

THE INFLUENCE OF THE 2000 ELECTORAL COMMUNICATION OVER THE VOTING BEHAVIOUR

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The present study presents the results of a qualitative research concerning the influence of the electoral discourse on the voters who, at the last presidential campaign in year 2000 voted for the first time with the nationalist candidate Corneliu Vadim Tudor. We will analyze the influencing potential of a specific discourse strategy which is the enunciation of reasonability. On this basis we question a hypothesis formulated within the framework of an experimental model of research which regards the influence of the electoral discourse on the voting behavior (the model of political identification, Anderson: 1996, 1998). According to this hypothesis the voters who do not have a stabile political attachment - the volatile electors - use the "reasonable" statements of the candidates as a criterion of identification with them.

In this study we seek to approach some discourse strategies which allow the construction of resonability (some stating strategies and socio-cognitive construction of the discourse); we will compare the "reasonable statements" in Vadim Tudor's electoral discourses with the same type of statements identified in the voters' discourse; thus we evaluate the 'socio-cognitive distance' between the candidate and the electors who voted for him for the first time.

Having analyzed this we put forward the following interpretation hypotheses: the voters have attributed to the electoral discourse advanced by Vadim Tudor a reasonable dimension ; the stating of resonability as electoral discourse strategy can influence not only the undecided voters, but also the voters who have a certain political attachment; this influencing process must be correlated with the specific conditions of the electoral circumstances (the influencing process is the more powerful and unpredictable the more the electoral circumstances are atypical); as discourse strategy the reasonability enunciation can be exploited at the level*

* The resonability statement constitutes only one of the variables considered in the evaluation of the electoral communication influence on the voting behavior. This study represents a chapter of a research project regarding (1) the evolution of electoral communication presented in the mass-media during the year 2000 the presidential campaign (devices, regimes and practices of presentation in the media) and (2) and the influence of the electoral circumstances (including the electoral campaign and its presentation in the media) on the voting behavior.