public saw Ion Iliescu rejected by the peasants in the department Giur-

giu, which were throwing potatoes and tomatoes at the presidential team, while Emil Constantinescu, in a ceremonial atmosphere, was awarding Mario Vargas Llosa the Doctor Honoris Causa title of University of Bucharest.

Such half-truths and tendentious interpretation of the events which concerned the two candidates to the supreme position in the state (the above mentioned case was not the only one and one can remember many other situations which appeared on the other TV stations, private ones, but especially on the public television) raised a lot of questions for the researchers of the Independent Centre of Social Studies and Polls (CIS).

*8 is it possible to draw up a programming schedule to quantify the partisan spirit of each TV station?*

*8 how can the TV assessment criteria be thought, criteria which shouldn't be tendentious, themselves marked by the political sympathies of the researchers working at the analysis?*

*8 in what way can such manipulating tendencies be prevented and sanctioned, in order to secure a correct broadcasting of the campaign?*

Trying to give an answer to these questions CIS launched the research regarding the monitoring of TV studios involvement in the political life and in the election campaign.

## The Methodology of Research

**T**HE research began with a plot phase in which were taken into account more than 200 variables. Only the most significant ones were retained as they could be subjects both to comparative analyses between studios, and to a study regarding the evolution in time.

As the result of the polls made both by CIS and by other institutes of sociology were showing that the evening news reels (between 19.30-21.30) had a high audience on every TV station, a special attention was given to them. Their monitoring concerned quota flowing aspects:

*1. The news hierarchy according to its reference fields (home, politics, economics, social, foreign affairs, international, other non-political internal, various) taking into account both their duration and their frequency.*

*2. The measurement of the share granted to the main political and social agents: of (president, presidency, government, justice, army, police, Romanian Intelligence Service, The Social Democracy Party of Romania), of the opposition (CDR, USD, ANL, UNC, other parties) and others (local administration, the Deputy Chamber, the Senate, the Church, trade unions, and other organisations of the civil society).*

*3. The identification of the news with obvious political implications, but also the subsidiary ones (in which the electoral wasn't the direct topic of the news) and of the mass-media agents.*

*4. The frequency of political parties on TV news.*

*5. The hierarchy of the most broadcast political actors under the TV news program.*

*6. The circumstances of broadcasting of the above mentioned actors (usual, conflictual, ceremonial).*

*7. The topic tackled by this agents according to their programs performance and the other competitors.*

*8. The assessment of those*

*agents by each TV station.*

*9. The assessment of actors and political parties.*

*10. The frequency of broad-casting special topics with great electoral impact: inflation-wages, social protection, corruption, edilitary actions, NATO and EU integration, the relation with Hungary.*

All these aspects were measured from the point of view of both frequency and the duration.

To simplify this analysis, one week every month was selected at random. These weeks of monitoring during the election campaign were: **22-28 of April, 22-28 of May, 22-28 of July, 19-25 of September, 30-6 of October, 12-18 of November.**

The April-November interval had three great periods:

**1. The campaign for the local elections (April-May 1996)**

**2. The pre-campaign for the general and presidential elections (July-August 1996)**

**3. The campaign for the general and presidential elections (September-November 1996).**

This monitoring was possible due to the help of the team

made up of researchers and professors of social studies / sciences, coordinated by the executive director of CIS, Pavel Campeanu. This team was composed of:

8 Gabriel Nagat - researcher at the Philosophy Institute of Romanian Academy

8 Bruno Stefan - university assistant at "Politehnica" University and CIS researcher

8 Marin Burcea - researcher at the Center of Regional Sociology

8 Silvia Cotofan - university assistant at the Faculty of Journalism of Bucharest University

8 Romulus Brancoveanu - researcher at the Institute of Educational Sciences

8 Gabriel Ivan - researcher at the Institute of educational Sciences

8 Camelia Baciu - researcher at the Institute of Sociology of the Romanian Academy

8 Dan Oprescu - researcher at the Center of Political Studies and Comparative Analysis

8 Daniela Murgoci - expert at the Council for Coordination, Strategy and Economic Reform

8 Simona Stefanescu - researcher at the Institute of Sociology of the Romanian Academy

8 Anca Daia - university assistant at the National School of Political and Administrative Studies

8 Gabriela Russo - researcher at the Institute of Hygiene

### The Broadcasting of Political Agents in TV news shows

**B**Y “agents” were designated the social and political

institutions which were the carrier of the actions that made the main object of the news, and also the persons which were talking on behalf of those institutions. The data below refer to the frequency of the presence of the screen of the main political and social actors, which were grouped into power agents, opposition’s agents and un-registered politically agents

#### Commentaries:

- The Romanian Television began the campaign with a significant broadcasting of presi-

Table 1

Mediatization Frequency of the Agents on the National TV Channel 1 (TVR 1)

Agents	Months						
	April	May	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov
President	12.3	15.9	8.4	3.05	8.45	2.8	5.27
Government	20	26	19.6	21.37	18.83	13.41	18.43
Justice	3	1.8	0.9	2.3	1.94	2.23	6.58
Army	4.6	0.9	13.9	6.11	2.6	3.35	1.31
Police & SRI*	2.3	5.3	12.2	3.82	1.94	1.68	6.58
SDPR	4	1.8	4.7	6.11	1.3	4.47	1.31
SDPR Allies	2.3	1.8	-	0.76	**	**	**
CDR	0.5	2.7	4.7	3.82	1.94	2.79	13.16
Other opposition parties	5.5	3.6	9.3	1.52	7.79	23.46	3.95
Parliament	5.1	4.5	1.9	3.05	7.14	9.5	2.62
Local Administration	4	7	7.5	11.45	3.9	4.47	7.9
Church	2.3	5.3	1.9	3.05	0.65	1.12	2.62
Patronage	5.5	0.9	2.8	13.74	9.75	12.85	5.27
Syndicates	1.6	4.5	1.9	3.82	0.65	1.12	13.16
Other civil society organisations	27	18	10.3	16.03	33.12	16.75	11.84

\* Romanian Information Service

\*\* Period in which SDPR governed without declared political allies

dent Iliescu (by May the news referring to him had amounted to almost 16% ), this broadcasting decreasing after the local elections.

- The Government was the institution the most shown on the screen. One out of five pieces of news had the government's as the topic.

- SDPR expressed itself almost exclusively through the actions of the institutions it ruled. As a party in competition with other political forces, it was pretty weakly represented, although the news about SDPR was both in frequency and in duration more numerous than that referring to the Democratic Convention.

- Until the second round of the presidential elections, SDPR had been prevailing at the TVR news, both by its agents (presidency, government, army, police, RIS, justice), and by other agents which, although declared as politically non-registered (such as the patronage), had SDPR leaders at their head, some of them being candidates in the elections.

- SDPR' allies (The Socialist Labour Party, Great Romania Party, National Unity Party of Romania) were almost ignored as long as they were in the government. They were given

attention especially after they left the power's spheres, becoming the new opposition.

- The opposition was present on the screen especially through small parties and alliances, which didn't overpass the electoral level of admission in Parliament (The Liberal National Alliance, The Socialist Party, The Socialist Labour Party, The National Center Union). The news about the DC was insignificant both in frequency and in duration. It was only the first round victory that brought TVR's attention on this alliance.

- As long as the government party had controlled TVR's news it fully broadcast itself. Over half of the news referred to the institutions it ruled. A third of it had as subject-matter colloquies symposia, meetings and actions of some organisations of the civilian society. The unions, which often acted against the government and declared their support the DC were almost inexistent on TVR. In the same situation was the local administration - under the control of the DC. Since it hadn't supported any political force, the Church was rarely seen at the TV news, except for Easter Day and Saint Mary Day.

**Table 2**

Mediatization Frequency of the Agents on Tele 7abc

Agents	Months						
	April	May	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov
President	5	2.4	5.6	1.26	3.9	1.33	2
Government	18.8	12.2	20.2	19	19.3	14.65	11
Justice	1.2	2.4	2.2	2.53	3.9	5.33	1
Army	1.2	-	6.8	1.26	2.6	4.01	1
Police & SRI*	12.5	8.5	3.4	11.4	3.9	6.67	4
PDSR	10	3.7	6.8	6.32	1.3	4.01	6
PDSR Allies	8.8	1.2	1.1	-	**	**	**
CDR	6.3	4.9	9	13.93	6.42	5.33	8
Other opposition parties	8.8	9.8	5.6	10.12	7.8	10.67	3
Parliament	11.2	3.6	-	1.26	16.73	12	2
Local Administration	2.5	2.4	9	5.06	14.12	12	6
Church	-	1.2	-	-	2.6	-	-
Patronage	3.7	3.7	7.8	7.6	3.9	-	12
Syndicates	6.3	13.5	5.6	1.26	8.4	4.01	4
Other civil society organisations	3.7	30.5	16.9	19	5.13	20	40

\* Romanian Information Service

\*\* Period in which SDPR governed without declared political allies

**Comments:**

- Unlike TVR, the time dedicated to the news about President Iliescu was much shorter at the private stations, a fact which proves the support which the national television granted to this candidate. The receiving by the president of an ambassador from an African country with which Romania didn't have any important relationship, became a very important event, fully broadcast at the beginning of "Actualitati" on TVR.

- The Government's actions were given attention by all the

TV stations. Antena 1 broadcast only a few pieces of news and Pro-Tv the most numerous pieces of news. The last months of the elections campaigns (October and November) reduced the frequency of government and ministerial appearances in the news programs almost by half.

- SDPR was much more present at the private stations (except Pro-Tv) than at the public station. Antena 1 presented a double number of pieces of news than TVR.

- DCR was the most often presented by Tele 7abc ( about 7,6



**Table 3**

Mediatization Frequency of the Agents on Antena 1

Agents	Months						
	April	May	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov
President	2.4	3.3	9.1	1.55	5.1	3.3	3.87
Government	20.1	7.6	10	17.83	13.6	13.29	6.97
Justice	1.3	0.8	4.6	4.66	8.5	4.95	1.55
Army	3	1.7	4.6	3.1	-	-	3.87
Police & SRI*	8.5	7.6	5.3	6.2	1.7	7.43	2.32
SDPR	3.7	8.4	4.6	8.53	5.9	5.78	6.97
SDPR Allies	1.8	1.7	0.8	2.32	**	**	**
CDR	2.4	5	3	12.4	6.8	5.78	8.53
Other opposition parties	7.3	4	10.7	10.85	15.12	9.07	9.3
Parliament	8	3.7	1.5	3.87	9.3	8.25	0.77
Local Administration	2.4	10	6.1	10.08	4.2	11.57	9.3
Church	0.6	-	0.8	1.55	1.7	1.65	-
Patronage	12.2	11.8	12.2	4.66	11.9	3.3	13.98
Syndicates	7.3	5	3.8	2.32	4.2	0.82	3.1
Other civil society organisations	19	29.4	22.9	10.08	11.9	24.81	29.47

\* Romanian Information Service

\*\* Period in which SDPR governed without declared political allies

percentages). Antena 1 devoted an equal time to SDPR and DCR (about 6,2% of the news, much more than Pro-Tv - 4,8% or TVR - 4,2%). These averages were significantly increased by the broadcasting of the DCR activity during the last monitoring period, precisely the period between the two presidency election ballots. All the TV stations foresaw the change and focused on the winners. The most radical change occurred at TVR and Pro-TV.

- Throughout seven months of elections, the four TV stations frequently presented the other

opposition parties. The most news was presented by Antena 1 (an excessive mediatization of the National Center Union - an alliance ruled by the Manager of Antena 1) and the least at ProTV - by half less than Antena 1. The percentage was about the same, 7,8, at Tele 7abc and TVR. But it is worth mentioning that during the most important period of the elections (in October), one out of four pieces of news was about an opposition party except the DCR at TVR. During the elections, the televisions created special programs in which the time was shared

**Table 4**

Mediatization Frequency of the Agents on ProTV

Agents	Months						
	April	May	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov
President	2.6	0.6	7.1	0.71	1.3	0.6	2.31
Government	21	17	14.2	26.25	26.9	13.26	13.84
Justice	6.5	1.3	5.6	4.96	9.6	7.68	7.69
Army	2.6	2.6	5	2.84	2.6	1.38	3.85
Police & SRI*	7.8	3.9	7.1	5.67	7	4.17	2.31
SDPR	-	5.8	2.8	2.12	-	2.78	3.08
SDPR Allies	1.3	2	-	1.41	**	**	**
CDR	4	3.9	3.5	5.67	5.1	1.38	10.77
Other opposition parties	7.8	5.8	5	4.25	7.1	3.18	2.31
Parliament	14	1.9	2.1	2.12	3.2	11.84	0.77
Local Administration	7.8	5.8	10	4.96	7.7	9.07	3.85
Church	4	0.6	-	1.41	0.6	-	-
Patronage	13	19.5	19.2	21.3	13.5	9.07	13.07
Syndicates	2.6	14.3	1.4	2.83	3.2	1.38	6.92
Other civil society organisations	5	15	17	13.5	12.2	34.21	29.23

\* Romanian Information Service

\*\* Period in which SDPR governed without declared political allies

according to the National Audio-Visual Council decisions. These programs were meant to take the election news away from the news programs. Yet it was presented by all the stations, but not significantly. The private televisions essentially reflected a situation confirmed by the elections. They presented the main parties proportionally to their best results in

October.

• Table 5 shows some very important things:

1. The Romanian Television tried to draw the public's attention to the other opposition parties which were ten times more present on the TV screen than this year.

**Table 5**

Mediatization Frequency of the Political Parties in October 1996

	TVR	Tele 7abc	Antena 1	ProTV
SDPR	4.47	4.01	5.78	2.78
DCR	2.79	5.33	5.78	1.38
Other parties	23.46	10.67	9.07	3.18

2. The station which tried to respect most the Audio-Video Council was ProTV.

3. The station which was the closest to the electorate options was Tele 7abc, closely followed by Antena 1.

- The actions of the employers' representatives were more often presented by ProTV (about 15% of all stations) and seldom by Tele 7abc (5,5 %). In

sent by the private stations in May, a favourite month for strikes in the last seven years.

- The civil society institutions (cultural, educational, scientific institutions) were equally presented by the four stations. No agent knew a simultaneous and continuous televising by all the TV stations. The average was one out of five pieces of news were about the civil institutions actions.

**Table 6**

Mediatization Frequency of the Power and Opposition Representatives

TV Station	Agents	April	May	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
TVR 1	Power	48.5	53.5	59.7	43.52	35.06	27.94	39.48
	Opposition	6	6.3	14	5.34	9.73	26.25	17.11
Tele 7abc	Power	57.5	30.4	46.1	41.77	34.9	36	25
	Opposition	15.1	14.7	14.6	24.05	14.22	16	11
Antena 1	Power	40.8	31.1	39	44.19	34.8	34.75	25.55
	Opposition	9.7	9	13.7	23.25	22	14.85	17.83
ProTV	Power	41.8	33.2	41.8	43.96	47.4	29.87	33.08
	Opposition	11.8	9.7	8.5	9.92	12.2	4.56	13.08

October - the top period of the elections - TVR was the most concerned station with the patronage's actions, as compared to the private stations.

- The most important media vector of the Trade Unions message was Tele 7abc. The public stations and Antena 1 were the most indifferent stations to the Trade Unions actions. These were often pre-

The grouping of the political agents into power and opposition agents emphasizes the above-mentioned conclusions once again (see Table 6).

### Observations

- At the beginning of the campaign in the spring of 1996 all the stations excessively presented the Power's messages. In April Tele 7abc was the sta-

tion which, at the same time, granted both the Power and the Opposition the most important number of minutes (57,5% and 15,1%). Generally, the Power was more present at the TV news than the Opposition. Even if there was a difference between the two forces during all the campaign, it fluctuated and finally diminished at the private televisions first and then at TVR.

- The greatest propaganda in favour of the Power's agents took place at TVR in July (almost 60% from the news), then this diminished by a half in the last month of the campaign.

- Excepting Tele 7abc, in April, and ProTV, in September, the private televisions showed the Power's agents with equal intensity: almost 38% of all the agents.

- The share of the news on governmental institutions as main agents was the closest in August - when the officials were in holidays and there were not events which could have been shown in a partisan way.

- In October, as the National Council of the Audio-Visual had also decided, the Power was shown the least on television.

- The Opposition's agents were also differently shown by the four televisions discussed. The greatest variation was on TVR, which presented them with the smallest share (5,3%) and the greatest (26,2%).

- Antena 1 and Tele 7abc were the televisions which gave the Opposition's agents the greatest time.

- ProTV was the television which presented the Opposition, as well as the Power, the least at the news reel: 10% on the average.

### The circumstances of TV showing of the political agents

**W**HEN monitoring the four televisions, three big categories of circumstances were taken into account, in which the agents can be shown: usual, conflictual and ceremonial. We thought that the way a political force is shown had a great impact on its public image. Not only does the frequency of its appearance matter to impose an image in the voters minds, but also the broadcasting circumstances, because a television can raise a party (showing them at length when receiving foreign guests or when seriously talking about the future of the country) or

can lower it (showing its conflicts with other forces, accusing it of corruption or immorality). As many well known researchers such as: P. Lazarsfeld, E. Katz, B. Berelson put it, these types of presentation have in the short run the effect of consolidating and confirming the existing electoral options, and, in the long run, the effect of changing the political behaviours. Presenting Ceausescu's pompous visits and receptions

or his inauguration of some building, didn't create too many Ceausescu's fans, it just consolidated the adhesions of those who just used to appreciate him; in the long run, this had an important role in changing of his image posthumously. As the polls show, the population perceives him as a good chief of state, who build many block-of-flats and who had good relations with all chiefs of state who used to

Table 7

Mediatization Circumstances of Political Agents  
(absolute frequencies)

TV Station	Agents	Circumst.	April	May	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov
TVR 1	Power	Usual	14	13	32	41	13	36	22
		Conflictual	10	8	12	4	6	3	1
		Ceremonial	60	39	20	12	35	11	7
	Opposition	Usual	4	2	12	2	8	45	9
		Conflictual	5	-	1	5	-	2	-
		Ceremonial	1	5	2	-	7	-	4
Tele 7abc	Power	Usual	18	8	21	16	15	16	25
		Conflictual	13	14	20	12	6	7	-
		Ceremonial	15	3	-	5	6	4	-
	Opposition	Usual	4	3	2	13	7	7	11
		Conflictual	1	9	10	5	-	-	-
		Ceremonial	7	-	1	1	4	5	-
Antena 1	Power	Usual	28	9	33	31	33	25	23
		Conflictual	26	16	15	22	6	12	3
		Ceremonial	13	12	3	4	2	5	7
	Opposition	Usual	7	4	16	17	22	9	12
		Conflictual	9	8	-	8	3	7	4
		Ceremonial	-	1	2	5	1	3	7
ProTV	Power	Usual	26	23	30	54	57	42	38
		Conflictual	4	24	20	3	7	-	5
		Ceremonial	2	4	9	5	10	-	-
	Opposition	Usual	2	5	7	11	9	7	14
		Conflictual	7	10	3	3	9	-	-
		Ceremonial	-	-	2	-	1	-	3

receive him like a king. This image is growing as the population's living standard is even lower.

That's why we thought that the circumstances of the TV broadcasting of the political forces are significant as to the TV's implication in political life (see Table 7).

### Comments:

- The data in the table above represent the absolute frequency of TV appearances. The data in the six previous tables represented the relative frequency, I mean the share of the appearances compared to the appearances of all agents, and the comments referred to these shares. The next comments will specially refer to the total number of appearances.

- On TVR, the Power benefited from an impressive number of ceremonious presentations. Almost half of the news (184 appearances out of 399, this means 46%) emphasized it pompously. No private television related so many ceremonies of the Social Democracy Party's leaders. Such presentations are four to six times fewer in the private studios: 30 on ProTV, 33 on Tele 7abc and 46 on Antena 1. These figures show that the TVR played a partisan and manipulating role

in the election campaign. Any visit of a foreign civil servant was shown, any official participation in foreign reunions and symposia was an intensely televised joy. At the beginning of the election campaign there was an outburst of such pompous news. In April, almost nine pieces of news a day showed the Power in ceremonies of national importance. Besides the news where it had a central place, there was almost no place for other home events. Even if over the next months the situation changed to a great extent, the TVR remained the station which showed the Power in the most pompous way.

- A similar situation can be found in the present actions of the Power in ceremonial circumstances by the private stations. In these circumstances they just showed the really important cases of public interest.

- The Power was the least presented on TVR in its conflictual situations (44 as compared to 63 on ProTV, 72 on Tele 7abc and 100 on Antena 1). And these conflicts became less and less shown as the campaign was going forward, the elections were coming nearer and the disputes with the other candidates had to be more obvious. On TVR the government

party refused the debates and reduced the news a lot that presented it in conflictual situations. Antena 1 was the one that presented the most situations of this.

- ProTV mostly showed the Power in usual circumstances such as: governmental meetings, ministerial decisions or press conferences, and this instances grew as the elections were coming nearer. Tele 7abc showed the least news about the Power.

- The Opposition received the greatest attention from Antena 1 (in absolute figures, not in percentage - 145 pieces of news) and the least from Tele 7abc (90). It was mostly shown in usual circumstances on all stations. Antena 1 and TVR were the ones that the most often presented it in this way.

- The Opposition in conflictual situations mostly caught the attention of Antena 1 and ProTV. TVR avoided the most to show it in these circumstances, preferring a reserved and neutral approach.

- ProTV presented the smallest number of the Opposition's ceremonial activities (6 in 7 months). The other televisions showed this type of activities on average of 2,7 pieces of news per week.

## Political Agents' Rhetoric

**T**HE study of the political agents' rhetoric was made appealing to the following categories of specific themes of the political discourse: programs, promises, performances, opponents (See Table 8).

### Comments:

- The Power began its campaign on TVR with messages that showed its performances during its governing. In April, seven pieces of news per day related homages and praises that the Power brought to itself. These praises for the governing success gave way to the discourses about programs, meant to justify the political line chosen.

- ProTV too (on the average - 20 pieces of news per week) and Antena 1 (15,7) created the image of the Power mostly by the discourses about its own results. Tele 7abc broadcast the least news with such messages (the average was a piece of news per day).

- The program that the SDPR delivered in the seven months of campaign was broadcast twice more often by TVR than by the private televisions.

- The Power didn't "fight" its opponents through TVR. The

**Table 8**  
Discourse Themes of Political Agents

TV Station	Agents	Themes	April	May	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov	
TVR 1	Power	Programs	18	34	36	30	16	23	9	
		Promises	6	7	2	1	10	11	6	
		Achievements	50	13	15	23	22	16	13	
		Adversaries	10	6	11	3	6	-	2	
	Opposition	Programs	3	6	15	2	7	42	4	
		Promises	1	-	-	-	5	3	4	
		Achievements	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	
		Adversaries	5	-	-	5	3	2	3	
	Tele 7abc	Power	Programs	22	4	11	10	5	16	-
			Promises	5	8	1	6	3	1	3
			Achievements	6	4	16	6	8	4	10
			Adversaries	13	2	13	11	11	6	12
Opposition		Programs	9	-	5	7	1	2	-	
		Promises	-	2	-	8	4	4	3	
		Achievements	-	4	1	1	2	2	4	
		Adversaries	3	6	7	3	4	4	4	
Antena 1		Power	Programs	19	9	4	26	8	8	4
			Promises	4	5	5	2	3	12	7
			Achievements	28	6	34	4	16	8	14
			Adversaries	16	17	8	25	14	14	8
	Opposition	Programs	1	1	13	15	10	8	4	
		Promises	5	5	2	4	4	5	9	
		Achievements	2	1	3	1	1	1	5	
		Adversaries	8	6	-	10	11	5	5	
	ProTV	Power	Programs	22	14	16	10	19	6	4
			Promises	-	3	14	18	18	4	11
			Achievements	3	20	9	22	37	19	28
			Adversaries	7	14	20	12	-	13	-
Opposition		Programs	2	5	4	8	10	-	1	
		Promises	-	-	-	4	3	-	9	
		Achievements	-	4	5	1	4	-	7	
		Adversaries	7	6	3	1	2	7	-	

public television broadcast the fewest pieces of news in which the governing party fought its opponents (on an average of 5,5 pieces of news per week), and these became fewer and fewer as the elections came, being

totally omitted in October newsreels.

- But the attacks of the Power against the Opposition stood for the subject-matter of a lot of news broadcast on private tele-



visions, mostly Antena 1. On average, two pieces of news per day related the Power's warlike attacks.

- The Power had nothing to promise during the campaign. That is why the discourses about promises were rare. The most numerous were ascertained on ProTV (about 10 per week), and the least numerous on Tele 7abc (one every two days).

- The messages of the Opposition were presented differently by the TV studios. TVR preferred to broadcast the discourses about political programs (in October they were dominant, the public television broadcast six news pieces per day on the parties' programs). The other themes of the political agents' rhetoric were almost ignored.

- The private televisions kept a balance in broadcasting different messages. Both promises and performances and attacks on the SDPR were more widely broadcast in the news programs on the private televisions than the TVR ones. The criticism about the governing party were two and a half times more numerous at Antena 1 than at TVR. Hence the public television tried not to let the people know these criticism, defending the image

that the agents of the Power tried to build through praising messages.

### Political Agents' Assessment

**T**HE appreciations that the televisions made on political agents were another relevant indication concerning their involvement in the campaign. That is why I considered that the news might show - or at least suggest - four types of assessments of the presented agents:

- positive assessments (+)
  - negative assessments (-)
  - neutral assessments (0)
  - ambiguous assessments (=)
- (See Table 9).

### Comments:

- The Power started the campaign in April with a massive positive appreciation from TVR. Over 10 news pieces per day praised the Power agents' actions while only one piece of news every 2 or 3 days contained a negative assessment. Although later on reduced, these favourable presentations dominated the informative issues till the end of the campaign.

- The principal Power agents (government, presidency and police) received favourable

**Table 9**  
Discourse Themes of Political Agents

TV Station	Agents	Evaluation	April	May	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov
TVR 1	Power	+	73	45	42	20	47	15	21
		-	3	1	2	2	3	-	1
		0	8	13	17	34	4	35	8
	Opposition	=	-	1	3	1	-	-	-
		+	4	2	4	-	1	-	4
		-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
		0	3	5	11	6	14	47	9
		=	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Tele 7abc	Power	+	11	5	9	12	11	8	-
		-	5	14	4	6	7	7	1
		0	21	1	27	12	8	8	24
	Opposition	=	9	5	1	3	1	4	-
		+	3	-	1	5	2	3	-
		-	1	10	2	-	1	-	-
		0	8	-	10	11	6	9	11
		=	-	2	-	3	2	-	-
Antena 1	Power	+	18	8	10	6	-	11	10
		-	18	13	-	28	3	8	8
		0	24	14	38	22	35	20	14
	Opposition	=	7	2	3	1	3	3	1
		+	4	3	6	4	4	5	9
		-	3	2	-	7	-	-	-
		0	9	7	12	16	22	11	11
		=	-	1	-	3	-	3	3
ProTV	Power	+	15	4	13	2	4	-	3
		-	5	12	17	5	9	6	3
		0	11	33	26	47	61	34	37
	Opposition	=	1	2	3	8	-	2	-
		+	-	1	2	-	-	-	3
		-	4	-	3	-	-	-	-
		0	5	14	7	13	19	7	14
		=	-	-	-	1	-	-	-

appreciations from private televisions too, but less and especially in the first period of the campaign.

- The fewest positive assessments on the Power were on

ProTV (over six times less than on TVR).

- The neutral assessment was the most preferred way of presenting the Power by the private studios. From this point of

view ProTV was the most neutral television: five news pieces per day presented the Power without ironical, praising or ambiguous hues.

- The negative assessments concerning the ruling of the country were almost non-existent on the National Television (TVR). On the whole, there were six times less negative news on TVR than on Antena 1. Among the commercial televisions, the fewest negative appreciations were broadcasted on Tele 7abc. Generally, these appreciations increased in number during the election campaign, when the political Power of that time had lost the first round of the elections.

- Ambiguous appreciations were frequently used on Tele 7abc, especially in April; such appreciation rarely occurred on TVR. Still, they didn't weigh much in TV announcers estimations.

- The Opposition's messages were related from a neutral point of view by all televisions. This neutrality was quite obvious on TVR and especially in October, when the Opposition was treated perfectly neutrally, with not a trace of irony or praise.

- The most positive assessments concerning the Op-

position occurred on Antena 1 - 5 times a week, while the fewest occurred on ProTV - 6 times during the 7 months of the campaign.

- TVR criticised the Opposition only in April, thus offering it the fewest negative evaluations. The most negative evaluations occurred in Tele 7abc, especially in May.

- Antena 1 broadcasts the most ambiguous interpretations while presenting messages and images about the Opposition. This kind of interpretations lacked on TVR and ProTV.

### **The TV broadcasting of the political and social actors**

**I**N our analysis of the televisions' involvement in the election campaign, we made a distinction between agents and actors. As we have already mentioned, the "agents" are the institutions - main subject-matter of the news. The "actors" are the leaders involved in the actions presented in the news. For example, the news about the meeting of Vacaroiu Cabinet is considered in terms of "agent" code "Government", while it involves as "actors" the members of the Government (N. Vacaroiu, M. Cosea, T. Melescanu and so on) and all the other leaders that sustain a

point of view in the news. So, one piece of news may involve only one agent and several actors or several agents and no actor at all (it's the case of the institutional, impersonal, official communiques). This difference between the number of the agents and the number of

the actors unable us to bring different nuances over the ways in which the televisions were favourable to certain political forces during the campaign.

I must say that our analysis concerns only the important

**Table 10**

Mediatization of Political and Social Actors on TVR 1

Agents	April	May	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov
Power	93	54	32	52	63	67	12
Opposition	12	11	14	14	41	72	16
Not enrolled	14	13	13	11	21	42	17

**Table 11**

Mediatization of Political and Social Actors on Tele 7abc

Agents	April	May	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov
Power	37	14	22	45	21	12	24
Opposition	25	16	20	56	30	23	38
Not enrolled	6	8	6	35	8	21	39

**Table 12**

Mediatization of Political and Social Actors on Antena 1

Agents	April	May	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov
Power	46	49	31	59	57	34	35
Opposition	11	29	18	58	54	37	55
Not enrolled	7	30	7	32	38	32	22

**Table 13**

Mediatization of Political and Social Actors on ProTV

Agents	April	May	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov
Power	11	34	52	46	47	21	33
Opposition	7	19	36	12	55	28	42
Not enrolled	27	11	28	29	24	76	21

actors of the political and social stage. We didn't take into consideration the passers-by interviewed in the streets or the anonymous persons involved in such small actions as accidents, thefts or defalcations. In this category of the unregistered actors we enlisted managers, directors, employers, bankers or highly cultivated people whose opinions might have led to the shaping of a public opinion. Even though these "unregistered persons" were sympathizers or even members of certain political organisations, they were identified after the institutions for which they spoke and which were not political ones.

#### Comments:

- The total number of the power actors was smaller than the number of the power agents, on every station, and the total number of the opposition actors was bigger than the one of the opposition leaders. Although the power representatives were more numerous than the opposition leaders, generally, they appeared on an average of one per piece of news, while the opposition leaders appeared two per piece of news.

- TVR began the campaign with a record number of the representatives of the power

parties: 93 as compared to 12 of the Opposition and 14 not enrolled. On the average, TVR has broadcast during the monitored 7 months 7,5 power leaders a day (373 as a total). On the second round in November, they were left aside, when the electoral balance leant towards the forces of opposition.

- The power leaders were presented on Tele 7abc the least of all the stations - twice less than on TVR.

- Among the private TV stations, the actors of Power were given the biggest attention by Antena 1. This was also done because this station presented the biggest number of actors: 741, while Tele 7abc presented 506.

- Antena 1 and ProTV presented the actors, deliberately or not, according to their proportion in Parliament. Tele 7abc reversed the proportion, being from this point of view closer to the expectations of the electorate. This station was the only one that almost constantly presented the opposition actors more frequently than the ones of power.

- On TVR we noted the biggest number of opposition actors televised per week, in the final stage of the campaign (October). During that period of

time, all the stations transmitted more information about the Opposition parties than about the SDPR. It is significant that, on TVR, the leaders of only one were presented 67 times while the ones of the tens of opposition parties were presented 72 times, so the support given to the Power party was obvious.

- ProTV seemed to be the station the most interested in presenting the not politically enrolled actors. Their most numerous appearances were noted in October: 76, which means 11 a day.

- With small exceptions (October and partly September), TVR preferred to televise an equal number of opposition and not actors, the sum being under the half of the number of the power actors presented.

## The televising of the candidates Ion Iliescu and Emil Constantinescu

**T**HE two principal candidates to presidency were differently presented on the four TV stations.

Comments:

- Ion Iliescu began his campaign on TVR powerfully. He had 22 appearances during the monitored week of April, while Emil Constantinescu had only one.

- During the seven months, Ion Iliescu appeared on TVR 12 times a week, on the average, and his countercandidate appeared 32 times. The appearances of Ion Iliescu were fewer in August (the holidays month) and in November (when the victory of Emil Constantinescu was predictable and the public

**Table 14**

Mediatization of Main Candidates: Ion Iliescu and Emil Constantinescu

TV Station	Candidate	April	May	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov
TVR	Iliescu	22	15	9	5	18	11	4
	Constantinescu	1	-	2	5	3	5	7
Tele 7abc	Iliescu	6	3	5	1	5	1	15
	Constantinescu	3	1	2	9	3	2	17
Antena 1	Iliescu	4	6	8	3	14	-	6
	Constantinescu	2	1	2	8	7	2	11
ProTV	Iliescu	2	1	13	1	10	4	5
	Constantinescu	1	1	8	4	9	7	12

television understood that it had to follow the electoral pulse). Excepting these two months, his TV appearances were abundant, in spite of the principles applied by the European televisions, that state that in the election campaign, irrespective of the candidates' official positions, the more intense presentation by the media of one of the candidates is considered to be incorrect and propaganda. There were many cases, in the last months, when the electoral visits in factories and farms were shown in the news bulletins as presidential actions instead of placing them in the specially devoted space for the election campaign, which was taken by other propaganda headings.

- On the other Tv channels, Iliescu was presented with an over half reduced frequency. Although there were high variations from a TV station to another, the weekly average of his appearances was almost equal with all of the three TV stations: 5,1 on Tele 7abc, 5,8 on Antena 1 and 4,8 on ProTV.

- Emil Constantinescu could be seen on TVR1 four times less than his countercandidate: 3,2 appearances per week as against 12. He was less shown on this TV station than he was on the other televisions, which were, like in Iliescu's case, very

close concerning the weekly average: 4,5 on Tele 7abc, 4,7 on Antena 1 and 5,2 on ProTV.

- The maximum number of appearances per week was 22 for Iliescu on TVR (in April) and 17 for Emil Constantinescu on Tele 7abc (in November).

- Iliescu's TV broadcasting would be more intense during the first months of the campaign, while Constantinescu's was especially done in August and November.

## Conclusions

**T**HE data and comments above tried to show the ways the TV news journals got involved in the election campaign and not all TV programs of those stations. We analyzed the information shown as news on a very limited space, that covered at most half an hour a day. But in their program schedules, the TV stations introduced broadcastings exclusively and explicitly dedicated to the election campaign, that covered a larger space. A special mention should be made on the private stations - especially Antena 1 and ProTV - which placed larger broadcast spaces than those offered by the public Television at the disposal of the competitors. The way that structured them (round tables, electoral clip), the favourable or

unfavourable interventions of the editors and the candidate's opportunity to widely expose their points of view significantly contributed to their orientation of the viewers' electoral behaviour. But their analysis is not a point of these comments. I considered that it is much more important to present the way in which the TV stations propagandized within spaces that were not meant for that and to also present the modalities in which the viewers were transmitted masked electoral messages in the shape of the daily ordinary events. The TV stations made subsidiary propaganda in other social or political broadcasting on a wider scale. For example, during the election campaign, TVR broadcast shows such as "The Governing - at the end of the mandate", in which the members of the Vacaroiu Government (candidates at the same time) congratulated themselves, being helped by E. Isopescu, the interviewer. One can also remember the tens of minutes long clips on Antena 1 which were dedicated to Ioan Pop de Popa.

Therefore, the answer to the question: "How much were the TV stations involved in the election campaign and whom did they support?" was nuanced in the case of the news broadcasting programs.

Briefly the things were clear for TVR: Ion Iliescu and SDPR were largely and broadly supported with the largest quantity of news per Newsreel. Antena 1 televised the competitors' point of view the most often. But it stuck to the same proportions that existed in Parliament. It was only in the second ballot round in November, that the support for Emil Constantinescu became visible. Tele 7abc supported the opposition forces, being related, from this point of view, to the results of the public opinion polls that had foreseen their victory. But this support, in absolute frequencies and length of time, was smaller if compared to other stations. ProTV was the less involved station, being more interested in the society's point of view about politics and less interested in the politicians' point of view about society. The different ways to present the political life contributed to the creation of other horizons than those offered by the public television.

Did this involvement lead to the structure of the voters' behaviour? Some researchers say that it had no importance and they justify their theory by the useless propaganda for Ion Pop de Popa on Antena 1 or for Ion Iliescu on TVR 1. The opinion polls show that they had



different effects in different social milieus. Thus, in the rural area, where there was no audio-visual competition at all and the TVR domination was almost total, the population preferably voted for the candidate and the parties supported by this television. In the urban areas, where there was a concurrent market and where the access to information was secured by a pluralistic institutional configuration, the population negatively perceived the

manipulating tendencies of any TV station; so, the existence of private TV stations along side with the public one assured a political balance. The role of the studies made by CIS and summed-up here was to measure this balance and to reveal to the public opinion the deviation that could be considered unfair, manipulating and propaganda.

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