

MASS MEDIA INFORMATION SOURCE IN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS OR A POLITICAL ACTOR?

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Abstract

Election campaigns are the top-level agreements in the cyclical process called political communication. Political communication involves a set of techniques and technologies where the media is not only a link between the political actor and the spectator. The media establishes relationships between political mediatization and globalization, between politics and the Internet, highlights the reconciliation between ethics and politics, between the political action and the exerting influence on the voting option. For a quarter of a century of democratic transformations of the media society in R M has evolved from print media partly distributed through sales and mail, from radio broadcast to new digital media. According to the research, not even a quarter of the citizens believe in the Parliament they have chosen, in the media has confidence almost half (45%) of the population. For (74%) of citizens, the most important source of information is television, followed by the Internet (35%) and radio (22%). Printed media is preferred by 19% of the population. The Internet is used every day by about 64% of the population and 20.8% think that the Internet tells the truth about the situation in Moldova, placing it on the same spot as television (20.2%). We will analyze the activity of the audiovisual media and the Internet in electoral campaigns based on the preferences of the citizens.

Keywords: *political communication, mass media, electoral campaigns, deontological norms, legislation, non-governmental organizations, monitoring, partiality, impartiality, ethical equity, voting option.*

Election campaigns are the top-level agreements in the cyclical process called political communication. The electoral campaigns never cease, they begin immediately after the elections and reach their peak during their election time. Political communication is more than political marketing, ie selling the political product with the candidate's emblem presented to the electorate.

Political communication involves a set of techniques and technologies where the media is not only a link between the political actor and the audience. In the globalized atmosphere of

our time, the media is not just the public space arena. In the connections between the electorate and the politics the media appears as a forming factor. In Fig. 1, we present the connections of the media in the relations: electorate-politics.

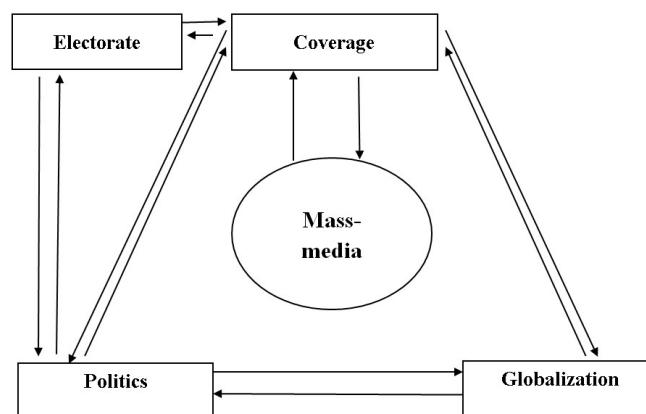


Fig. 1. Mass media in the electorate-politics connections

At the same time, the media establishes relations between political coverage and globalization, between politics and the Internet, highlights the reconciliation between ethics and politics, between the political action and exerts the influence on the voting option. In Fig. 2 we present the media relations, which lead to the formation of the voting option.

In the study that we present to you, we focused on the information functions in the electoral campaigns that the media components perform in the digital age. The sociological research shows us that in an election campaign there are three major factors that interact: 1) the campaign actions; 2) the actions of the opponents whose goal is the activity of the political actor; 3) the media institutions (ALGRAD, 1999).

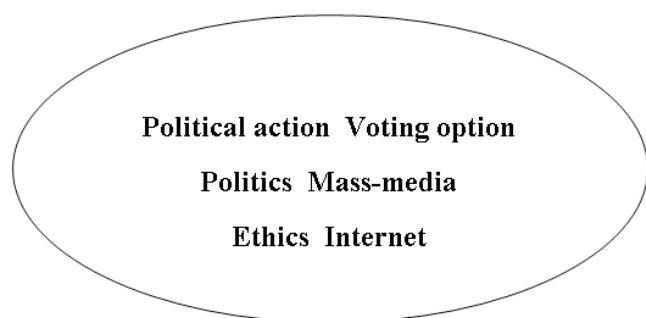


Fig. 2. Media relations in the formation of the voting option

Mass media in electoral campaigns operates under the legal framework: the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova (CRM) (The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, 1994); the Electoral Code (EC); the Media Law (ML) (Press Law, 1995); the Audiovisual Code of the Republic of Moldova (AC RM); the Regulation on the coverage of the electoral campaign in the Republic of Moldova; the Law on the Freedom of Expression; the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (Electoral Code, 1997). The legal framework ensures that citizens are informed in an equitable, impartial and balanced way - without the interference from party authorities, social - political bodies and independent persons enrolled in the electoral race. According to the Media Law (Article 1, paragraph 1), the State guarantees to all persons the right to free expression of opinions and ideas, to truthful information on events in domestic and international life through periodicals and press agencies, operating under the conditions of political pluralism. The law provides (Article 5, paragraph 1): "The right to found periodical publications and press agencies, irrespective of their organizational-legal form, is held by any legal person of the Republic of Moldova and a natural person, a citizen of the Republic of Moldova who is 18 years old and lives on its territory".

Moldovan media is mostly self-sufficient, it ensures its existence through the sale of media products and the space offered to the public by donations, grants and, in case of children's press, if the co-founder is the government, from budget financing. For a quarter of a century of democratic transformation of the media society in the Republic of Moldova which has evolved from

the printed press distributed partly through sales and mail, from radio broadcasting to new digital media broadcast by satellite, cable, on digital platforms, through the Internet. According to the research conducted by the Association of Sociologists and Demographers of the Republic of Moldova (ASDRM), the population gives the highest confidence, after the church, to the mass media. While no even a quarter of citizens believe in the Parliament elected by them, almost half (45%) of the population trusts the media. For (74%) of the citizens the most important source of information is television, followed by the internet (35%) and radio (22%). Printed media is preferred by 19% of the population. The internet is used every day by about 64% of the population and 20.8% think that the Internet tells the truth about the situation in Moldova, placing it on the same level as television (20.2%).

The media census conducted in November on request of the Center for Independent Journalism (CIJ) has identified 503 media sources. These sources produce a certain media product. The analysis of the statistical data shows us that about 35% of the media sources are the printed press. On the other hand, radio stations are 13%; TV stations - 8%; News agencies - 4%. About 55% of the media institutions are concentrated in Chisinau. In the ranking of countries with the fastest access to the Internet, Moldova ranks third, being overtaken by South Korea and Latvia. The number of Internet users in the Republic of Moldova exceeds 2.13 million out of which 52.86% are women and 47.14% are men (DIEX, 2016).

The Internet is a means of communicating, transmitting and storing information. The Internet has created new media, online media, internet media, social networks. At the base of the Mass Media Guide and the Map of Moldavian Media Institutions developed by the Center for Independent Journalism we can make approximate calculations of the number of journalists engaged in the production of media products. Approximate estimations make us assume that about 3500 journalists are employed in the production of media products in the Republic of Moldova at present stage. There are no TV stations in the Republic of Moldova that do not have political sympathies or are not politically affiliated. Prime, Publika TV, Channel

2, Channel 3, are part of the General Media Group - Trust led by Vlad Plahotniuc, a prosperous businessman and chairman of the Democratic Party of Moldova (DPM), to which, at the beginning of 2016, CTC Mega and Super TV joined. Jurnal TV, until the end of 2016, was owned by "Jurnal Chişinău Plus" SRL, and the only beneficiary was the businessman Victor Țopa. The Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), the President Igor Dodon has broadcasting space licences for Accent TV, NTV Moldova and Exclusiv TV. And the leader of Our Party (OP) - Renato Usatâi, the mayor of Balti is from Feb 2016 the beneficiary of Ru TV, managed by "Euroshow" SRL.

For journalists, the electoral campaigns are not only a demonstration of their professional capabilities but also sources of income. From one campaign to the other, the expenses of the electoral contestants are increasing. The costs for one minute of TV broadcasting in local elections are also growing. Televisions rank first in terms of advertising costs, with an average of 50-700 euro a minute on broadcast election advertising. In the period 2011-2014, the electoral expenses of the parties and of the independent candidates in the six electoral campaigns for the parliamentary elections increased 30 times and reached on the 30th of November the amount of 116.3 million lei - officially declared amount. If we take into account the realities of RM, this amount should be increased by at least 4 times to get closer to the true number of expenses.

Electoral advertising rates in the 2016 for the presidential elections for a 30-second broadcast segment oscillated between 30 and 100 euros at REN TV; 1750 euros for Jurnal TV and 1500 euros for Prime, 750 euros for Canal 3 and 1000 euro for Publika TV.

The income is a turnover that demonstrates how representative and active in the media market is the media institution. In the electoral campaign the income is obtained by selling the broadcasting space for the broadcasting of electoral advertising or the realization and posting of the electoral journalistic products with an electoral theme.

Although there are different political guidelines when selling the space for electoral advertising, TV stations do not take into account

the promotional content. Monitoring its income from business in election campaigns is carried out by the Central Electoral Commission and the Tax Authorities. The largest advertising revenue in election campaigns is held by the General Media Group with Prime TV channels, Publika TV, Canal 3, Channel 2. The advertising revenue of this media trust, according to experts, fluctuates between 40-50 mil.dol. US..

We will analyze the activity of the audiovisual media and the Internet in the electoral campaigns, starting from the preferences of the citizens.

The quality of the electoral media product, the observance of the ethical principles and the legislation ensuring the impartiality and equidistance of the media in electoral campaigns are monitored by the Central Electoral Commission (CEC), the Audiovisual Coordination Council (ACC), the Nongovernmental Media Organizations (NMO), the Electronic Press Association From Moldova (EPAM), Association of Independent Press (IPA), etc. Cases of violation of legislation are reported to the CEC, ACC, which are acting under the law.

The process of democratic transformation in the political struggle for power in the Republic of Moldova is in a new phase starting with the electoral campaign for the April 5, 2009 parliamentary elections. The Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (LDPM) formed one year and three months before the launch of the electoral campaign (constitutional congress December 8, 2007). LDPM has assumed the green color that symbolizes revival, life, change, purity. The slogan "Stop Communism! Green for Moldova!" reminds of the slogan of the European Green Party - "Stop the climate disasters, green for the future!" Since its establishment LDPM announced courageously: "Moldova without Voronin, Moldova without Communists". The Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM) aspires to the third term of government. Although the leader Vladimir Voronin sought to maintain an internal balance through his authoritarian style, "conflicts between generations" were imminent. Young Communists wanted more freedom in their turn to grab goods, to head leadership. We will not examine here the situation that had been outlined inside the PCRM. We will mention only that V.Voronin fulfills an

authoritative style of command, which contradicts the democratic, liberal aspirations of Moldovan businessmen, demonstrates a fierce nihilism against historical truth and authentic cultural values. For these reasons the cultural elites have supported LDPM from its start its entry in the electoral campaign was in full force. Mass media, however, has largely demonstrated loyalty and servility to power. From the "Media Monitoring in the Election Campaign for the 2009 Parliamentary Elections" - general report presented by the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (CC FFE), ICJ and IPA (COALIȚIA CIVICĂ 2009, 2009), we note the following:

1. The public stations with national coverage Moldova 1 and Radio Moldova have intensively covered the work of the government and the PCRM, the actions of the president, the prime minister and the president of the parliament - all candidates on the party list and defying the law remained in their positions of leadership throughout the electoral campaign. The PCRM was presented as the only formation that represents order, stability, well-being, and the opposition parties wore images resembling anarchy, chaos, poverty, misunderstanding, started on endless quarrels. The private stations NIT, Antena C, EU TV acted the same way.

2. The TV stations Pro TV, TV7 and Radio Vocea Basarabiei proved democratic spirit placed themselves on pluralistic positions. These media sources informed voters on equidistant positions and gave equal access to all electoral contestants.

3. The public mass-media financed partly or totally by the taxpayers budgets promoted the ideology of the PCRM and did not fulfill their mission to inform citizens fairly, equidistantly, impartially. At that time, the Internet, the online journalism in the RM was at the beginning and remained out of sight.

The results of the April 5, 2009 poll are favourable to the PCRM. It obtained 60 deputy mandates, and LDPM - 15, DP - which will manifest later did not enter the parliament. There followed the events of 7 April 2009, with violent demonstrations, the burning of presidential and parliament buildings, homicides, arrests, maltreatments of young people. PCRM's actions, accompanied by the elements of communist dictatorship, led to early elections

(July 29, 2009). It is the beginning of the PCRM's decline, which at the next election gets 48 mandates, and LDPM-18 and PD-13. The head of the DP becomes the former Parliament President, the communist Marian Lupu. After the boycott by the PCRM and the failure to elect the president of RM by the legislature., the parliament was dissolved and early parliamentary elections were held in November 2010. It is the astral moment of LDPM. It gets 32 mandates, PCRM - 42, and DPM - 15.

If we make a brief analysis of the results of the parliamentary elections from the 5th of April 2009 to 28th of November 2010, then we will find the following:

a). On April the 5th, 2009 the Communist faction has 60 deputies including: 1) Lupu Marian; 2) Dodon Igor; 3) Stepaniuc Victor; 4) Turcan Vladimir 5) Abramciuc Viorica 6) Mishin Vladimir 7) Mironic Ala; 8) Vlah Irina;

LDPM gets 15 mandates; PD-0; Our Moldova Alliance - 11.

b) On July the 29th, 2009 PCRM obtains 48 mandates: 1) Turcanu Vladimir, 2) Mark Tcaciuc, 3) Dodon Igor, 4) Stepaniuc Victor, 5) Abramciuc Viorica, 6) Mișin Vladimir, 7) Vlah Irina. Lupu Marian is leaving the Communists and joins the DMP.

LDPM gets 18 mandates, DP - 13 mandates.

c) On November the 28th, 2010 the PCRM obtains 42 mandates of deputies. From the list of PCRM electoral candidates there disappear 1) Stepaniuc Victor, 2) Turcanu Vladimir, 3) Abramciuc Viorica. LDPM obtains 32 mandates, DP-15 mandates.

As a result of the struggles inside and between the political parties, the mass media gains more freedom, but it does not remain equidistant and consolidates its capabilities by approaching and directing relations with ruling political parties, easily being seduced by political forces with financial offers. In the study "Regulating the Media Condition in Electoral Campaigns", the authors Ion Bunduchi, Eugen Râbca, Boyco Boev note the following:

1. As a result of the changes made in the Electoral Framework, the guarantees of editorial independence and transparency in the activity of the broadcasters were increased. Mass media

gained more freedom, pressures and interference in media activity by the politics weakened.

2. The attributions in CCA electoral campaigns were separated from those of the CEC.

3. Broadcasters were legally required to publish the editorial policy on the CCA site and to announce the name of the owner / owners. Also, the national radio broadcasters were obliged to organize debates of the electoral campaign of the referendum to elect the president and to give electoral contestants free airtime (5 minutes on TV and 10 minutes on radio). Broadcasters were free to determine the format, frequency and duration of electoral debates, they could invite, together with competitors and representatives of civil society, any interested person, provided that their presence is indicated in the editorial policy.

4. Granting Freedoms and Rights has proven that the media is not ready to capitalize on democratic opportunities. CCFCE notes that from the first days of the electoral campaign of the referendum to elect the president of the CCA commit "violations of the electoral legislation: a) lately published on the site the list of the national broadcasters; b) placed on the site late statements on editorial policy; c) the contents of the statements of some broadcasters contravened the legislation but were accepted by the CCA and published, etc. "The CCA has improved its activity in the electoral campaign for the early parliamentary elections of November 28, 2010. Mass media strengthens its ranks, and in November 30, 2014 parliamentary elections the media regroup trying to conceal sympathies and take positions impartially. They do not always succeed. Political life is effervescent. PCRPM is in a free fall. V.Voronin is left by the veterans V. Mişin, V.Stepaniuc, Z.Greceanăi. The example of Marian Lupu follows: Igor Dodon, Marc Tcaciuc, Iurie Muntean, Grigore Petrenco. PCRPM gets 21 mandates. The young politicians who have won the voters' sympathy through their position, courage, and intent to get closer to the European Union, and thus the recovery of the national economy, have proved to be inconsistent, ill-temperate and greedy, they are caught in the corners of corruption. Between the PLDM and PDM both in the ruling coalition a fratricidal war is triggered. The victor is DPM although he has

only 19 seats in parliament, compared to LDPM with 23 deputies. In fact, the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM) won the victory, led by former Communist Igor Dodon, an disciple of V. Voronin.

The journalists, just like politicians, form groups, media sets up, holdings of various colors. As politicians migrate from party to party, journalists go unruly from one media trust to another with editorial policy diametrically opposed to the previous one and seek to mimic credibility in front of the citizens. The media trust of LDPM, made up of Vocea Basarabiei radio station and Vocea Basarabiei television, is formed for a short time. With the exclusion of the leader of LDPM - V. Filat from the political life, the trust that was hardly taking shape collapses too.

The behavior of the media in the electoral campaign in November 2014 was monitored by CCFCE through ICJ, IPA, and APEL, and separately, the International Election Observation Mission OSCE / BIDDO, and apart from the first CCA monitored the media institutions which reflected the electoral campaign. Experts' conclusions are very close.

1) Mass media is pluralist, but divided on political criteria;

2) The national public broadcast was within the limits of the balance of the electoral actors, although on a reduced background of analytical / conflict / critical programs;

3) Pro TV Chişinău was equidistant and impartial with all the electoral contestants, proving to be one of the broadcasters that best respected the legislation;

4) Jurnal TV did not favor any electoral contestant, but in turn disfavored the DPM;

5) Prime TV, Publika TV, Channel 2, Channel 3 have clearly opted for DPM;

6) Television N4 and TV7 favored in their PLDM in their programs; Accent TV favored and promoted openly the Patria Party and its leader - R. Usatâi;

7) The public regional broadcaster CRT inadequately and briefly reflected the electoral campaign (Centrul pentru Jurnalism Independent, 2015).

After the second monitoring report on the manner in which the electoral campaign for the local general elections in 2015 was publicized,

the CCA sanctioned a minimum fine of 1800 lei the TV channels Publika TV, Prime, Canal 2, Canal 3 and Accent TV and with public warning - TV channels Jurnal TV, N4, RenTV Moldova and TV7. The 5 broadcasters that were to pay the minimum fine were sanctioned for the second time during the respective electoral campaign for favoring electoral contestants. In the main news bulletins broadcast by these posts the weight of a single candidate amounts to 70% compared to other candidates. In the electoral campaign for the election of the President of the Republic of Moldova in October 2016, CCA sanctioned seven TV channels: Prime, Channel 3, Channel 2, Publika TV, Accent TV, Jurnal TV and NTV Moldova. Television stations have politically sided with electoral candidates. They defied the electoral legislation, thenormative and journalistic norms, Prime, Canal 3, Channel 2, Publika TV promoted intensively the presidential candidate Marian Lupu and the party he represented. At the same time, it was certified that the Platform for Dignity and Truth and the leader Andrei Năstase was disfavored following the placement of the subjects with an accentuated defamatory character. A similar situation has been confirmed by Accent TV and NTV Moldova, which promoted the interest of the candidate of the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova, Igor Dodon, disfavored the candidate of the Action and Solidarity Party, Maia Sandu, Jurnal TV disfavored the Democratic Party candidate and favored the presidential candidate Maia Sandu - mentions the portal realitatea.md in a news release published on November 11, 2016. The respective stations paid a fine each in the amount of 5400 lei. The television stations TV7 and RenTV Moldova were also publicly warned.

In the "Report on the situation of the press in the Republic of Moldova in 2014", the online press also appears: Unimedia.info and Realitatea.md, which covered the electoral campaign equidistantly ; Omega.md favored the Popular Party; Jurnal.md has massively deprived DPM. Online media is also monitored in local elections in June 14, 2015. The results of the monitoring of five online portals are presented in the report published by CCFCE and ICJ "Media Monitoring in the Election Campaign for the General Local Elections of 14 June 2015" 13].

Monitoring dissemination campaigns through the Internet presents a compartment little elucidated. This portal proves the stated hypothesis. The online press, the www.omg.md portal did not respect equidistance and impartiality in the coverage policy of electoral campaigns. The portal promotes some electoral contestants and presents them in a disfavoring context. News does not meet the qualities of journalistic fairness. They usually contain only one biased, promotional opinion. The DPM electoral actors had the greatest visibility, but in a disfavoring context. Omg.md promoted "Our Party" and its leader Renato Usatâi.

The www.pan.md portal reflected the selective electoral campaign, stopping at a small number of electoral contestants, most of them being mentioned only, without their opinions, only "Our Party", PSRM and PCRM had direct appearances in site materials. Governing parties are being criticized, and "Our Party" (R. Usatâi) and PSRM (I. Dodon) are favored;

Www.publika.md in almost half of the news stories complied with the principle of impartiality, as well as in the previous elections monitoring publika.md favored DPM ; Wwww.timpul.md with only one exception, electoral textiles published by time.md, met the criteria set by the norms of ethics and the electoral legislation; Wwww.unimedia.info during the monitoring period ensured the greatest diversity of electoral competitors: with one exception, all the materials placed on the site by unimedia.info were unbiased. The media coverage of the electoral campaign through universal vote of the President of the Republic of Moldova on the 30th of October 2016 was monitored by non-governmental media organizations, foreign observers and media institutions. The increased interest of the media in the presidential election was reflected in the return after a 19-year break at the direct election of the president. It is a relatively long period in which the media has evolved. Changes have taken place in the media structural field, the diversification of media sources and the political affiliation of journalists, their migration from some media institutions to others, located in diametrically opposed positions. In the "Final Report on Media Monitoring in the Electoral Campaign for the Election of the President of the

Republic of Moldova on October 30, 2016" IAP,ICJ and APEL notes:

1) Some national television stations did not hold debates with the attendance of candidates in the evenings, with the highest audience. Thus they deprived the citizens of the right to inform themselves to make conscious choice.

2) During the campaign, on 12 TV stations, Marian Lupu was most often favored by news about the government's activity, which, through image transfer, indirectly favored this candidate. Igor Dodon was also much favored, and Maia Sandu Disfavored.

3) Prime channels, Channel 2, Channel 3, Publika TV, NTV Moldova, Accent TV and Jurnal TV have openly sided with, favoring or disfavoring certain candidates and have not complied with the electoral campaign coverage stipulated in the regulation approved by the CEC.

4) TV7, Moldova 1, Pro TV, Realitatea TV reflected, relatively in a balanced way the electoral campaign.

5) The online portals have frequently published documented news from a single source, and often accusations have not been balanced by giving the right to reply to those targeted as whole on the 12 portlets monitored, candidate Igor Dodon appeared more often disadvantaged, and Maia Sandu was more often presented in a positive context. The portals Agora.md, Newsmaker.md, Realitatea.md reflected the campaign in a balanced manner and without obvious editorial preferences; to a lesser extent the same can be said about Unimedia.info and Deschide.md. Today.md and Moldova24.info which had an editorial policy aimed at discrediting the opponents of the current government, including the transmission of distorted and even false information. Jurnal.md, Ziarulnational.md, Sputnik.md favored and / or clearly disfavored certain electoral contestants. Noi.md and Gagauzinfo.md had a more balanced editorial behavior in the first round, but in the second round favored Igor Dodon. The expert Ion Bunduchi considers: "Before the elections, a large number of portals appeared that distributed false and denigrating news and because the national regulator - BCC started very late monitoring and overlooked serious deviations,

it gives the feeling that it was wanted. Certainly, the media failed to pass the exam on professional maturity and objective information of citizens".

The Internet offers unlimited space for posting and a multiple dissemination of information. For these reasons, monitoring electoral information on the Internet, using the methods of monitoring media wire cast, radio waves or mail, would be absurd. At present, there are no methods to monitor election campaigns placed on the internet. A special topic in online election campaigns is the blogosphere. The blog is an artificial English word and is the result of the combination of two words web and log, which means an internet journal, appeared in 1997 when John Berger opened an internet page he called "weblog". In fact, through "weblog", the journalists disseminated the information that for some reason was omitted by the editorial office and was not edited, that is, it was destined to end up in the bin, appeared on the "weblog". In time, the bloggers' army has grown, and its ranks have been complemented by strangers to the journalist profession, but who wanted by all means to write and post some of their writing so they could communicate the outcome of their work to others. That's how the blogosphere appeared. For politicians, bloggers are some soldiers who have stayed in the body of the regiments and have hidden in vulnerable places from where they defy the enemy / the political opponents tracing sighting trajectory with light bullets. Many blogs instantly receive feedback, so they get the feedback on their material, which they publish simultaneously and become interactive. By grouping a number of active readers around it, the blog turns into a virtual opinion-forming center. Most importantly, the blogger is not an official source, does not represent an editorial team, has no legal responsibility. He is free to write everything he thinks it can be. The blogger does not do voluntary work for the benefit of society. He is the employee of someone, someone (a political party, a businessman / politician, a business enterprise) which pays him for the media services, of direct or indirect promotion of a product. So far, I have not encountered cases in which a blogger has publicly announced the sources that fund him. I read bloggers' posts where they struggled vigorously to promote the

cause of some political actors, whom they wrote "they were not really like." Could I believe them? A blog is a one-person editorial staff that performs several functions. The blogosphere is a trend. Digital technologies provide tools (widgets) that open new perspectives; the cities from where there are the latest posts, the latest reviews, the top of the articles. There are also techniques that allow the discovery of the most important themes to be addressed, their classification and the dispatching of the "journalistic product" autonomously to the addresses of the readers who are interested in the subject (ZECA BUZURA, 2007).

The blogosphere has given rise to discussions about the blogger's deontology, the veracity of the journalistic product, the techniques of persuasion and manipulation, etc. One thing is certain for journalists, the blog is an informal source of information, and as any unofficial source is to be verified from other sources, for virtual worlds the number of sources of verification should be at least 10. Although the blogosphere is establishing itself more and more secure in the Republic of Moldova it is to be investigated to know: its tendencies, the promoters, its impact. Part of the digital communication technologies the blogosphere is studied as a subject at the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Sciences, the State University of Moldova. In the bachelor thesis "The Blog - A tool for Manipulating Public Opinion", Alina Cujba, guided by her scientific mentor Sergiu Corlat, presents five top bloggers who post on websites on materials on political issues. The selection was made according to the number of posts during one year.

1. Eugen Luchianiu. [Http://luchianiu.com/blog/](http://luchianiu.com/blog/) He is considered an unofficial leader of the bloggers community in the Republic of Moldova. Many times he acts as an organizer of bloggers' actions, be it meetings with politicians or other actions. He is well acquainted with most Moldovan politicians, has a good reputation and has the "gift of writing", proof of which is the impressions on his blog, as well as the comments on the materials he publishes. He never gives up fight and knows how to support his point of view. According to the number of posts in 2014, Luchianiu ranks 1st with 119 papers published.

A close bond, as well as with most bloggers, Eugen has with facebook social network, where he has about 1,500 subscribers to his blog and with whom he distributes what he writes or even on facebook ideas new ideas take shape for a next topic on the blog. There he also has the most comments and distributions, and people also get involved and give their opinion about what the author has written. The most common question when reading from luchianiu.com is who is providing him the information? The sources of the blogger have always attracted a special interest for the reader, because he often gives information that is not known to the general public. In an interview for tribuna.md, Eugen says: "I'm not sure whether the bloggers have any influence on politics, but politicians have an influence on bloggers, that I'm sure. That is why there are now many bloggers who are paid by them, who promote certain interests, certain ideas, topics that politicians consider important, and for this reason an opinion has been created that bloggers are very important in politics. Which is not quite so. We have very few bloggers, namely bloggers, who know the field and who have analytical thinking. There are a lot of analysts who have gone through blogging and are politicians who have blogs, but I do not know whether they can be considered bloggers." From here, we can draw some conclusions about the blogging world. It is certain that Luchianiu knows the field and those involved in it, as well as what lies behind the curtain.

2. Corneliu Gandrabur <http://gandrabur.net/> Has a blog since 2010 and was launched with the nickname of "casiting", but was only discovered in 2011. Corneliu Gandrabur is a lawyer, but he likes more to write about the political class from us. He became a blogger out of the need to write somewhere about something. Analyzing his blog, there is a simplicity in design. It does not have any color, with a white background where articles, placed one by one on the page, can be seen. Compared to Eugen Luchianiu, who writes on different themes, Corneliu has on his blog most articles about politics, political representatives or certain social issues that are tangled with politics. Most internet users prefer to comment on the distribution of Gandrabur's facebook page, rather than directly

on the blog. Some of the posts lead to debates, contradictory ideas, or contain insults about what the blogger wrote. Some people accuse Corneliu of writing on order, others agreeing totally with what he wrote.

3. Dragoş Galbur <http://blog.galbur.md/> He is an adept of the Union with Romania and manifests himself in the most courageous and categorical manner. He challenges anyone in his way, takes a stand on other aspects of social life. Dragoş Galbur's blog is one of the most popular, but is going through a period of slowing down activity, and can be ranked third on the top. He made the decision to stop blogging just before the elections: "Okay, today, Oct. 1, I closed the blog, at least for the election campaign period and at most - until I become calmer, happy and inspired to write again, about anything other than the political mess and all sorts of frustrations and routine nerves," wrote the blogger on his facebook page. Even if the activity of the blog was stopped at the end of 2014, Dragoş Galbur remained one of the most influential bloggers in the online space in our country and not only. His posts gather scores and hundreds of appreciations, and the opinions that are exposed are not overlooked.

4. Petru Bogatu <http://bogatu.voceabasarabiei.net/> He is one of the few analysts coming from the field of journalism. Petru Bogatu is a well-known personality in the Romanian space, besides having a special style in political analysis, he is also a real professional. He presents the message correctly and interestingly, for everyone's understanding. It is not a sophisticated type of communication, the journalist has a lucid thought and we must appreciate that Mr. Bogatu is among the few analysts in our country who presents geopolitical problems, his materials have a technique of presenting the message in correct parameters, the hand of the experienced journalist is easily noticed. After all, Petru Bogatu remains one of the most powerful opinion leaders in the Republic of Moldova.

5. Tudor Cojocaru <http://www.tudorcojocariu.eu/> He is one of the most active bloggers in the Republic of Moldova with a blog of over 7 years of existence. The studies he has done help him to do well in politics and not only. He graduated the Faculty of Sociology of the

University of Bucharest and a Master in International Relations and European Integration. He has got a considerable work experience in the field. His manner of communication is by approaching the processes that take place in a systematic, professional way, but at the same time in exposing them in simple language. It is the author's merit, which have led many publications to take over his materials: Timpul newspaper, Vox Report Platform, Vox Publika Platform, Blogosphere, In Depth, Politicon Blogosphere, Blogosphere Glasul, Jurnal Portal of Chisinau, thePortal Romanian Journal, Academica Network. Even though he has fewer subscribers to his blog, the distributions and comments are much more than at the previous bloggers. Some posts raise true waves of opinions on the views of the author, on the the comments following the events presented (COMAN, 2009).

The top of the most active politicians with blogs:

1. Vitalia Pavlicenco - NLP president. www.pavlicenco.md has a personal blog since June 2008. The predominant colors on the blog are blue, yellow (NLP colors) and beige. The slogan at the top of the homepage is "Life deserves to be lived only in dignity!". The blog is "live", being renewed with articles about the party's activity, but also about the personal activity of the PNL leader. Also, press articles are posted. The blog has a line of categories: Home, About Me, Political Program, NLP History, Photo Gallery, Video Gallery, Write a Petition, Contacts. But in comparison with other blogs, the one which promotes politics has a special aspect. First of all, it is designed to present the party's and its leader's stance towards certain things, his work, and to promote the party's interests and ideology. The lady president posts all the activities of the party, accompanied by a lot of photos.

2. Valeriu Munteanu - LP vice-president <http://munteanu.md/> launched his personal blog in 2010. The predominant color on his blog is blue (the LP color), black and white to emphasize the text. The slogan at the top of the home page is slightly dark blue, written under the name of the deputy: "Live simple, life is careful to be complicated," and the party logo is placed next to it. Compared to the previous blog

design, this blog is more organized as a structure, all the materials are placed in a clear order, only the first few lines are easily visible. Also, there are articles criticizing other parties or their representatives. These are more than the news that directly show the work of the party to which Mr Munteanu belongs. The Blog contains the following categories: Blog, Initiatives, Speeches, Media, Photo, Archive, CV, Contact. The LP vice-president posts articles every few days, addressing the most current themes in the country, related to politics. He has attached to his blog his official page on facebook, "Valeriu Munteanu", which has about 3,400 appraisals. There are three more links that lead to the blogs: Dorin Chirtoaca, Mihai Ghimpu and the Liberal Party. These are part of the promotional interests of the LP party.

3. Valeriu Saharneanu - ex-deputy of the Liberal Reform Party - valeriusaharneanu.com launched his personal blog in 2013. The predominant colors on the blog are yellow to green, but also a dark blue that resembles that of the party. The central image of the blog is a landscape. The blog has the following categories: Considerations, Politics, Party History - PLR, Press Releases, Material Videos. Important elements are the tags, the keywords in articles that make the search faster. The archive is also present dating back to August 2013 with the first article and the last one in May 2015. Another positive side of the blog is the press releases that allow readers to keep up-to-date with the latest party news. The "Grounds for Discussion" category can not be overlooked, where materials about the most important heroes of Romanian space are posted, as well as criticism of some of today's dignitaries. This category is the only one that has been encountered so far, being distinguished through originality.

4. Igor Dodon - PSRM leader www.dodon.md - dates back to 2010. It is in two languages - "Moldavian" and Russian. The colors used are claret, white, orange and gray. Igor Dodon publishes on his blog both his own articles, as well as interviews and other articles in the press that are directly related to his work. If, in the case of some politicians, it was stated that one of the journalists would write them in their place, Igor Dodon can say that he alone guides the activity

of the blog, the articles being from the first source. This can be deduced not only from the statements of other bloggers but also from the very activity of the leader. He also manages his own facebook page alone, which is often involved in the comments of various opinion leaders. His blog begins with a quote from Napoleon Bonaparte: "Ten people who express their opinion in public are stronger than hundreds of thousands who are silent."

The materials on the page are well structured, not loaded with photos or video, which has an advantage for readability. The blog also contains useful links to various sites that are directly related to the leader's interests.

5. Andrian Candu - Parliament President, DP deputy candu.md launched his blog in April 2014. The predominant colors are blue, red and also white. The background image of the blog is the photo of Adrian Candu, but also the Soroca fortress. In line with his name, the functions he holds are written: President of the Parliament, Vice President of DPM. The blog categories are: About me, Photos, Videos, Opinions. After that, there is a section on the move with recent articles accompanied by a representative photo. Even if he is a novice in the world of bloggers, the President of the Parliament has amazed readers by publishing the Kroll report on money laundering through the three banks: Unibanc, Savings Bank, Social Bank. That post had a rating of about 70,000 visitors who were interested in the secret report. The post has gathered around 50 comments, where people criticize and praise the politician's gesture.

The media is a factor of information, political education, voters' opinion formation to make voting decisions. By exercising the functions it has in society, the media can, to a certain extent, influence the vote. Taking voting decisions is a psychological process that depends on favorable factors that act in a complex way through their multiple incidence on the individual.

The research conducted by the Association of Sociologists and Demographers in the Republic of Moldova shows that 59% of the respondents (more than half of the population) with the right to vote believe that the media has much influence on the results of the elections. At the same time, every fourth citizen who has changed his electoral

preferences has made the decision being influenced by the media. We should keep in mind that the voting decision depends on the political culture of the citizen, the interest he shows towards politics. Every third citizen, as field research shows, is interested in politics. Nearly half of the population is a little interested, and every eight out of a hundred does not care at all about politics. One of the founders of the communist (Bolshevik) party in Russia said that if we are not interested in politics then politics will be of interest to us. An analysis of media relations-political parties - the electoral vote of voters during several election campaigns proves that in a democratic system where there are freedom of expression and pluralism of opinions, where the media is not an instrument of Party propaganda, but it is foreign to party interests, the media can not influence the electorate so much as to give the vote without taking into consideration other sources of information.

The disappearance from the political life of the Republic of Moldova or the transformation of several parties by changing their names led to the disappearance of several periodicals. Thus, they have gone in the history of the press, "Earth and Men" (media agency of the Democratic Agrarian Party), "Juventus" (newspaper of the Association of Democratic Youth), "Luceafărul" (publication of the Party of Renaissance and Conciliation) "Furnica" (newspaper of the Social-Political Movement, Civic Alliance for Reformation), "Country" (organ of the Christian Democratic People's Front), "Mesager" (publication of the Party of Democratic Forces). The Social Policy Movement The Alliance for Democracy and Reforms was built in 1997. In advance, a national campaign launched a promotional campaign in defining this movement by designing a clip of ants that crossed the screen without rest. The video ran several times a day for one year. At the same time, the party's publication "Furnica" was issued. In the parliamentary elections in 1998, the Electoral Civic Electoral Alliance gained 3.29% of the votes and did not accede to Parliament.

The Democratic Agrarian Party, in the 1994 parliamentary elections, gets 54 mandates and forms the government on its own. The party carries out political control over the State

Company "Teleradio-Moldova" and publishes the newspaper "Earth and People", the newspaper with the largest circulation at that time, partially distributed free of charge. After four years of government, in the 1998 elections, DAPM gains 3.69% of the votes and does not accede to Parliament.

The Party of Renaissance and Conciliation in 1998-2001 played an important role in the governing Alliance for Democracy and Reform. The party edited the "Luceafărul" publication and virtually had unlimited access to national television and broadcasting. In the 2001 parliamentary elections, the party does not pass the electoral threshold of 6%. Although at the 1998 parliamentary elections the Party of Democratic Forces gains 8.84% of the votes or 11 mandates and, together with the Democratic Convention of Moldova and the Movement for a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova, participates in the government in the 2001 parliamentary elections, it only gets 1, 22% of the votes. This happened when the party was editing the "Messenger" - a popular publication at that time.

Digital technologies have opened new perspectives for communication for businessmen passionate of politics. In their perception, the economic marketing and the political marketing, business and politics are governed by identical laws. These are the errors of childish democratization. The evolution of the suffrage for the LDPM in the electoral campaigns for the 2009, 2010 and 2014 parliamentary elections proves that the party benefited directly from the support of four Prime TV channels, Publika TV, Canal 2, Canal 3, several radio stations and online platforms. The number of mandates obtained in relation to LDPM (which did not have such media arsenal) is net in favor of LDPM: 5th April 2009 LDPM - 15 mandates; DP - 0, 29 July 2009 - LDPM - 18 mandates, DP - 13, 28th November 2010 LDPM - 32 mandates, DP - 15, 30th November 2014 LDPM - 23 mandates, DP - 19 mandates.

We may find some explanations of the evolutionary process, of the increase and decrease of the interest shown by the citizens towards the parties in the electoral campaigns and of the formation of the voting option, if we return to Fig. 2, "Media relations in the formation of the

voting option". The voting option depends on the mass media, just as their media and politics interact with political action, and all taken together are subordinated to ethics, morality.

CONCLUSIONS

1) The mass media legislation in the Republic of Moldova ensures: the correct functioning of the media institutions in electoral campaigns, of CCA; Access to information and freedom of expression.

2) The media is divided on political criteria. Politicians or their affiliated people create media trusts that, through editorial policies, involve journalists in informational wars, which have the ultimate goal of manipulating citizens, the influence of the voting option.

3) Broadly speaking, media in the Republic of Moldova is an arena of the public space, a show where interests collide, opinions are expressed freely, so at a national scale through its diversity the media remains a source of information and ensures pluralism of opinions. On corporate segments, the media is biased, being guided by oligarchic interests, and journalists often manifestly show political partisanship.

4) Against the background of the struggle between media holdings guided by oligarchic interests, the media that is not politically affiliated is fragile and permanently threatened by the danger of disappearance and seizure.

5) Over the past 10 years, the number of media outlets has risen by about 10 each year. This proves the expansion of media diversity and the increase of external pluralism. To note is the limited number of journalistic genres and limited geographic scope of concerns and themes addressed by editorial staff.

6) Media law does not cover the online journalism and does not ensure the pluralism of opinions in this area. Some portals publish

explicitly unverified material for manipulators, without indicating the sources. Owners of several portals are anonymous. The blogosphere is an informational space totally left to the discretion of bloggers, who are mostly politically affiliated, though seemingly independent.

7) The electoral campaign for the election of the president by universal suffrage has proved that the freedoms granted to the CCA by the modification of the Electoral Code are not always capitalized with responsibility towards the consumer of the audiovisual product. Although the CCA is free to make decisions, it remains under the influence of politics.

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