

Brand Components in Electoral Debates: Presidential Elections Romania 2009

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ABSTRACT

The present paper illustrates the use of the brand and its components in the most important campaign debate of the presidential elections in Romania in 2009. The research method we have selected is the case study. The research technique consisted of the content analysis of the two speeches. The conducted analysis has included all the three types of the content analysis: conceptual, relational and qualitative analysis. The content analysis has been conducted by using the Nvivo software. The identification of the candidate's brand in a single debate particularly entails its presence throughout the electoral campaign. We can outline the main component of the brand notion the two candidates have resorted to in this debate: Bănescu resorted to positioning, while Antonescu opted for differentiation and positioning.

KEYWORDS: *political brand, presidential elections, electoral debates, political brand components, branding management.*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *M31, D72.*

INTRODUCTION

Political branding, a new research field for the management-marketing sciences, is currently a very important research topic.

The central focus of this paper is if the brand components are used in campaigns in political discourses. The selected, qualitative, research method is the case study. The content analysis was the chosen research technique.

The present paper is part of a more ample abductive approach research study that confirms the influence of the brand on the voters' behaviour, both through qualitative and quantitative methods, such as: the phenomenological analysis, the survey, the case study and the statistical and mathematical analysis. One of the three case studies approached in the present paper is the 2009 presidential elections in Romania, where we have checked whether the brand components have been used by the candidates during the campaigns.

The brand of the candidates competing for the presidential position was identified during the 2009 elections in Romania. We will not illustrate the presence of the brand components throughout the entire duration of the electoral campaign but rather pinpoint the presence of the personal brand components in politics manifested during a presidential election debate.

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We have not selected an irrelevant debate, but the only one that was “more detached” in terms of the debate topics and candidate arguments. We are referring to the debate between Traian Băsescu, the head of state and PDL candidate (who got the best score during the first round – 32,44% of the valid votes) and Crin Antonescu, leader of the PNL party and presidential candidate (who ranked third during the first round, i.e. 20,02% of the valid votes). The debate took place before the first elections round. Presidential elections in Romania are uninominal and the voting system is based on a simple majority during the two rounds. The information source we have used is the website www.youtube.com, where parts of this debate have been uploaded.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The definition of the brand through its components has been carried out in previous papers (2009, 2010, 2011) and we will also further present summarising tables related to the presence of the brand components in politics:

Table 1. The eight brand components in politics, presented in specialised professional papers

Suggested brand components	Author presenting this notion in relation to political brands
Brand values (Mentality, lifestyle)	Smith and French (2009), Lieb and Shah (2010)
Innovation	O’Cass (2009)
Differentiation	Smith and French (2009), Lieb and Shah (2010)
Positioning	Butler and Harris (2009), Smith and French (2009), Lieb and Shah (2010)
Segmentation, targeting	Butler and Harris (2009), Lieb and Shah (2010)
Adaptability	Butler and Harris (2009), Scammell (2007), Hennenberg, Scammell and O’Shaughnessy (2009)
History, sustainability	Scammell (2007)
Notoriety	Smith and French (2009)

2. METHODOLOGY

According to the research epistemology of social sciences, the research methodology we have used can be included in the constructivist paradigm, as the constructivist approach focuses on the construction of reality. (Thiétardet coll., 2007).

The research hypotheses used:

The brand components can be found directly or indirectly as elements used in the speeches of the two candidates (8 hypotheses) H1:H8. They refer to the following brand components: brand values (mentality, lifestyle) – H1; innovation – H2; differentiation – H3; positioning – H4; segmentation – H5; adaptability – H6; sustainability, history – H7; notoriety – H8.

For instance:

H1: the brand values (mentality, lifestyle) can be identified in at least one of the two candidates’ speeches.

- H2: Differentiation is identified in at least one of the two candidates' speeches.
- H3: Positioning is identified in at least one of the two candidates' speeches.
- H4: Awareness is identified in at least one of the two candidates' speeches.
- H5: History is identified in at least one of the two candidates' speeches.
- H6: Adaptability is identified in at least one of the two candidates' speeches.
- H7: Innovation is identified in at least one of the two candidates' speeches.
- H8: Segmentation is identified in at least one of the two candidates' speeches.

The analysis technique used is the content analysis of the above mentioned speech. Our analysis will encompass all the three types of the content analysis: conceptual, relational and qualitative analyses.

This analysis technique has the advantage of being a quantitative-qualitative analysis employed in the study of communication, both in terms of its manifest and its latent content (Chelcea, 2007; Mayiring, 2000), as the a priori defined concepts often fail to be explicitly identified in the text. Therefore, the researcher has analysed the text and has coded it in terms of its brand management contents. The relevance of latent coding may exceed the relevance of manifest coding, since people communicate meaning in various implicit ways that depend on the context and not only on specific words or phrases (Agabrian, 2006).

The definition suggested by Chelcea for this technique, "a set of quantitative and qualitative techniques for the research of verbal and nonverbal communication, with the purpose of identifying and describing in an unbiased and systematic manner the manifest and/or latent content, in order to draw conclusions concerning the individual and society or communication itself as a social interaction process", is the most proximal scientific research technique that is relevant for the purpose of the present study, that consists in identifying, describing and explaining social interactions (Chelcea, 2007).

The analysis of this speech resorted to the types of content analysis as follows:

- The qualitative content analysis: used in identifying and assigning the text segments to each of the eight targeted concepts and deriving conclusions (we have used the term *concept* rather than *variable* since they do not have different values for different cases or units in our analysis. The concepts are merely identified, but not measured in the present analysis);
- Conceptual analysis: the frequency of concepts in a text and the text surface covered by each of these;
- Relational analysis that enables the visualisation of the relations between concepts.

The coding protocol and the definitions of the concepts that have been taken into account when conducting the coding with specific focus on the latent meaning in a brand management approach are itemised in the lines below:

1. Brand values; lifestyle, mentality. This concept is identified when one of the candidates will mention a new way of thinking or a new lifestyle (their own) that a candidate (himself, maybe) or a party has introduced/has attempted to introduce.
2. Awareness. Codifies the text segment that refers to being known, to being recognised, the desire to be recognised as a candidate, as an individual, as a politician or referring to the proposed programme or to the party.
3. Segmentation: codifies the parts of the speech that refer to sending messages, to targeting, communication, finding solutions for certain voter categories.

4. Positioning. Codifies the parts of the speech where Bănescu/Antonescu refer to what they have done, what they will or wish to do in order to settle certain issues, what their opinion is on certain campaign topics that have been mentioned by the moderator.
5. Differentiation. This concept reveals the difference between the candidate and the other candidate or between parties. Just as with positioning, we will analyse the desired, communicated and perceived differentiation.
6. Adaptability. We will also codify the adaptability of the candidate's speech to the statements made by the moderator or their opponent. Auxiliary words: we/I will accomplish.
7. Innovation. We will codify the innovation related to the solutions suggested by the candidate or the party in order to settle the various problems faced by voters, by the party or by the candidate, to strategy or communication.
8. Sustainability, history. We will codify the elements they will communicate on their past, on the accomplishments (of a candidate or of the party) and believed to have mattered in the outcome of the elections.

The coding in this analysis has been conducted manually by the researcher. We have included several times a part of the text in different brands components. This situation was somehow to be expected, since all these concepts overlap, and some of them have been devised together in practice (segmentation, positioning and differentiation), and the brand to be outlined is confined within a range delineated by the connections between its component concepts.

2.1 The recording unit, the context unit and the sampling unit

The recording unit for our concept context (brand components in politics) is the theme: that speech fragment whose ideas confine it to the significance of one of the established concepts (Rotariu, 1986 apud Agabrian, 2006). Ole Holsti (1969) describes the theme as a "single assertion about some subjects". The outline of the theme encompasses a single idea, without being confined to the individual semantic borderlines of the sentences and paragraphs (apud Agabrian, 2006). The theme is the most appropriate recording unit to be used when identifying the created concepts and subsequently brings about certain advantages, such as recording accuracy and analysis reliability.

This analysis does not refer to the context unit, since we do not have variables with categories, and we need context in order to identify the category that encompasses a particular part of the speech. However, if we only refer to the contextual meaning, we can assert that the context unit is the theme as well.

The theme, as the selected recording unit, even creates a new technique for certain authors: the content thematic analysis. This can only be applied when the coding is conducted for a priori established categories and when there is a solid conceptual framework being illustrated, as is our case. However, there are no differences in the application of the content thematic analysis and the classical thematic analysis (Jolibert, Jourdan, 2006).

2.2 Precision/accuracy and validity of the analysis

The selection of the theme as a recording unit conveys more accuracy to our analysis than other available choices, an argument stated by Holl and also embraced by Chelcea (2008): “The quoted sociologist (i.e. Holt) remarked that the other recording units (the sentence, the compound sentence, the paragraph), though easy to spot, entail their conversion to thematic units, which raises serious issues in terms of the accuracy of the content analysis.”

Accuracy was also our main choice since we have worked with variables that only had two categories.

2.3 External validity

For the validity of the content analysis study we have checked whether the characteristics of the text and the conclusions are relevant to the hypotheses we wish to investigate. The content analysis doesn't show that each of the categories influences the voters' choice, but indicates a certain and strong influence, as they are used by the candidate in this speech.

This validity will not be analysed separately, but alongside the other elements of a more ample research: the case study for the 2008 presidential elections in the United States and that of the 2009 presidential elections in Romania, as well as other research methods and techniques: the documentary study and the detailed interviews conducted in France and Romania with the candidates or their campaign managers. A strong point for validity is the fact that the concepts we have used are not applied only in the confrontation between the two main candidates for the highest office in Romania in 2010, but also in the detailed interviews and in Obama's speech (Jolibert, Jourdan, 2006). Consequently, validity must be approached as a whole, as part of the triangular research conducted in the more ample research in the Ph.D. thesis (Ghiuta, 2011) and will be presented as a validation to be formulated. The above mentioned more ample research can also be perceived as three case studies (the small number is, however, a weakness in the generalisation, not in terms of the transferability of the results) that have led to the same results, while the research has been validated through the triangulation of the findings:

- ✓ Elections in Romania (local 2008, parliamentary 2008, presidential 2009).
- ✓ Elections in France (several types of elections in different years; in the detailed interviews, particularly regionals in 2010, local 2008, legislative 2007, presidential 2007).
- ✓ Elections in the United States of America (presidential 2008).

However, the research compensates through the various types of elections under analysis, the various people who have been interviewed (candidates, campaign managers. Voters), the various parties the interviewees are part of (left, right, centre), the various sources of information (direct, indirect through official data, research papers, books, newspaper articles).

These three case studies have been selected depending on democracy, on the current interest for its study and for its electoral results, thus:

- The United States of America, the international symbol of democracy;
- France, the European symbol of democracy;

- Romania, a country with a rather recent democracy (20 years) and where the electoral analyses are, at least quantitatively, at an incipient stage as compared to the first two.

Analytical generalisation, as well as transferability, can also be approached in terms of other papers that focus on and present the same phenomenon, papers that have been mentioned when we have analysed the internal validity of the results. What is important is the fact that these papers are very topical and have been published after the present research had been started. They can be seen as a result of the current tendency among international researchers in the fields of politics and marketing to introduce this subject in their scope of interest. The papers mentioned when speaking of internal validity highlight the fact that the brand is an important and necessary instrument for influencing the voters' behaviour. "The results of a qualitative research can be compared depending on the identical or different characteristics of the cases analysed by the researcher." Thus, in all the three cases we have analysed, we have confirmed the same eight brand components in politics, which are also to be found in France, Romania and the United States of America (Thiéart et al, 2007).

The external validity of the qualitative study is improved by triangulating the sources of information, the documents and the case studies, rendering it relevant on a statistical level as well. Moreover, the theoretical generalisation of the brand components in general and of the political realm in particular, conveys a certain type of external validity (Gavard-Perretet al., 2008).

The reliability of a research study is believed to be a measure of the accuracy of the results found by various researchers at different times or periods of time if each of them would resort to the same strategy, would use the same facts or, in other words, would develop their research by resorting to the same rules, methods, procedures and instruments for that respective research (Zait & Spalanzani, 2006).

2.4 The reliability of the research and of the measuring instruments

An important element for the reliability of the research is for observations to be conducted in time. This is particularly difficult for the entire paper, as we have used an abductive approach with forward and backward dynamics, both in terms of concepts and analysis as well. What we believe to be essential in this context is the study we have conducted "in the field". That is why we have mentioned the date when each interview was conducted in the chapter that focuses on the analysis of the detailed interviews.

Moreover, the reliability of the research also partly relies on the reliability of the instrument for analysis (Thiéart et alii, 2007). We have described how we have contacted the interviewees, the motivation and the structure of the sample, the venue, the way they were selected, the explanations they had been given before the interview, the way the interview was implemented, the moment when we approached a subject from the interview mental guide, the researcher's openness to the possible new concepts that may have emerged, the analysis technique used and the way these interviews have been analysed (as well as for the speech held by Obama and the confrontation between Băsescu and Antonescu), the used software, the coding protocol, the concepts/variables employed, the recording unit, the context and the sampling unit.

As far as coding reliability is concerned, the weakness of the conducted research consists of the fact that we have not checked the coding reproduction/replication possibility (inter-coder reliability) but only the stability of the coding reliability (intra-coder reliability), as the researcher ran the coding process twice and eventually found the same speech units that included one of the eight a priori themes (Gavard-Perret et al., 2008; Thiétart, et coll., 2007).

An important element for the reliability of the research is the researcher's honesty in presenting the entire research process and analysis of the collected data. We believe that we have met the honest research criteria by mentioning the exact sources, by describing the way we have directly collected the data the use of objective exhaustive data (the results of the 2010 local elections in Romania), the method of analysis and by presenting the limitations of our research.

2.5 Limitations

When speaking of the reliability of the coding, the weakness of the conducted analysis consists of the fact that we did not check the reproducibility of the coding (inter-coder reliability) but only the stability of the coding reliability (the intra-coder reliability). The researcher ran the coding process twice and found the same text units that depicted one of the eight topics established beforehand (Gavard-Perret et al., 2008; Thiétart, et coll., 2007).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Mentality, lifestyle

Crin Antonescu's initial presentation refers to the two candidates' different way of thinking, each of them trying to persuade and attract people who think alike. However, we can't refer to a type of mentality either one of the candidates has managed to inspire to the community or to a large number of voters. Therefore, we are not dealing with a complete representation of a brand that would meet the necessary and sufficient criteria. However, mention must be made of the fact that this brand component is the last one to be identified for a brand. In this context, the candidates are the ones that identify with the mentality of a certain category of voters and subsequently become the spokespersons for the values and morality of that particular class.

3.2 History, past, durability

Both candidates resort to history and political past. If Băsescu refers to his and other candidates' history and political past (particularly to that of the PSD candidate), Crin Antonescu speaks of his own past that he contrasts to that of Băsescu. We will make a separate presentation of the candidates' speeches, where they resort to their own history as opposed to speeches that make reference to the opponent's past.

3.2.1 Own history

3.2.1.1 Băsescu

The past is also used in positioning. Băsescu uses the past to emphasize his fight against communism "*I have had the courage to condemn the crimes of communism*", „*I have been*

*a politician who, I repeat, has had the courage to condemn communism for five years” and, to illustrate that he had been a good leader and, particularly, a state reformer: “the issue of subsidies has been solved this year, like it hadn’t been in any other year before this”, I am a politician who has had the courage to come before Parliament and tell you «Dear MPs, you must reform». I am a politician who has had the courage to assert that the press must be free, Mr. Antonescu, and to bear the consequences of the freedom of the press. I am a politician who has known how to lead its country into the European Union on January 1st 2007 (...) who has brought American armed forces in the Romanian military divisions of the eastern border. (...) who said no to withdrawing our troops from Iraq (...) whose credibility and that of his country has managed to convince world leaders that the place where the NATO summit,(...). I am the politician who, when all of you were in a hurry to sign South stream alongside our neighbours, said no. (...) I am the politician who has left the country wider by about 9000 km². The Hague trial was carried out with the support and the decisions taken in CSAT, **during my term**. Romania is 9000 km² wider. (...) But, during my term, I have fully met the commitments I have made to the Romanian people, even though I haven’t managed to meet them all. The constant reform of the Romanian government continues”. Even though I won’t be floating in Cotroceni, I have written there, but this is nonsense that political parties can either take into account or completely ignore.” The durability of Băsescu’s brand positioning is explicitly illustrated through the fact that he continues to present himself as an alternative to the entire political class, particularly through his last reply when he positions himself across from “everyone” (referring to the other politicians). This phrase is repeatedly used by the liberal candidate in his answer to the final question.*

The durability of Băsescu’s brand can also be highlighted by the fact that he maintains his specific style of seasoning his statements with humorous and ironic remarks in order to defuse the atmosphere and to baffle his opponents: “*You should have seen what I would have answered if I had answered (laughing)*”, “*Moderator: But, on the other hand, you also speak of urban crowding, which means that, in your opinion, I gather, many city dwellers had better move to rural areas. (Băsescu laughs)*”; “*They were liberals (a.n. the protesters in front of the President’s office) under cover. There you go. (Laughing)*”, “*If the mailman had come by, it (the money) would have gotten to Mr. Vintu. (...) But to Mr. Vintu, not to the peasants.*”, “*You’d better stand up in my presence, Mr. Antonescu.*”

3.2.1.2 Antonescu

The liberal candidate doesn’t speak much about his past, but barely when he is comparing himself with the current president. However, Crin Antonescu’s speech illustrates the fact that he hadn’t been a member of the Romanian Communist Party or FSN “*I wasn’t with Iliescu in FSN either*” and the fact that he had supported keeping the Romanian military forces in Iraq, even against the wishes of his Party leaders. “*When they talked about withdrawing our forces from Iraq, I was the only liberal politician that contradicted his Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence publicly.*”

In Antonescu’s speech, we can see that his personal history is not presented at all but is merely mentioned in opposition to Traian Băsescu’s or in order to clarify and contradict the latter’s statements. As for the rest of his speech, Antonescu denounces the deeds and actions of the current president.

3.2.2 History of the opponent

3.2.2.1 Bănescu

Bănescu refers to and accuses Crin Antonescu's past, apart from his political one, contra positioning himself with the latter: *"A man who had never gone through a dramatic incident, when he had to leave his wife alone and find himself in difficult situations"* Thus, Bănescu hazily refers to the tragic incident of Antonescu's wife's death. This statement was argued by certain journalists as being part of a controlled management strategy meant to handle the rumours that Antonescu had left his wife to die in agony. However, president Bănescu never directly stated this.

Additionally, Bănescu taunts his opponent about the fact that he not only was absent from Parliament, but also that he had had erroneous positions, different from his own. As far as the position he had adopted, Bănescu doesn't lame Antonescu directly, but the entire political class, by using the word "all", thus including the latter: *"You were all laughing at the external policies", "You were all screaming to withdraw out troops from Iraq", "You were all kind of in a hurry to sign South stream, both you and our neighbours"*

3.2.2.2 Antonescu

Antonescu blames Bănescu for his involvement in the Romanian Communist Party, his association with Ion Iliescu, Adrian Năstase, Mircea Geoană, Viorel Hrebenciuc, Marian Vanghelie in political alliances and governing with them and other business people/politicians such as Patriciu, Voiculescu, Vântu: *"You went to work every day (...) and then in Iliescu's cabinets", "Well, you and Ion Iliescu were colleagues in two parties. Well, he was above you. I haven't. With Mr. Voiculescu, with Mr. Iliescu, with Mr. Geoană, with Mr. Hrebenciuc, with Mr. Vanghelie you were allies", "In Iliescu's government after the Miners' strike", "with your former associates, Patriciu, Vântu, Voiculescu, Iliescu."*

The liberal candidate refers to a sensitive subject for the current president, i.e. the Romanian navy fleet, indirectly appealing to the collective memory of the citizens who make an implicit connection between the Romanian fleet and Traian Bănescu: *"but how will you leave, since you have no fleet"*. This is the statement that most eloquently presents the durability component, as this accusation is deeply and long related to Bănescu's brand.

Another subject directed at Bănescu's deeds refers to the fact that he had treated women inadequately: *"The female models, for instance, and the speech, related to women, during your term, are inadequate. You have promoted the woman as an object, the easily successful woman, you have used the word pussy when referring to women and not men, you have grabbed a female journalist's phone, not a male's, you have invited a female journalist to dinner, not a male one. This is an inadequate attitude towards women and I haven't spoken, I didn't do it enough, I haven't sent messages or promoted the model of the woman society actually relies on: the woman who takes care of the household, who raises children; even though, I am respectfully telling you do have such a model and you could have promoted it more. We're talking about Mrs. Bănescu herself. And, moreover, the model of the successful woman who climbs the career ladder based on her education, not on insolence. The model of the successful woman who earns people's admiration not by the things one can see, but things one can feel, things that are gradually built. You have*

scarcely promoted this model and, unfortunately, Romanian women are not just pussies, filthy gipsies or women whose success is easily earned and often transient.”

3.3 Awareness

Neither candidate brings awareness to the table, as this subject is irrelevant. However, awareness has had a very important role in this confrontation. Crin Antonescu was interested in raising it, as he knew that his notoriety was obviously lower than the current president's, particularly in rural areas. A presentation during the first public confrontation of that campaign, broadcast live or rerun and overly discussed and analysed on several channels particularly helps the candidate with the least notoriety. This is one of the main reasons (apart from the fundamental one mentioned in relation to positioning) for which Crin Antonescu and his team have rooted for this debate with such ardour. The invitation was however launched just a few days before by Băsescu for Mircea Geoană, even though each candidate had a well-established schedule Antonescu accepted the invitation and Traian Băsescu's staff also responded positively to the invitation.

3.4 Positioning

Positioning is the brand component that is most used by the two candidates during this debate. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, positioning is a most topical theme in this confrontation between the two candidates.

The candidates' positioning depends on what they wish to accomplish as leaders of the country, and particularly on their past. As could be seen in the sub chapter referring to the *past and personal history* component, the two candidates have developed their strategy relying on a retrospective vote. However, Băsescu is the one that speaks more of a prospective vote, of what he wishes to accomplish in the future.

In contrast, Antonescu relies only on retrospective votes and on the people's discontent; this is also the positioning he wishes to assume in the voter's eyes – a spokesperson for disgruntled Romanians. That is why the liberal candidate will speak of what he wishes to accomplish through his platform only when he is directly asked by the moderator of this confrontation.

Usually, the idea of positioning in politics refers to the candidate's image in the eyes of his voters or of certain categories of voters. Positioning can be either desired, communicated and perceptual (the latter is actually the sense in which the term is used in branding). Since the perceived and desired positioning are rather difficult to approach in our analysis, only the communicated positioning will be included in this study, with focus on language abuse. In the context of this debate, we have found elements of communicated positioning both on themselves and on their opponent.

3.4.1 Self-positioning attempt

3.4.1.1 Băsescu

Băsescu positions himself as a politician who had condemned communism, as a good leader during his term and as a reformer of the state. If the first two positions are exclusively retrospective, the third also includes a future approach: *“The constant reform of the Romanian state continues.”* And *“The positioning based on the things he had*

accomplished can also be illustrated with the following statements: *the issue of subsidies has been solved this year, like it hadn't been in any other year before this*", *I am a politician who has had the courage to come before Parliament and tell you «Dear MPs, you must reform».* *I am a politician who has had the courage to assert that the press must be free, Mr. Antonescu, and to bear the consequences of the freedom of the press.* *I am a politician who has known how to lead its country into the European Union on January 1st 2007 and not how Mr. Patriciu said, that we must postpone, as Romgaz was yet to be privatized.* *I am a politician who has had the courage, when you were all mocking external policies that we needed American armed forces on Romania's eastern border, and who has brought American armed forces in the Romanian military divisions of the eastern border.* *I am a politician who, when you were laughing and didn't know where the Black Sea was, was saying that the Black Sea is a strategic area, and today, the Black Sea is part of the Black Sea synergy, and a NATO strategic objective, during the summit that took place in Bucharest.* *I am a politician who said no, when you were coming out of the National Permanent Office and were all shouting that we should withdraw out troops from Iraq. Romania has honour, and we will stay there until we complete our mission. And, this year, our troops, who had completed their mission, have marched through the Arch of Triumph in Bucharest (PDL applauds)* *I am a politician who, on his own and his country's credibility, has managed to convince world leaders that the place where the largest NATO summit in the history of this organisation can take place, is Bucharest. And, today, all the NATO documents refer to the decisions of the Bucharest summit. I am the politician who, when all of you were in a hurry to sign South stream alongside our neighbours, said no. There is only one great European project, called Nabucco. And, a month and a half ago, the Romanian Government has signed the agreement for Nabucco. I am the politician who has left the country wider, Mr. Antonescu (...)* *I am the politician who has left the country wider by about 9000 km². During my term, The Hague trial was carried out with the support and the decisions taken in CSAT. Romania is 9000 km² wider. Of course, with the support of the Foreign Affairs and outside experts. In other words, Mr. Antonescu, I believe I am a politician who knows what to say to Romanians at the beginning of his term. (...) But, during my term, I have fully met the commitments I have made to the Romanian people, even though I haven't managed to meet them all.*

The current president positions himself as the politician who was opposed to the political class in general, a political class described as "all", a word to be found repeatedly in the above text.

Moreover, the PDL candidate is trying to conceal the weaknesses he has in his positioning in relation to culture: *"(...)I have tried to fill a void I had once created in my research related to the living classics."* This void the president was talking about is mainly a void or a negative perception of the voters in relation to his positioning in the cultural arena.

3.4.1.2 Antonescu

Antonescu wishes to position himself as a representative of Romanians, particularly of the ones disgruntled by the current regime and, in certain parts of his speech, he refers to himself as one of them: *"those who support me have missed you, and we're talking about Romanians, you know, not all of them, but some Romanians. We shall see how many"*.

Crin Antonescu separates himself from PDL and PSD and from the act of governing: *"Well, you and Ion Iliescu have been colleagues in two parties. Well, he was kind of above you. I*

haven't. With Mr. Voiculescu, with Mr. Iliescu, with Mr. Geoană, with Mr. Hrebenciuc, with Mr. Vanghelie you were allies. I still am not. Who had made the Grivco coalition? You, from time to time, when you had to. During Iliescu's term, after the Miners' strike, I wasn't there.", "Yes, they talk and they rule, Mr. Băsescu, but I didn't rule."

The fact that the liberal is relying on retrospective votes can also be noticed in the above quotes. Antonescu positions himself against Băsescu, and thus his own positioning is simultaneous with his opponents' positioning on a clearly different position (in practice, positioning and differentiation are concepts that are done and communicated simultaneously).

Another position of the liberal candidate is that of equidistant president who will not be directly involved in the duties of the executive. It is the only part of Antonescu's positioning that is done by taking into account the strategy of prospective voting, even though it still relies on the disgruntlement of a certain part of the voters in relation to some previous events: *"I, as president, will not try to impose something on the government, and will perhaps plead in front of it in favour of a certain solution."*

Returning to the positioning based on previous events, Antonescu states that he supports good ideas, regardless of their political source and the fact that his decisions were not subordinate to any party hierarchy: *"You have supported many right issues during this term. I didn't abstain from supporting them as such, even when I did so against ... well, my own colleagues' opinion."*

3.4.2 The opponent's positioning attempt

3.4.2.1 Băsescu

The current president has tried to position Antonescu as a common politician, including him in the same category as those politicians who have opposed certain correct measures he mentioned; measures that subsequently proved to be to the benefit of the country. Antonescu's association with these is made by using the word "all", together with a second person plural reference: *"(...) you must reform (...) you were all laughing (...) when you were laughing you didn't understand (...) you were all shouting (...) you were all in a hurry to sign"*. These statements must be considered as part of the wider context in which Băsescu has been refuting the political class throughout his political term (therefore, we have perfect coherence here), and particularly when the voters' opinion about MPs was far from positive. The president in office is trying to make a direct connection between the liberal candidate and other political characters with a negative image in the eyes of certain voters *"Dan Voiculescu missed you, and so did Ion Iliescu and Hrebenciuc. The Grivco alliances did not include me, but they did include you."*

Another argument that was used is the fact that Antonescu doesn't care about the Romanians' future, as he was often absent from the Parliament sessions.

Traian Băsescu positions his opponent very low in society and accuses him of not having taken care of even one of his closest, whom he deserted: *"A dramatic incident, when he left his wife all alone and when he found himself in difficult situations. For me, women, all women, are much more important than you."* And repeatedly accuses Antonescu of misinformation: *"Let's not introduce our misinformation", "You are misinforming!", "So, that's the correct information."*

3.4.2.2 Antonescu

Much of Antonescu's speech relies on the negative positioning of the important candidates in this competition. He particularly refers to Traian Băsescu, but also to the second candidate who has great chances of getting into the second round of the elections, Mircea Geoană. Actually, Antonescu's strategy was to join Traian Băsescu in the second round. In order to do that, he needed to get ahead Geoană in the preferences of those who were going to cast their vote. Antonescu's great weakness is his awareness, lower in rural areas, just like that of the party he belongs to, as opposed to PSD and PDL. For the liberal candidate, this public debate meant his recognition as a candidate with actual chances of getting into the second round of the elections.

a) Antonescu positions Băsescu

The PNL leader tries to associate the current president with PSD, a party that the latter blames, and particularly with certain political leaders believed to be communists or who became rich by doing business with the government. Thus, he blames the president for the fact that he was a member of two left parties, among which the communist party, with whom he created alliances: *"They (the alliances) were made with you, Mr. Băsescu. Well, you and Ion Iliescu have been colleagues in two parties. Well, he was kind of above you. I haven't. With Mr. Voiculescu, with Mr. Iliescu, with Mr. Geoană, with Mr. Hrebenciuc, with Mr. Vanghelie you were allies. I still am not. Who had made the Grivco coalition? You, from time to time, when you had to. During Iliescu's term, after the Miners' strike, I wasn't there. (...) the Communist Party (...) No party has forgotten."*; he associates him with Geoană, hinting at demagoguery: *"The situation where all these nice words that sound just like the ones Mr. Geoană will use, I'm not sure when or where, but he will use them; he's probably using them in Macin now. Apart from this, the subsidies haven't been paid this year, farmers have visited you and it must have been a rather unpleasant visit... for them, unlike for you, I suppose."*

Moreover, Antonescu talks about the things the president has done to embarrass women, accusing him of being misogynistic and of promoting women who didn't deserve to be promoted: *"We are still a rather conservative society, and female models have a hard time pushing their way through. And, unfortunately, by resorting to certain means. The female models, for instance, and the speech, related to women, during your term, are inadequate. You have promoted the woman as an object, the easily successful woman, you have used the word pussy when referring to women and not men, you have grabbed a female journalist's phone, not a male's, you have invited a female journalist to dinner, not a male one. This is an inadequate attitude towards women and I haven't spoken, I didn't do it enough, I haven't sent messages or promoted the model of the woman society actually relies on: the woman who takes care of the household, who raises children; even though, I am respectfully telling you do have such a model and you could have promoted it more. We're talking about Mrs. Băsescu herself. And, moreover, the model of the successful woman who climbs the career ladder based on her education, not on insolence. The model of the successful woman who earns people's admiration not by the things one can see, but things one can feel, things that are gradually built. You have scarcely promoted this model and, unfortunately, Romanian women are not just pussies, filthy gypsies or women whose success is easily earned and often transient."*

Crin Antonescu is trying to associate Băsescu with the characters in his political entourage who have made serious mistakes in the media: *“I won’t ask you how you felt when a councillor, Mr. Avramescu, told Andrei Marga that he is a cypher and that he hasn’t read any books, how you felt next to Solomon in Craiova, when you told Dinescu that his days in Oltenia are numbered if he doesn’t come to his senses”* and in the end made a comparison with Ceausescu: *“How do you feel now, when two thirds of Romanians think you are worse than Ceausescu, according to sociological studies?”*

Antonescu indirectly accuses Băsescu on delicate subjects, at least in terms of media perception, in relation to the voters’ opinion about Băsescu, the Romanian naval fleet and the CNSAS files: *“Really? All of them? (n.a. on handing in the CNSAS files)”* and *“how will you leave, since you have no fleet”*, *“There’s nothing left to lead, since there is no fleet.”*

Antonescu also supports the idea that Băsescu failed the people, and once again tries to associate him with the individuals that Băsescu was blaming at the time: *“The great problem is that out of all of these, you haven’t won either the fight with the moguls or with your former associates (Patriciu, Vântu, Voiculescu, Iliescu). Many people have been hopeful and you, mind I don’t use a strong word, have let them down. How you have deceived the young people from the capital who had no homes, who voted for you as Mayor when you purchased a house in Mihăileanu and haven’t given a young couple a house, or something else. Just as you, as a soldier’s son, both you and Mr. Geoană, have deceived and disrespected an institution when you let Stănișoara cut their increments and feed us gibberish in Parliament when discussing the motion we have proposed, when you allowed the Prime Minister, Mr. Boc, to grant coarse pensions, and deceived people who have risked their lives.”*. We can easily observe that Antonescu is trying to influence the people’s trust in the PDL candidate, referring to various categories of citizens, and this issue will be further addressed in the segmentation section.

b) Antonescu positions Geoană

Antonescu speaks of and attacks Geoană, as he is aiming for the second place in the first round of the elections (the second place held by Geoană in most opinion polls). Thus, by associating Geoană and Băsescu, Antonescu positions himself as the only alternative that can be successful to the current regime.

3.5 Segmentation

Neither candidate addressed Romanians chaotically, but each has aimed at certain segments. Even Antonescu, who first had a more general segmentation (Romanians disgruntled with the current regime), subsequently used finer segmentations. Even if we have noticed that certain categories (farmers, animal breeders and women) are targeted by each of the two candidates (also due to the debate format), we have identified specific segments that each candidate addresses separately, particularly Crin Antonescu.

3.5.1 Băsescu

Băsescu addresses both Romanians in general *“it doesn’t mean Romanians have missed me”* or *“I want to get along with Romanians”*, as well as to certain specific categories:

- the population living off farming, i.e. a large portion (30%, in his opinion): *“in rural areas, at the moment, there is only agriculture. That’s where we must generate policies that would encourage people to associate and install small processing lines for agricultural produce, for instance: in villages where people breed animals, we need milk processing units and meat processing units, so that cities could receive foodstuffs and not agricultural produce. One moment. If we have fruit, for example, in the area, we must arrange for processing units that would turn the fruit into compote, canned fruit, etc. What does that mean? That young people and women in rural areas can find a job in the industry created in rural areas. (...) We must direct, push and stimulate the emergence of small and medium sized enterprises in rural areas, otherwise small farmers will continue to be poor, because farming can never make him prosperous; only processed agricultural produce for the food industry will convey added value, jobs and taxes to be levied by local authorities.”*
- The population dealing with animal breeding: *“80% of the subsidies were paid for chickens, subsidies per hectare is being paid, while subsidies for animals, as never before, is being paid 90% from the budget and part from the banks, before December 31st”*
- Educated people, especially informed ones: *“The latest book is Cărtărescu, I have tried to fill a void I had once created in my research related to the living classics.”*
- women: *“As far as I’m concerned, decency should tell you that a man who has three women in the house respects them (n.a. on Antonescu) (...) For me, women, all women, are much more important than you. (...) In society, you don’t have the value of a woman, any woman, even the one I have apologised to for offending her. (...) I love and appreciate beautiful women.”*

In his closing paragraphs, Bănescu addresses all Romanians, emphasizing his deeds for the country: *“I believe that I am a politician who needs to tell Romanians at the beginning of his term.”* During that intervention, Bănescu has used words such as “country”, “Romanians”, “Romania”, “nation” about 15 times.

3.5.2 Antonescu

Just like his debate partner, Crin Antonescu first addresses more generally, to all disgruntled Romanians *“those who support me have missed you, and we’re talking about Romanians, you know, not all of them, but some Romanians. Or “(...) poor are the millions of Romanians, rich are the people you know, the ones Mr. Hrebenciuc and the others have tallied.”* And when he asks the final question *“Oh, the many questions, how I’ve looked forward to this! Mr. Bănescu! How millions of Romanians have long waited for you to ask you...”* and then separately, for the other various categories of Romanians:

- Framers and animal breeders *“Apart from this, the subsidies haven’t been paid this year, farmers have visited you and it must have been a rather unpleasant visit... for them, unlike for you, I suppose. And, as far as Romanian agriculture in general is concerned, I believe we have to approach it by discussing the Romanian farming sector, and by talking not only about the issue of agriculture but about the farming problem in Romania and particularly about Romania’s policies in the European Union in the field. We didn’t have anything consistent, so we need something consistent, sustainable and, as consensual as possible. That is all we can say now and I believe anyway that, since there some kind of fear that somehow relates to or*

- involves foreign policy issues, the President has this obligation and possibility to somehow coordinate these lines. The rest is, surely, the government's duty";*
- *Women: "There are many women in this country, we are a bit misogynistic, you know, the men involved in Romanian politics. (...)We are still a rather conservative society, and female models have a hard time pushing their way through. And, unfortunately, by resorting to certain means. The female models, for instance, and the speech, related to women, during your term, are inadequate. You have promoted the woman as an object, the easily successful woman, you have used the word pussy when referring to women and not men, you have grabbed a female journalist's phone, not a male's, you have invited a female journalist to dinner, not a male one. This is an inadequate attitude towards women and I haven't spoken, I didn't do it enough, I haven't sent messages or promoted the model of the woman society actually relies on: the woman who takes care of the household, who raises children; even though, I am respectfully telling you do have such a model and you could have promoted it more. We're talking about Mrs. Băsescu herself. And, moreover, the model of the successful woman who climbs the career ladder based on her education, not on insolence. The model of the successful woman who earns people's admiration not by the things one can see, but things one can feel, things that are gradually built. You have scarcely promoted this model and, unfortunately, Romanian women are not just pussies, filthy gipsies or women whose success is easily earned and often transient."*
 - *Young people: How you have deceived the young people from the capital who had no homes, who voted for you as Mayor when you purchased a house in Mihăileanu and haven't given a young couple a house, or something else.";*
 - *Armed forces: „ Just as you, as a soldier's son, both you and Mr. Geoană, have deceived and disrespected an institution when you let Stănișoara cut their increments and feed us gibberish in Parliament when discussing the motion we have proposed";*
 - *Certain categories of senior citizens: "when you allowed the Prime Minister, Mr. Boc, to grant coarse pensions, and deceived people who have risked their lives".*

3.6 Differentiation

Differentiation is used by the two candidates, both associating their opponent with people with a negative public image and dissociating themselves. Băsescu is trying to differentiate himself from all the other politicians, Antonescu included, when the latter is trying to differentiate himself clearly from Traian Băsescu and Mircea Geoană. Antonescu even made a difference between the two other candidates, a differentiation that favoured Băsescu, and this was a strategic decision to attack Mircea Geoană in order to take the last eligible place for the second round. What is most interesting here is that these differentiations are constructed directly, by presenting the other candidate in opposition.

The first differentiations are contrasts between the two candidates by associating them with public individuals from the other parties, particularly from PSD, and the dialogue below eloquently illustrates this very point:

"Traian Băsescu (T.B.): I know, I know, Dan Voiculescu missed me, as well as Ion Iliescu and Hrebenciuc. The Grivco alliances haven't been signed with me, but with you.

Crin Antonescu (C.A.): They were signed with you, Mr. Băsescu. Well, you and Ion Iliescu have been colleagues in two parties. Well, he was kind of above you. I haven't. With Mr. Voiculescu, with Mr. Iliescu, with Mr. Geoană, with Mr. Hrebenciuc, with Mr. Vanghelie you were allies. I still am not. Who had made the Grivco coalition? You, from time to time, when you had to. During Iliescu's term, after the Miners' strike, I wasn't there.

T.B.: With one difference: I have had the courage to condemn the crimes of communism while you, as a liberal, have mocked me with Ion Iliescu and Vadim Tudor when I was being trashed in Parliament. That's the difference between me and those who don't have the courage to take responsibility of the important gestures they do for this country."

A strong differentiation attempted by both candidates is identified in relation to the implementation of their proposed economic programme. While Antonescu asserts that "(...) I, as president, will not try to impose something on the government, and will perhaps plead in front of it in favour of a certain solution. But I, as president, have this vision and will continue to support the creation of a government and of a majority behind it within the confines of the Constitution, a government that would act decisively in the economic sector with these measures and, clearly, with others as well." Băsescu has a completely different vision, thinking that he must be actively involved in the governing activity: "I will fight for what I believe in. I won't be floating in Cotroceni, I have written there, but this is nonsense that political parties can either take into account or completely ignore".

Another differentiation of the two candidates that they are trying to emphasize is related to the subject of women. While Băsescu accuses Antonescu for his behaviour towards his late wife "Mr. Antonescu, I believe you are mistaken in your approach; as far as I'm concerned, decency should tell you that a man who has three women in the house respects them. A man who had never gone through a dramatic incident, when he had to leave his wife alone and find himself in difficult situations.", Antonescu accuses Băsescu for his general behaviour towards women: "The female models, for instance, and the speech, related to women, during your term, are inadequate. You have promoted the woman as an object, the easily successful woman, you have used the word pussy when referring to women and not men, you have grabbed a female journalist's phone, not a male's, you have invited a female journalist to dinner, not a male one. This is an inadequate attitude towards women and I haven't spoken, I didn't do it enough, I haven't sent messages or promoted the model of the woman society actually relies on: the woman who takes care of the household, who raises children; even though, I am respectfully telling you do have such a model and you could have promoted it more. We're talking about Mrs. Băsescu herself. And, moreover, the model of the successful woman who climbs the career ladder based on her education, not on insolence. The model of the successful woman who earns people's admiration not by the things one can see, but things one can feel, things that are gradually built. You have scarcely promoted this model and, unfortunately, Romanian women are not just pussies, filthy gypsies or women whose success is easily earned and often transient."

Băsescu differentiates himself from the political class in his response to the final question, when he sets himself apart from the other politicians, identified as "all", in opposition with the phrase "I am a politician": ", I am a politician who has had the courage to come before Parliament and tell you «Dear MPs, you must reform». I am a politician who has had the courage to assert that the press must be free, Mr. Antonescu, and to bear the consequences of the freedom of the press. I am a politician who has known how to lead its country into

the European Union on January 1st 2007 and not how Mr. Patriciu said, that we must postpone, as Romgaz was yet to be privatized. I am a politician who has had the courage, when you were all mocking external policies that we needed American armed forces on Romania's eastern border, and who has brought American armed forces in the Romanian military divisions of the eastern border. I am a politician who, when you were laughing and didn't know where the Black Sea was, was saying that the Black Sea is a strategic area, and today, the Black Sea is part of the Black Sea synergy, and a NATO strategic objective, during the summit that took place in Bucharest. I am a politician who said no, when you were coming out of the National Permanent Office and were all shouting that we should withdraw our troops from Iraq. Romania has honour, and we will stay there until we complete our mission. And, this year, our troops, who had completed their mission, have marched through the Arch of Triumph in Bucharest (PDL applauds) I am a politician who, on his own and his country's credibility, has managed to convince world leaders that the place where the largest NATO summit in the history of this organisation can take place, is Bucharest. And, today, all the NATO documents refer to the decisions of the Bucharest summit. I am the politician who, when all of you were in a hurry to sign South stream alongside our neighbours, said no."

However, the greatest differentiation between the two candidates is made by Antonescu, apart from the fact that it is the end of the confrontation and particularly for explicitly using the word "differences" (twice in the same sentence), and opposing the terms "you" and "my" within a very short time span, referring to education and wealth: *"There are any differences between us. Speaking of today's topic, education and the economy. I would have liked to discuss education and your savings, about education and my savings. That's where you'll spot the greatest differences."*

3.7 Innovation

Innovation is not an element that stood out during the debate between the two candidates. However, we can still note certain interventions or strategic approaches where the two candidates have inserted new elements.

Traian Băsescu uses a new element in the debate, arguing the fact that Antonescu had left his wife that was suffering from a terminal disease: *"A man who had never gone through a dramatic incident, when he had to leave his wife alone and find himself in difficult situations."*

Another new element is the fact that Antonescu was aggressive, but remained calm and diplomatic. Crin Antonescu has managed to use a humorous approach during the debate, combining it with fine irony, an approach that had before been typical of his debate opponent: *"The problem is that, as President, you've been missing a lot, for about five years."* *"The president has this obligation and somehow possibility to coordinate these lines. The rest is done by the Government. (...) No, it wasn't about you, you know."* *"Well, were those people security agents under cover?"* *"Perhaps she (Băsescu's wife) deserves another term, but I believe you don't."*, *"Oh, the many questions, how I've looked forward to this! Mr. Băsescu! How millions of Romanians have long waited for you to ask you..."*, *"Romanians are a bit ungrateful, I believe, in light of this record of yours."* *"Really? All of them? (a.n. on handing in the CNSAS files)"* and *"You do have a job, but how will you leave since you have no fleet."*

As a general impression, Antonescu has conveyed an offensive but detached image, while Băsescu was more on the defensive and a bit more serious. This is somehow to be expected, as most discussions have been on the subject of past events, both candidates trying to rely on retrospective votes. Thus, the president in office had, as he himself stated, to present what he had accomplished: *“I don't know whether you'll ever get this chance, to deliver an honesty report to the entire nation.”*

3.8 Adaptability

Here, we can identify an adaptability to the type of debate – a live TV broadcast – but particularly as it was an event that can be considered as organised ad-hoc. Antonescu seemed to adapt better to the format of the debate, but Traian Băsescu has skilfully and naturally adjusted and formulated the perfect answers to Antonescu's set of questions that were directed at positioning Băsescu to a disadvantage, from the voters' viewpoint. Two such instances are presented below:

„C.A.: Well, were those people security agents under cover? Or what were they, Mr. Băsescu?

T.B.: No.

C.A: When they came to you, by the fence, there.

T.B.: They were under cover liberals. There you go. Laughs.

C.A: They were liberals? Ok.”

“T.B.: And why do you mind then every time you hear of women in Cotroceni?

C.A: Aaa! Let me answer!

(...)

C.A: The women you have endorsed in politics, for instance, that's what I'm talking about.

T.B.: It caught your attention. Something else is making you mad, Mr. Antonescu.

C.A: Nothing's making me mad. I see you are a bit annoyed.

T.B.: You're mad when a woman is also beautiful, apart from being smart. I love and appreciate beautiful women.

C.A: But who are we talking about?

T.B.: My wife, Mr. Antonescu. (laughs, PDL applauds)”. (given that Băsescu's wife is not involved in politics and Antonescu was expecting another reply).

4.9 The brand components in the speeches of Antonescu and Băsescu (conceptual content analysis)

We will further present the frequency of the concepts in the text and the text surface covered by each of these for each candidate.

Table 2. Frequency of the brand components and the text coverage

Antonescu		
Component	Number of recording units	Text coverage of total he's discours
Adaptability	4	2,86%
Differentiation	5	14,16%
Innovation	6	3,28%
History	12	15,06%
Positioning	14	29,46%
Segmentation	9	20,74%

Table 3. Frequency of the brand components and the text coverage

Băsescu		
Component	Number of recording units	Text coverage of total he'sdiscours
Adaptability	4	2,43%
Differentiation	6	17,34%
Innovation	1	0,90%
History	15	20,45%
Positioning	11	26,02%
Segmentation	10	37,00%

We'll provide a text surface example from Traian Băsescu's speech, that was covered by three of the six concepts, both in differentiation, personal history and positioning as well. *"I am a politician who has had the courage to assert that the press must be free, Mr. Antonescu, and to bear the consequences of the freedom of the press."*

Note the fact that Antonescu focuses on positioning, as he is a more recent product on the market for the presidential position than Băsescu. However, both candidates emphasize four brand components: segmentation, positioning, history and differentiation. Both candidates use differentiation from Geoană (the candidate that ranked second in opinion polls). As far as the frequency with which the two candidates have inserted the themes, we have identified almost the same number of recording units for all components, except for Innovation, that Antonescu emphasized more, which makes sense strategically since he is the one targeting change, while Băsescu should focus on the idea of continuity.

4.10 The brand components in the speeches of Antonescu and Băsescu (relational content analysis)

In this type of analysis, we will illustrate the relations between the brand components that can be found in the speeches of the two candidates and the intensity of these relations through the common text coverage of each two components used or by means of the number of common recordings. The components are in a bi-univocal relationship.

Table 4. Proportion of the pairs of components used by Antonescu

Numer of common text unities/ Proportion text coverage	Differentiation		Innovation		History		Positioning		Segmentation	
	0	0	1	0.50%	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adaptability	0	0	1	0.50%	0	0	0	0	0	0
Differentiation			0	0	1	0.50%	3	10.87%	1	7,14%
Innovation					2	0.76%	3	0.50%	1	0.88%
History							6	11.74%	1	7.14%
Positioning									5	13.24%

Table 5. Proportion of the pairs of components used by Bănescu

Numer of common text unities/ Proportion text coverage	Differentiation		Innovation		History		Positioning		Segmentation	
	0	0	0	0	1	0.19%	0	0	1	0.75%
Adaptability	0	0	0	0	1	0.19%	0	0	1	0.75%
Differentiation			0	0	6	12.84%	4	13.08%	3	11.77%
Innovation					1	0.90%	0	0	0	0
History							8	16.68%	5	15.24%
Positioning									4	22.16%

In Antonescu's case, the bi-univocal relationships between the pairs of variables with an important weight throughout his speech are: positioning-segmentation, positioning-history and positioning-differentiation.

In Bănescu's case, the bi-univocal relationships between the pairs of variables with an important weight throughout his speech are positioning-segmentation, positioning-history, positioning-differentiation, differentiation-history and differentiation-segmentation.

CONCLUSIONS

The content analysis in this case study has revealed that six of the eight brand components (adaptability, differentiation, innovation, history, positioning and segmentation) are used by politicians in order to influence the elector's vote. Thus, six of the eight research hypotheses have been verified. This result is somehow justified by the fact that a candidate does not make much use of the awareness brand component in his speech.

The measurement of these components enables us to see how they have been used throughout this specific debate. However, the importance and the employment of each brand component and the relationships between these components differ depending on the stages in the lifecycle of this "product", i.e. the politician.

According to the content analysis, we can state that there is an interconnection between the brand components, due to the numerous instances when a part of the text was assigned to two or more components. The brand is the result of the interaction between these components.

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