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MASTER THESIS

THEME:

**POLITICAL COMMUNICATION OF PARLIAMENTARIANS IN KOSOVO
THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA - FACEBOOK**

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INTRODUCTION

This paper wants to address the issue of online media (Facebook) and analysis of the concept, creation and consumption of these media. Also, this paper discusses the notions of political communication and political actors and how politicians use online media (Facebook) as a channel of information and communication with the audience whether they are fans of theirs or no fans of that party. It is clear that the term "political communication" leaves room for a variety of definitions and it is difficult to determine its exact definition. One of the definitions of this term is that of Denton and Woodward stating that: "Clean discussion about the distribution of public resources (income), official authority (which is given authority / right to make legitimate, legislative and executive decisions) and official sanctions (what rewards or punishes the state)".

Until 2000 today's media and journalism crafts were undisturbed until the connection of high speed internet, Google News, YouTube, Twitter, smart-phones, mobile internet and more. Nowadays we do not feel the need for printing, radio stations or television channels.

Changes which journalists are facing are so big that they are matched with "earthquake" of the invention of the printing press of the Catholic clergy. The heart of the revolution was not appeared in the mid-1990s when the Internet arrived, but the real revolution came when the entire audience from all fields and professions were sensitized that the obstacles to the creation and distribution of contents had ended.

Information revolution in the first place is the democratization of public writing. Technological event of the decade by the classical, traditional media and heritage is to develop tools and self-publishing services that are inexpensive, easy to use and the possibility to be connected at all times (Always on).

People have neglected the old media and through social networking exchange more towards each other. Today one can say what they know and what they do, because everyone has their own printing press (blog), radio station (podcast) or television (YouTube).

Information today is free, dissolved and lies between people related and does not get "down" by the authorities as we are used now. Being present in every country, information circulates more quickly and in many different forms. The public today is quite capable and willing to explore, discover, merge and publish.

So, the reporter is not the only historian of the present. Time, when the world passed through the filter of the media and journalists, is over. The information is fragmented and does not belong in the past. The press, radio or TV are merged and absorbed by the internet: "The greatest enemy of the traditional media is not Internet but the available time of public". Today everyone has felt the changes and is aware that it is no longer possible to act as before. The world does not stop changes and "giant" called Internet is sweeping every aspect of life whether personal or professional as such are spending more through the screen than by letter.

Some of the essential points of this information revolution are:

- The economic value of the use of traditional media is crumbling in front of new offering digital media, where costs are lower. Today the public receives the information everywhere, anytime and from different sources, since the technology is in the home, in the office, on the road, on vacation;
- Abundance is replacing inadequacy. Today information is anywhere, at any time because we are surrounded by digitized information sources often free. Abundant amount and instant information has decreased the value of the proposed information so far;
- The Internet is the great new media convergence of XXI century, today makes the world information through smart-phones and other tablets. Today each treads on the other, the newspapers make videos, televisions write articles on Web, and radios publish their photos on websites.

Reporters in the recent years are pessimistic and worried about the economic survival. This gives us to understand that pessimism about the arrival of new technologies have passed into the background. Power, influence and authority of traditional media are decreased because they are weakened by the loss of tens of thousands of journalists on average of quarter and one third of their staff since 2000.

Deputies are divided into categories according to their activity on Facebook. This division is made in the conventional way such as: very active, nearly active and passive. All those over 90 days that have had over 90 posts (text, pictures and video) are placed in the active group. All those who had less than 90 posts are placed in the nearly active group. But those who have under half of 90 posts means 45 posts and those are placed in the passive deputies group.

CONCLUSIONS

Facebook is a communication that in principle gives you to understand that there is a two-way communication between the politician and the recipient of the message or the electorate. Facebook, unlike television or newspaper, makes two-way communication: the message is given and has reaction. In traditional media (newspapers, television), the message of politician is given to citizens, but citizens (recipient of the message) find it impossible to react because newspapers and TV (on paper and screen, rather than newspaper and TV online) does not allow the feedback. Because the politician did not respond to their readers or followers comments, it means that the politician only writes information to which there is reaction, but then the politician does not respond, so he/she does not respond to citizens' reaction.

This is a conversational, two-way communication, but non-response of the politician to comments by readers is still a disproportionate dialogue. Facebook offers enough space for the promotion of activities of politicians. They can show their originality without being violated by anybody or anything since their posts on their private or political side reach to their followers without any change and at any time. Facebook as a mean of communication and information is seen as a database of politicians where other media often cite their views on Facebook, so there is a big possibility that the parliamentarians are more present with their views in other traditional media too such as newspapers and television. Facebook now is seen as the most influential medium in which politicians manage it themselves, because they are the editor, self funder and the censor.

Kosovo's parliamentarians use Facebook to be closer to their constituents and to make some form of uninterrupted campaign for four years as they are in position or opposition. It appears that 43 percent of young people between 18-25 years consume the most time on facebook. The number of Facebook users aged 26-33 is 20% while the ages of 34-41 are 7% and ages 42-49 are 12%. Unlike younger ages, ages of 26-49 were less to spend on Facebook, because the use of other Internet sites such as E-mail and news sites. Older ages from 50-65 years who usually follow the traditional media such as television or newspaper also use Facebook too, where 17% of them have an account of Facebook. It is worth mentioning that during our research we found that the use of Facebook in the ratio between male and female gender was too close where it turns that women are 50.4%, while 49.5% men that use Facebook.

- Facebook followers of politicians were inclined to like short and light texts and not long texts and analysis.
- Even more pleasing were the photos whose message is easily obtainable, tirelessly and quickly. This means that the individual in Kosovo tends to superficial messages.
- Politicians generally had posted the most significant events, their posts were liked below average compared with the number of followers they had in Facebook.
- Kosovo parliamentarians mainly post texts and fewer pictures of their political activities. Only a third is pictures, as two-thirds of posts are short texts.

- Those short texts are generally texts with 5-6 lines. Long texts are noted at the chairmen of parties and ministers that have greater responsibility to the institutions that they manage.
- Also it is noted that long texts, commentary or analysis, have much less likes by their friends on Facebook.
- During the monitoring, we noticed that the followers of Facebook pages of politicians are more inclined to like pictures, or text files associated with pictures more than posts that are just text. Nearly twice as many results that photos to be liked more than the text.
- Photos posted by parliamentarians are almost 80 percent of the view of their meetings with important people and various ambassadors, only a small part are pictures of their family. But even here there is a difference between the content of photos: family photos and profile pictures are twice popular among fans than the pictures directly related to politics or political activities.
- Many deputies repeat on Facebook or draw on this page video or text what they have said and discussed in Parliament.
- Parliamentarians mainly on their posts praise themselves; provide information on their activities and meetings; comments on daily events; analysis of the political, legal and social issues.
- Regarding the analysis of the text content, we can say that half of Kosovo's parliamentarians had given personal or partisan views on daily events. About 20% of the active deputies have written about themselves and their meetings related to politics. Besides the party leaders and ministers, in their posts they had analyzed daily occurrence problems such as unemployment, migration, the Special Court, the dismissal of the minister Jablanovic etc.
- In the posts of our parliamentarians on Facebook not all are supportive of their followers. There were opponents although they were Facebook friends. This was noticed in negative comments or opinions that they had towards a politician. By monitoring, we can say that about 15 percent had negative comments.
- It is generally noticed a not so much aggressive language, it was nearly restrained. There were times that any reaction or denigrating comment of the commentator to the politician, after a day not be seen on the politician's page, that implies that it was cleared from the politician or the holder of the site.
- Language was generally within ethical norms;
- Mainly politicians had kept the official website itself. There is a small percentage of exception of deputies. VjosaOsmani has posted that her official website is maintained by the administrators, but the wording of messages is done by her.
- Mainly politicians had kept the official website itself. The exceptions are a small percentage of MPs. VjosaOsmani has posted the warning that its official website maintained by the administrators, but the wording of messages makes it himself.

- Average likes compared to the total number of friends, it's nearly the same for example they receive only 3 percent likes by their friends for the things they post on Facebook.
- Photos that promote more positive comments are those where politicians are with families and where the commentators give compliments, meanwhile the topics that promote harsh and negative comments are related to social welfare.