Romanian Public Intellectuals and Their Use of New Media

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Abstract: *This article attempts to determine if there is a category that we can call "new media intellectuals" among the Romanian "public intellectuals" (Jacoby 1987, Posner 2009). I will analyze how Romanian public intellectuals who used to be very present in the traditional media (written press, television) in the last decade of the 20th century and in the first decade of the 21st century managed to adapt their practices to the new media: do they publish online? Do they have their own sites/blogs? Are they present on social media and if yes in which one? What is the frequency of their online posting? And what is their audience? Is there a generational distinction in using these new media? Is it possible to identify different types of public intellectuals according to their use of new media? I will analyze the presence in the new media for ten public Romanian intellectuals during October 2014 (an electoral month), intellectuals who can be categorized as "public" and who have been previously very present in the traditional media, the aim being to understand if they made the transition to new media and how. Our hypothesis is that this adaptation to new media is made according to different variables as their age, their political ambition or their implication in public debates.*

Keywords: *Romanian public intellectuals, uses, new media, online public sphere.*

Introduction

This research topic emerged in autumn 2014 when working on a linked subject and investigating how Romanian public intellectuals adapt their discourse to the new media. When analyzing their discourses in the online public sphere, a second area of interest was developing almost naturally regarding how they use these new media. So, for this article I decided to enhance the study about their uses trying to identify some categories.

First, I will explain the context of my research, that of a post-communist country, and more generally, that of the rise of a new online public sphere where intellectuals (but not only them) could express their ideas and opinions without the mediation of the traditional media. Then I will define the concept of "public intellectual" that I'm using in this research as well as the "new media". I will pay a particular attention to the literature review investigating the relation between public intellectuals and online/new media and I will position my research in the area of uses studies.

In the second part of my article I will present some of the results of the analysis I designed, conclusions and limits of this research.

The context

The context of my analysis is a very particular one, that of a post-communist country. After almost a half century of silence due to the absence of press freedom and speech freedom during the communism, starting from December 1989 (fall of communism in Romania), Romanian intellectuals experienced, compressed, what intellectuals of Western countries, such as France, had known for almost a century: a "golden age" (a strong presence in the print media when, for example, the magazine published by a group of public intellectuals - *22* drew 150,000 copies), then in the audiovisual media and, more recently, a necessary adaptation to web 2.0. It's maybe interesting to mention that, during the communism, Romania didn't really have a strong dissidence movement (as in Poland, for example) and only very few and isolated intellectuals manifested publicly their opposition to the system.

The general context of this research is of course that of the redefinition of the public space by the Internet and the new technologies of information and communication. At the uprising of the Internet, dominant voices expressed optimism about its contribution to the reinforcement of democracy and the civic interaction while, more recently, this optimism was counter balanced while observing the limits in reestablishing democracies as well as the fragmentation, the difficulty to control the buzz or even a certain regression of the deep reflection capacity (Dahlgren 2005, Flichy 2010).

According to Internet Worlds Stats (source: http://www.internetworldstats.com/europa.htm#ro), on December 31, 2013, Romania was counting 10,8 million

Internet users for 21,7 million population, which represents a 49,8% penetration. Some more recent dates are indicating 8 million Facebook users (Source: http://www.facebrands.ro/demografice.html, on 16 March 2015) while the reported number of blogs for 25-31 May 2015 was 88,126 with 5,997 active (at least 1 post for the indicated period, source: http://www.zelist.ro/).

Definitions

I am operating with the definition of public intellectual proposed by Rusell Jacoby (1997) and Richard Posner (2004) as "intellectuals who opine to an educated public on questions of or inflected by a political concern" (Posner 2004, p. 2) and write "for the general public, or at least for a broader than merely academic or specialist audience, on "public affairs" – on political affairs on a broader sense of the word" (Posner 2004, p. 23). Speaking publicly about issues of general interest seems to be mandatory for this definition.

However, I estimate this definition is not so different from the understanding of "intellectual" in the French studies: "Intellectual is someone who meddles in what does not concern him" (Sartre 1980, p. 20) or "intellectual and committed (in the public debate – my note) is a pleonasm" (Bodin 1964, p. 20).

I use new media as a generic appelation for all Internet-based media (new media and social media) and, when analyzing, I'm taking into account mainly blogs, group blogs, Facebook or Twitter profile.

Public Intellectuals and New Media

The term of public intellectual is closely linked to the existence of the press, «the locus *par excellence* for the development of critical intellectuals» (Schlessinger 1986, p. 87). If in 1980s there was a concern in Western countries about the effects of the television on the intellectuals' statute, a very new chapter is written nowadays about the reshaping of this statute in the context of a redefinition of the public sphere by the new media who create new opinion leaders who threaten the intellectuals' "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu 1984) just like journalists did it a few years ago. Several researchers investigate how this redefinition of the public sphere by the new media help public intellectuals in disseminating their ideas and obtaining legitimacy or, on the contrary, jeopardize their legitimacy by offering to everyone an easy access to the public sphere (Kellner 1997, Drezner 2008, Jacoby 2008, Danowski&Park 2009, Freese 2009, Baert & Both 2012, Dahlgren 2012, 2013, Figueiras 2012).

Very early, in 1997, Douglas Kellner stated in a, I would say, prophetic text, that "in the contemporary high-tech societies there is emerging a significant expansion of the public sphere and these developments connected primarily with media and computer technologies, require a reformulation and expansion of the

concept of critical or committed intellectual as well as a redefinition of the public intellectual" (Kellner 1997, p. 4).

Among the cited studies, I would notice two positions. One is considering the Internet as simply giving public intellectuals new opportunities to express their ideas and encounter their public, offering them a new chance to re-conquest their privileged positions. Another one is underlying the opportunity for everyone to become her/his public intellectual and so the difficulty for the traditional PI to make their voices heard in this democratized public sphere. Sometimes, these two positions even coexist. Not to mention the idea that the blog would have downright killed the public intellectuals discourse (Wolfe 2004).

Russell Jacoby, who launched the very popular formula of "public intellectual", obviously does not appreciate the influence of the Internet on the PI's status. Jacoby thinks that "Internet has altered cultural realities" by giving "anyone an electronic pulpit" and "altered the quality and content of intellectual discussions" (Jacoby 2009, p. 40). Consequence, in the US, blogs just "add to the cacophony" while "too many voices cancel each other". And the conclusion is with no mercy: "today everyone is a writer or blogger, but where are the readers?" (Jacoby 2009, p. 40).

On the optimist side, Daniel Drezner (2009) estimates that "the Internet is another possible aid to the renaissance of public intellectuals" while "the explosion of online publications, podcasts, diavlogs, and especially weblogs have enabled public intellectuals to express their ideas beyond the narrow confines of elite op-ed pages and network television" (Drezner 2009, p.49). The maximum optimism is maybe expressed in these words: "There has never been a better time to be a public intellectual and the web is the big reason why" (Siva Vaidhyanathan cited in Drezner 2009, p. 49). Drezner says clearly that "the growth of online venues has stimulated rather than retarded the quality and diversity of public intellectuals" (Drezner 2009, p. 50). His thesis is that the proliferation of blogs reverses the academization of intellectuals which "created barriers to the flourishing of public intellectuals" (Drezner 2009, p. 53). However, a redefinition of the public intellectual seems to be necessary as "blogging democratizes the function of public intellectual" (Drezner 2009, p. 53).

This democratization of the access to the public sphere is widely noticed. "Citizens are no longer just positioned as audiences, but can be active producers", Peter Dahlgren (Dahlgren 2013, p. 401) states while warning about the fact that "these developments raise the fundamental issue of what the concept of public intellectual means in the contemporary media landscape" (Dahlgren 2013, p. 402). In another study, the author underlines that "the web obviously provides public intellectuals with new ports of entry in the public sphere – as it does for all citizens who might be interested" which announce a possible difficult situation while

"there are now more citizens pursuing activities similar to public intellectuals" (Dahlgren 2012, p. 102).

Dahlgren is pursuing the idea of a redefinition of the PI voiced by Drezner and records the raise of "a new generation of public intellectuals (…) who differ from traditional public intellectuals in two basic ways, namely their adept use of the new media, affordances and their status as "intellectuals" (Dahlgren 2012, p. 102). "People are discovering and inventing on the net modes in which one can be an intellectuals", Dahlgren highlights while noticing also that, in the web context standards and evaluation criteria are becoming "more difficult in the web context" (Dahlgren 2012, p. 102). The author is even proposing a name for those public intellectuals issued from bloggers: "civic intellectuals". They still are public intellectuals because of "their commitments to ideas", but "they are less likely to reach extensive audiences" and "are more likely to have more interaction with those who read their texts (Dahlgren 2013, p. 403).

Jeremy Freese is positioning on a more skeptical paradigm: "more people can now nurse aspirations to be public intellectuals, but blogs also make plain the difficulties of actually reaching a public in ways that books do not" and also they "vitiate romantic ideas about the PI as transcendent figure" (Freese 2009, p. 45). He underlines that "blogs give individuals far more power in making ideas available, but having thoughts available to the public is not the same as having them read" (Freese 2009, p. 46). Furthermore, the importance of the audiences of PI blogs has to be mentioned.

Same pessimist approach about the public intellectuals influence in society is mentioned by Rita Figueiras (Figueiras 2012, p. 112): "people started speaking in its own right refusing intellectuals to act as its spokespersons, thus, thinkers have begun to lose relevance in the public sphere" (Figueiras 2012, p. 112). However, she argues that "one of the central institutions where the identity of intellectuals was cemented, the 18th century salon, is being re-enacted today precisely on the internet" because "through the net, many intellectuals are exercising their authority and reinforcing the 21st century intellectual community" (Figueiras 2012, p. 112). Basically, "the internet is providing a place for intellectuals to express themselves, to be read and have their authority extended" (Figueiras 2012, p. 112).

Despite the problem of the democratized access and growing competition to be heard, one more aspect worth to be mentioned: the way new media is "changing how intellectuals engage with their public" (Baert&Booth 2012, p.117). If in the case of traditional media, the PI-public relation was mediated, in the Internet era "intellectuals now have "a more intimate relationship" with the technologies used to engage publics than even before (Baert&Booth 2012, p.117 see also, Kellner 1998, p. 174). "With tools of engagement placed directly into the hands of intellectuals, a more dialogical style of intervention may emerge as publics are engaged without institutionalized mediators", Baert&Booth underline (2012, p. 117).

Uses

My interest in researching the way public intellectuals are using new media can be placed in what might be called a kind of revival of uses and users studies in the context of the transformations implied by the new technologies and despite the critics of the technological determinism heard these last decades. Not to mention, in favour of this area of research interest, that the last issue of the Revue française des sciences de l'information et de la communication (June, 2015) was dedicated to this approach. "This uses topic (…) answers today to major challenges of the society in order to understand the contemporary technological dynamics of the information sector" (Badillos & Pélissier 2015), explain the issue coordinators while dressing a short review of media uses history while remembering McLuhan heritage which stipulates that every technological development have a serious impact on the society. It worth also to mention that this new approach to the sociology of uses in the new media and particularly in the social media is relying on an interactive paradigm of communication (Charest & Gauthier 2012, p.18) as public is not a receptor anymore but is actively participating to the conversation and even to media content production, I would add.

My approach is a qualitative one, proposing the analysis of the online presence of a small group of Romanian intellectuals that respect the definition of public intellectuals presented above. They also can be labelled as traditional PI as they have already been present in the media (press, television) before pursuing their online activity.

The Romanian public intellectuals chosen for analyzing their online presence during one month (October 2014) were: Andrei Plesu, Gabriel Liiceanu, Stelian Tanase, Vladimir Tismaneanu, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, Tedor Baconschi, Cristian Preda, Costi Rogozanu, Mircea Cartescu and Mircea Dinescu.

My uses analysis will try to respond to these four questions:
 – What kind of online media do they use?
 – Which is the frequency of their posts?
 – What is their audience?
 – Do they interact with their public?

ANALYSIS

Several Typologies

When analyzing the online presence of the ten public intellectuals (what kind of new media, with what frequency, what public and what interaction), I manage to identify three categories labelled as "fake" bloggers, real/experimented bloggers and new media intellectuals.

The "fake bloggers"

In some of the cases analyzed, the public intellectuals are present in the online media but, in fact, they are just transposing online the paper version of their activity. That's the case for Gabriel Liiceanu, 72, philosopher and director of the Humanitas publishing house, very present on the public sphere after 1990 and very well known for his call in favour of a moral "cleaning" on the public scene after the communism as well as for Andrei Plesu, writer and Arts historic, very popular for his op-eds.

Andrei Plesu is present on the group blogging site of daily newspaper Adevarul where he is regularly publishing once a week, just as he does in the print version (4 posts for October 2014). During the same month, two other articles were published in the online version of the review Dilema that he is coordinating. There is also a Personality Page Andrei Plesu on Facebook (9,556 Likes on 2nd June 2015) but it is animated by "a group of fans" and simply relying media and online Plesu's interventions. So, my analysis specifically investigates the blog on Adevarul.

According to the stats published by Adevarul blogging platform and taking into account the number of comments for each post, Plesu is the most popular of the bloggers present on this online platform. The average number of comments for his posts in October 2014 was 308 with a maximum of 330 comments for a post named "The enemies of the people" (13 October 2014).

The site doesn't provide other stats about the number of visualisations for his articles and Plesu's blog audience is not being monitored by an independent agency. However, we have an indication of the popularity of his posts because each of them has a social media connector indicating the number of Facebook Likes and Shares. His posts count between 521 and 13,758 Likes and between 91 and 3,260 Shares. The maximum is reached by a post called "Where do we live" (20 October 2014) which manage to get 13,758 Like and 3,260 Share on Facebook.

Plesu never respond to the comments on his posts. Even more, he seems to be irritated by those who comment on his posts so, two of the four October posts were dedicated to them: "My Dear Commentator" and "Under Covers Interlocutors". He reproaches them the fact that they publish without revealing their identity as well as they don't have a very civilised way of communication. He even announced at the end of October 2014, the decision to not allow anymore anonymous comments to his posts on Adevarul.ro.

Gabriel Liiceanu online presence is more discrete. Since September 2011, he's publishing once or two a month on a civic online platform named www.contributors.ro (22nd position in the Top of Blogs in October 2014, according to ZeList, a monitoring agency for the Romanian online). As in the case of Plesu, his Facebook page is animated by a group of fans and counts 4,193 Likes (on 5 June 2015). There

is no original content production on this page which is simply re-publishing articles about or by Liiceanu.

On October 2014, he published two posts in this group blog. According to the stats provided by the site, one of his posts (21 October 2014) counts 321,437 visualisations and 475 comments and the other (published on 6 October 2014) – 26,485 visualisations and 118 comments (stats checked on 27 June 2015).

He never answers to the comments.

We call these two cases "Fakebloggers" because even if t they have an online presence, this presence doesn't really benefit from the online advantages like interactivity and the possibility to publish with no restricted frequency and to react in real time to everyday events.

In the case of Plesu everything is published with mathematical frequency (once a week, like in the print version) and the texts are not adapted to the online (same length as in the print version: 4,000 to 6,000 signs. The same situation can be noticed in the case of Liiceanu. The texts are not at all adapted to the online taking into account their length: 19,000 and 27,000 signs, even using references like in an academic production.

However, even if there is no adaptation to the online and just a translation of their print activity, their audience seems to be impressive. One reason could be the fact that they count among the most well-known Romanian public intellectual (if not the most well-known). When searching on Google, Gabriel Liiceanu returns 421,000 mentions of his name, while Andrei Plescu 201,000 (stats checked on 5 June 2015). They seem to take advantage of this notoriety gained while they were very present in the traditional media. These traditional media are frequently relaying their posts and contributing to their visibility.

The real bloggers

For some other public intellectuals we investigate, the use of blog seems to be more complete. That's the case for Stelian Tanase, 64, writer, political scientist, Vladimir Tismaneanu, 65, political scientist living in the USA and Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, 50, political scientist also, very implicated in the civic debate in Romania.

Stelian Tanase is constantly publishing on his own site (www.stelian-tanase.ro) which includes, despite the blog, some other sections (actuality, film or shows reviews, historical commemorations, and trip notes) where are also publishing some invited "guests". His site has even a commercial section where jewelleries are proposed to sell.

The site has an attached Facebook Page (Stelian Tanase/Media-publishing-news), counting some 28,000 Like (on 2nd June 2015).

On October 2014, he posts 24th times on the blog and has only 5th posts (links from the blog, not original content production on the Facebook). However, it

seems to be exceptional because on some other months, his presence on Facebook is much more important.

In October 2014, his site was 3rd in top personal pages (source: www.trafic.ro), counting 14,525 unique visitors and 31,556 visualisations. Their posts are receiving between 43 (for a cultural/literature post) and 485 Likes on Facebook (for a post called "Pupincurismul – o vocatie romaneasca" – "The praise with no fundament, a Romanian vocation"). His posts count usually 1-2 share or, the most, 14 (in one case).

On the blog, there are no comments or other interaction with the audience. However, the author is responding personally to readers' comments on Facebook.

Vladimir Tismaneanu is also constantly feeding his blog www.tismaneanu. wordpress.com, which archives descend till 2009. His blog is updated and is rich in links to other blogs or to some publishing events. He's frequently using photos to illustrate the texts.

In October 2014, he published 39 posts while 4 of them are also published on the group blog www.contributors.ro. However, it is to notice that not all of these posts were created for the blog, but also for some other media (online or traditional) and are just re-published on the blog.

On 28 October, his blog ranked on 102nd position in the Top of Romanian blogs (source: www.zelist.ro). We do not have other information about the audience but for the posts published on contributors.ro, the number of visualisations is indicated (between 2,090 and 6,465) as well as the number of Likes on Facebook (between 33 and 638).

Comments are not allowed on www.tismaneanu.wordpress.com but it is possible to comment on contributors.ro (between 16 to 48 comments) and the author is responding to comments.

Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, 50, is publishing on her civic online platform www.romaniacurata.ro (Proper Romania), also a group blog. Some of her posts on this site are also re-published on the online version of the daily newspaper *Romania libera*. In October 2014, she posts 5th times and four of these posts are also being published on www.romanialibera.ro.

We don't have stats about the audience of her posts but we have some indications about the popularity of her writings due to the number of Facebook Likes: between 96 and 3,000 for her most popular post announcing her vote preferences ("Who am I going to vote for in the first and in the second round").

It is not possible to comment her articles on www.romanialibera.ro but it is possible to do this on www.romaniacurata.ro. There are 15 to 76 comments and the author is sometimes responding to these comments under the nickname "alinaMP".

We call this typology of public intellectuals, "real bloggers" because they seem to use completely the advantages of blogging, mainly the possibility to publish whenever they consider to have something to say to the audience as well the pos-

sibility to have direct dialog and exchange with their readers. However, they are still not using all the online possibilities: their posts remain basically text or text plus photo and they are not present on social media (except Stelian Tanase but he doesn't produce specific content for Facebook, just re-publishing the blog).

The New Media Intellectuals

The third category that we indentified includes public intellectuals who mix presence on the blog or group blog and a very rich presence on social media (Facebook, Twitter).

Teodor Baconschi, 53, religions anthropologist, former ambassador and former FM, Cristian Preda, 50, political sciences professor, MEP and former member of two right oriented parties, the writer and poet Mircea Cartarescu, 58, could enter to this category as well as the younger writer and columnist Costi Rogozanu, 37.

Teodor Baconschi's blog (started in 2009) was not active in October 2014. He abandoned it when he left PMP (Popular Movement Party) on May 2014. Baconschi recently restarted his blog (April 2015) trying to promote this way his essay on Facebook ("Facebook, the narcissism factory"). Instead, he is very present on Facebook, feeding two pages, one personal but with the possibility to follow (so it's public) and another one as a personality (about 7,700 Like in October 2014).

The personality page does not have posts in October which seems to be exceptional as for the other months there is a rich activity but he is very prolific on his personal page with 259 posts, reaching 15 posts a day for example on 16th October. It is to mention that his posts are short and using multimedia possibilities as photos, videos, and links to other sites as well as shared status of some friends.

We do not have stats about his readers except the number of Likes on his Personality page but we have an indication about the popularity of his posts on Facebook depending on the number of Likes which varies from 22 (for a post treating a foreign affairs issue) to 149 for a post regarding a political issue. He resumes himself in a post published in October the situation: "cultural posts receive 30 to 50 Likes, public interest with very implicated language – 75 to 100 Likes while personal post – 200 to 400 Likes".

He currently responds to comments and interacts with readers on his Facebook page.

As well as Baconschi, Cristian Preda is announcing on 9 September 2014 that he is abandoning the blog and can be followed on his two Facebook pages (personal and Politician page) and on Twitter. He continues to publish once a week on the group blog of www.adevarul.ro but, as he recognized, it's not a real blog.

In October 2014, he published 51 posts on Facebook. Preda adapts his writing to Facebook: his posts are short and he is frequently using links and uploading photos.

His Personality Page was counting about 4,000 Likes in October 2014 and the number of Likes for his posts varies from a very few (4-6) for issues regarding the European subjects to 305 when announcing his vote preference or 320 when having a personal post (a photo with his father and with his father-in-law).

Preda responds to comments on his pages and directly interact with his readers.

Costi Rogozanu is constantly publishing on the group blog www.criticatac.ro and he also feeds a personal Facebook page with the possibility to follow. In October 2014, he published 20 posts on www.criticatac.ro and 85 posts on his Facebook page. His posts on www.criticatac.ro receive between a few dozens and 1,200 Facebook Likes. The most popular of its posts counts 4,228 visualisations.

It is possible to comment his posts on www.criticatac.ro (up to 115 comments) but he is not responding. Instead, he frequently responds on his Facebook page.

Mircea Cartarescu, 58, poet and writer (one of the most well-known Romanian contemporary writers: Google research returns 307,000 results for his name on 5 June 2015) doesn't feed a blog but starting November 7, 2014, he opens his Facebook page publicly. We can presume that it was a political decision as his first public post (and so the possibility to follow him) was an urge in favour one of the two candidates to the second tour of the presidential elections (scheduled on 16 November 2014). Due to these exceptional conditions, we decided to analyze his online presence during the month of November 2014 instead of October 2014 as for the other public intellectuals.

Cartarescu is counting (on 5 June 2015) 314 friend and 14,260 followers on his Facebook page. In November 2014, he posts 17th times on his page. His posts are adapted to the social media: short and using links, photos, videos, etc. Eight of these posts are published on 17th November when the results of the second tour of the presidential elections were released and his posts are treating this subject.

The number of Likes for his posts varies from 48 to 1,406 or even 2,037 (on June 2015) when saying he was the first to predict Klaus Iohannis would be the next Romanian president (17 November 2014) or when expressing his joy for the victory of the preferred candidate in the elections (17 November 2014). He also has an impressive number of shares for some of his posts: 665 for the post expressing the joy of the victory and 506 Shares for the post urging in favor of one of the candidate (7 November 2014).

Mircea Cartarescu responds occasionally to comments on his Facebook page. However, his posts don't record an impressive number of comments (1 to 37). The most important number of comments is for the post when he says he was the first talking about Iohannis as the next president of Romania.

Our research was supposed to include the online presence of another public intellectual, the poet, writer and columnist Mircea Dinescu, one of the dissidents

under the communist regime. However, after analyzing his Facebook Community Page (about 6,900 Like on 8 June 2014), we decided not to include it in the conclusions as it was obvious that it wasn't him that is posting but his (marketing) team. All posts have a marketing/promotional language trying to increase visibility for his TV show mixing cuisine and Romanian traditional music. So, posts mainly include photos, or Youtube links about this TV show. Occasionally, it also provides links to his columns in the satirical weekly he is coordinating (*Catavencii*). Even if I do not include this analysis in the conclusions as it was not a public intellectual who actually uses this Facebook page, it seems relevant to mention this specific, marketing oriented use of the social media by a PI, via a professional team.

Conclusion and limits

For some of the Romanian public intellectuals the move to the online media is only a technical transposition of their use of print media with no effort to adapt their use (shorter texts, increased frequency, use of multimedia) or to interact with their audience. As Peter Dahlgren observed, many traditional PIs remain "the same when they enter digital public sphere" (Dahlgren 2012, p. 103). They also seem very keen to preserve a very hierarchical-authoritarian relation with their audience.

Because of the notoriety gained in the traditional media, their online presences are very often re-distributed by this traditional media offering them an exceptional visibility and audience.

The paradox is that, these misfit PIs managed to be more popular in the online sphere that their more adapted colleagues. However, it is not clear what would be their fate if they wouldn't profit of their previous notoriety.

Younger PIs seem to have more abilities to use online media with all the advantages: multimedia tools and interaction with their audiences. Their implication in the political/civic life certainly has a role in their interest to dialogue. Dahlgren was noticing that "particularly, younger people, with "web roots", engage in a variety of media practices" and "they use web in a more technically creative, multimedia ways, often in the alternative political domain" (Dahlgren 2012, p. 104). Despite these enhanced capabilities, they don't always manage in obtaining a wider audience than the previous, more traditional generation of PIs. It is to appreciate their openness in redefining the PIs-audience relation a more collaborative one even if we should analyze the content of their comments in order to really understand their position.

As stipulated at the beginning, my analysis is a qualitative one and I do not pretend to generalize it to all Romanian PIs and their use of new media. However, the nine cases evaluated in this research count with no doubt among the most popular Romania PIs.

It is also necessary to underline the volatility of the online corpus which can change from one hour to another because of different factors such as: the author's editing, the audience interaction, the social media or blog platform changes, the hosting web changes, etc. To avoid these changes I tried to save the online corpus in offline documents and to precise for every part of analysis the date when the data were available. Unfortunately, for the audience and interactions, it was not possible to have the same indicators for all the nine cases analyzed (as for example, number of visualizations, number of followers or number of comments. Despite this heterogeneity, the analysis offers a quite precise map of the investigated topics.

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