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Populism and the Romanian 'Orange Revolution': a discourse-analytical perspective on the presidential election of December 2004

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Abstract

This paper analyzes differences in the legitimation strategies used by, and on behalf of the two presidential candidates in the elections of December 2004 in Romania, using a combination of Critical Discourse Analysis and pragma-dialectics. These differences are seen to lie primarily in the varieties of populist discourse that were drawn upon in the construction of legitimizing arguments for both candidates: a paternalist type vs. a radical-authoritarian, anti-political type of populism. I relate the success of the latter type to more effective strategic manoeuvring in argumentation, part of more effective branding strategies in general, but also to existing types of political culture amongst the electorate and to social, economic circumstances. I also argue that, in the Romanian context at the end of 2004, a variety of otherwise fallacious populist electoral messages were perceived as reasonable and acceptable, as fitting adjustments to the situation and as means of optimizing the deliberative situation of the electorate.

Introduction

This paper is part of my recent work on aspects of 'transition' in post-communist Romania (Ieţcu 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d, Ieţcu forthcoming).[1] Methodologically, it combines *Critical Discourse Analysis* (Fairclough 1989, 1992, 1995, 2000, 2003, 2006, Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, Wodak et al. 1999) with a particular normative theory of argumentation, *pragma-dialectics* (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992, 2004, van Eemeren et al. 2002, van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2002, Jacobs 2002), an approach which I started developing in Ieţcu (2004, 2006a). One of my particular concerns here is with aspects of 'political marketing' (Newman 1999), i.e. the restructuring of the political field as a form of market or 'quasi-market' and the application within it of techniques of marketing, such as 'branding', leading to changes in political discourse, political genres and the identities of politicians.

I focus on political marketing in the Romanian presidential election of 2004. I analyze electoral material from the final television debate between the two candidates who reached

the second round of the election: Traian Băsescu (formerly Mayor of Bucharest), the candidate of the Alliance for Justice and Truth ('Alianța D.A.', i.e. the National-Liberal and the Democratic Party), and the winner of the presidential election by a narrow margin (51.23% of the votes); and Adrian Năstase (48.77%), who was Prime Minister in the previous government and the candidate of the Social Democratic Party (PSD). I focus on discursive aspects, particularly on argumentation issues, and on the way they relate to the pursuit of political strategies and political goals. For instance, I look at how the presidential election was fought by deploying a variety of tried-and-tested but also original and unconventional legitimation strategies, in which varieties of populism, authoritarianism, paternalism and charismatic leadership styles were tried out by both candidates.

In Romania, the 2004 election was fought by the Social Democrats (PSD) on the basis of their allegedly satisfactory record in government between 2000 and 2004, including a significant growth in GDP (8%), successful entry into NATO, and substantial progress towards membership of the EU. The 'Alliance for Justice and Truth' fought the election mainly on the issue of corruption, which they associated primarily with the PSD and their allies – a political and economic oligarchy with roots in Romania's communist past (including in *Securitate* structures).

I show that the various (self-)legitimation strategies pursued in the campaign involved the construction of electoral messages which diagnosed the wants and needs of the electorate according to each candidate's populist agenda, and claimed that each of them was able to provide the solution to those wants and needs. I am going to investigate the populist element of these electoral messages, and differences among varieties of populism in the discourse of the candidates, in forms of interaction with the electorate through political genres and in their personal styles. I am also relating the success of populism to features of the political culture of the electorate and to specific socio-economic circumstances in Romania. It is, for instance, largely due to contextual factors that forms of argumentation that, in different contexts, or for different audiences, might have been perceived as fallacious and unacceptable were considered to be reasonable and therefore acceptable.

I am also drawing here to some extent on a functional, contextual view of fallacies (Jacobs 2002) that looks at *messages, in their context* (and not at decontextualized categories), as fallacious or not. On this view, argumentative effectiveness (and presumably, acceptability) is tied to the satisfaction of 'public interests' such as the 'achievement of reasonable decision-making' in a given context. Rhetorical strategies that might be classified as fallacious (*ad hominem* attacks, *ad populum* appeals, etc.) can be thus perceived as pragmatically adequate, moreover as reasonable (non-fallacious), given the particular characteristics of the context and of the audience, and the goals pursued by the arguers.

They may thus function as 'constructive contributions' to the decision-making process, e.g. may clarify what is at issue in more effective ways than 'non-fallacious' argumentation. 'Reasonable argumentation', in other words, 'is argumentation that makes the best of the situation', and this involves making 'adjustments *to* the situation and *of* the situation' (for instance, by appealing to so-called 'fallacious' means of persuasion), so as to 'enhance the conditions of deliberation'. Thus, the issue of argument effectiveness need not be a matter of whether people have been persuaded by 'trustworthy means' but whether or not they have been put in a better position to come to a decision, even by being exposed to argumentation which is strictly speaking 'fallacious' (Jacobs 2002: 124-125).

Theoretical background

Branding

One innovative element in the 2004 election was the application of the strategy of 'branding' in Băsescu's campaign. The 'Băsescu brand' was built on features of his personality which made him a highly unconventional figure in Romanian politics, clearly different from the model established by former President Ion Iliescu (1990-1992, 1992-1996, 2000-2004). The branding strategies that were used to construct Băsescu as a politician involved cutting across boundaries which conventionally separated the field of politics from the fields of popular entertainment, commercial advertising and from everyday life, through an interdiscursive hybridity (Fairclough 1992, 2003, 2006) which articulated together a wider range of communicative resources than were normally found in Romanian politics. [2]

This was evident in the campaign for the re-election of Băsescu as Mayor of Bucharest earlier in 2004, which had the character of a humorous commercial advertising campaign in which Băsescu was symbolized as a red chilli pepper (*ardei iute)*, a symbol which evoked his tendency to flare up at unpredictable moments, suggested that he adds spice to Romanian politics, that he is fast and efficient, that his presence is inconvenient and irritating to the political establishment, etc. (Fairclough 2006: 101-105). Good-quality humour (drawing for instance on culinary traditions that the electorate could arguably recognize as part of the Romanian country brand) was used extensively throughout both the local and presidential campaign in inspired electoral posters: if Băsescu (as Mayor) was represented as a chilli pepper, the members of the city council were pictured as an appetizing jar of pickled red peppers, etc. In a series of leaflets created for the presidential campaign, Băsescu, a former captain in the merchant navy, was shown saluting, accompanied by the slogan 'Să trăiți bine!' ('May you live well!'), a wordplay on the greeting which accompanies a salute in the armed forces, 'Să trăiți!' (literally, 'May you live!'). This was subsequently picked up by

contributors to Băsescu's electoral web-site, in letters and discussion forums, and humorously changed to 'Să trăim bine!' ("May *we* live well!').

In most electoral materials, Băsescu addressed his electorate *directly*, often in highly colloquial language. The following examples can be found on Băsescu's electoral web-site (www.basescu.ro), accompanied by his photograph, against an orange background, with open arms and outstretched open hands, as if ready to face any challenge, in the manner of a ball-player preparing for an attack, with a cheerful, almost mischievous expression on his face: 'They can't steal as many votes as you can cast. Let justice be done! Băsescu for President!'… 'In the second round, show them how many votes you can cast! Go out and vote! As many of you as you can, you and your families… The truth lies in the votes'.[3]

The presidential campaign also involved an internet campaign (a so-called 'digital guerilla', on the same web-site), with contributions from the voters (letters, original campaign posters, etc.), to which Băsescu subsequently added the following message, which once again characteristically combines direct interpellation and humour: 'Dear "internauts", I have been in a race but I haven't allowed them to catch up with me. And they did not succeed in virusing me! Moreover, I have won. Thanks to you. To you, who have put your courage and talent into the Digital and SMS Guerilla, and to you who went to the polls. It is thanks to you that Romania will now win too. Let's click Refresh. It's High Priority now! Thank you, (signed) Traian Băsescu.'[4]

On the whole, Băsescu emerged primarily as an open, straightforward man, with a keen sense of humour, an essentially 'outlaw' character calling on the electorate to support him against the corrupt power system, a *persona* very much akin, in my view, to the comic characters of traditional folk-tales: the subversive peasant anti-hero, who, through the power of his own wit and cunning, succeeds in humiliating and punishing the greedy and dishonest rich. In most situations, Băsescu came through as an ordinary person, who never bothered to draw a line between 'Băsescu the man' and 'Băsescu the politician', or, later on, between 'Băsescu the man' and 'Băsescu the President'. No formal rules and norms of protocol and diplomacy ever seem to encumber Băsescu when he appears in public, on television, in restaurants or at football stadiums. As political analysts have observed, this resonates well with the electorate, as ordinary Romanians recognize their own impulsive reactions in those of the President (Teodorescu and Sultănoiu 2006: 69).

However, as theorists of populism have observed, it would be a mistake to believe that ordinary people want to be ruled by the 'man in the street', by someone exactly like them. What they want is that their problems should be solved according to their own values and interests and they accept that this will have to be done by a remarkable individual. The typical populist leader is not a genuine outsider, but part of an 'outsider elite', connected to

the ruling elites (which the population perceives as 'alien') but not part of them (Mudde 2004: 560). Băsescu's professional and political experience and reputation, his position as challenger to the establishment, his radical, subversive message and his personal qualities (sincerity, humour, spontaneity, etc.), coupled with a range of less attractive features (occasional coarseness of language and behaviour, etc.), composed a distinctive charismatic authority which at once elevated Băsescu above the ordinary people and fully expressed their identities and aspirations. The 'outsider elite' he represented was defined by opposition with the ex-communist elites, who held power in Romania at the time, through the PSD and other parties. Interestingly, these 'outsider elites' seemed to include the anti-communist intellectual elite, and this is shown clearly by the constant support Băsescu has received during the campaign and since then from some of the country's foremost intellectuals.

The distance Băsescu took from more conventional, formal political styles, in his manner of talking and public behaviour, as a fundamental element of the 'Băsescu brand', was of a piece with the more general radical, anti-political variety of populism of his campaign and resonated well with the anti-political feelings of the Romanian electorate, with the prevailing orientations towards the political system of large segments of the electorate. Repeatedly, during the campaign, and at least three times during the television debate I am analyzing here, Băsescu claimed that his only 'allies' in the second round, the 'allies' he was counting on were the 'Romanian people', and any Romanian citizen who wanted to put a stop to the 'totalitarian' power held by the PSD.[5]

The syntagm 'orange revolution', which was also part of the branding strategies used in the campaign, gained some currency in the media some time after December 2004, but was soon afterwards used mostly in critical, disillusioned contexts. Opinion leaders were sometimes heard to claim, in 2005, that Băsescu had 'betrayed the orange revolution', that the 'orange revolution has failed', i.e. that Băsescu had failed to live up to the radical promises made in 2004. The relative (if limited) popularity of the expression was due at the time to perceived similarities between the election of 2004 and the elections in the Ukraine and Georgia, which were seen to have brought into confrontation a strong charismatic leader, in symbolic partnership and alliance with the people, on the one hand, and a corrupt political establishment, on the other, yet to have all more or less ultimately failed in their attempt to uproot and radically reform the *status quo* (Teodorescu and Sultănoiu 2006).

The colour orange itself was extensively used in electoral material on behalf of the D.A. Alliance, but the similarities with the 2004 elections in the Ukraine were little exploited at the time: in general, Romania had little wish to associate herself with the ex-Soviet republics. Băsescu's vocal clamouring, after the first round, for a cancellation of the elections on

grounds of major fraud were in fact met with almost unanimous disapproval. Not only, it was shown, was the charge of electoral fraud grossly exaggerated, but to cancel the elections would plunge the country into chaos, would reiterate the unstable situation in the Ukraine, and would damage Romania's image abroad.

Populism and political culture

The 2004 election saw the emergence of new forms of populist appeal. A distinctive form of populism had previously manifested itself strongly in the 2000 election, in the radical, authoritarian and demagogical discourse of national-extremist leader Corneliu Vadim Tudor (Ceauşescu's one-time 'court poet', whom he immortalized in verse as 'genius of the Carpathians'), who obtained at the time 33% of the votes in the second round. Another variety is currently on the rise in Romania in the person of Gigi Becali, the comically loquacious leader of the PNG (New Generation Party), a rich self-made businessman and football-club owner, with barely any schooling and little Romanian grammar, self-styled saviour and redeemer of the nation and its poor, on an allegedly God-given mission to make Romania 'shine as beautifully as the sun in the sky'.

While these latter varieties of populism have a clear nationalistic and religious component, the populisms of the 2004 presidential campaign were relatively free from nationalistic and religious elements (with differences between the candidates, as I will show later), in obvious relation to the candidates' political affiliations and platforms and to Romania's political situation as a candidate country to EU accession. The forms of populism deployed on behalf of the two candidates were interestingly combined instead with appeals to predominantly secular liberal and social-democratic values, and Europe, the EU and NATO figured prominently in both candidates' electoral strategies. On the whole, the 2004 election reconfirmed the electorate's affinity for a 'radical' form of populism, directed against the entire political class (parties, the government, the parliament), i.e. for a fundamentally 'anti-political' form of protest, best embodied by Vadim Tudor in the 2000 campaign (Mungiu-Pippidi 2002: 128), but also for other varieties of populist message, most notably for the paternalist message of stability, continuity and social consensus (represented by former President Ion Iliescu in 2000).

In the seminal tradition inaugurated by Ionescu and Gellner (1969), there are several distinct ways of understanding populism: as an ideology, a pseudo-ideology, a political movement, a political style, a set of attitudes, etc. A widespread view is that populism is *not* an ideology in its own right, but a '*syndrome'* (Wiles 1969), a '*meta-doctrine*', a 'recurrent ideological structure of a very general type that can be parasitic on other more clearly defined doctrines and push them towards eccentric positions' (Ioniţă 1998: 198), or a '*pseudo-ideology'* which can sometimes prove stronger than traditional ideologies (Mungiu-Pippidi 2002: 128).

Populism is also viewed as a specific type of *attitude*: a 'complex set of cognitive and affective orientations towards politics and society in general', involving nostalgia for a 'golden age' (e.g. the communist period in Romania), fear in the face of modernization and change, and resentment towards the political class and representative democracy (Mungiu-Pippidi 2002: 128).

Populism is also often viewed as a *pathology* of western democracy, a corrupt form of democratic ideas, and therefore a threat to a liberal-democratic society. Mudde (2004) rejects the 'pathology' thesis and argues that populism has now become mainstream in the politics of western democracies, that there is and will be a prevailing 'populist Zeitgeist'. For Mudde, populism *is* an *ideology*, namely, 'an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, the "pure people" versus "the corrupt elite", and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people'. The core concept of populist ideology (albeit a 'thin' core) is *the people*; this 'thin' centre lends itself to combinations with other fuller ideologies (socialism, nationalism, etc.). Populism's two opposites are elitism (with which it shares a Manichean view of the social and political world) and pluralism (Mudde 2004: 543-544).[6]

Jagers and Walgrave (2005) reject the ideology view of populism and suggest instead that populism is a '*political communication style*', or a communication 'master frame', a way of talking about a variety of issues by appealing to and identifying with the people and pretending to speak in their name. As a political style which merely makes reference to the people and their problems in this way (a 'thin' conception of populism), populism has no particular political colour, it can be of the left or of the right; ideologically speaking, it is an 'empty shell'. It is primarily a 'conspicuous exhibition of closeness to (ordinary) citizens', achieved both by talking *to* the public in a certain *manner* (i.e. using colloquial language) and by a certain *content* of discourse, i.e. by talking *about* the people, and thus showing care and concern for their problems. A 'thick' conception involves two additional features: (a) populism gives expression to anti-establishment, anti-elite feelings, and (b) is based on a particular homogeneity/ exclusion logic (namely, the people is viewed as a monolithic, homogeneous group, while certain specific categories, e.g. political and economic elites, are viewed as excluded from the group) (Jagers and Walgrave 2005: 3).

Ioniță (1998) adopts a 'family resemblance' approach to the diversity of forms of populism: not all of the features that can be associated with populism are characteristic of each and every one of its manifestations. Populism, he argues, typically involves legitimation in the name of a monolithically conceived 'people' and exalts the simple folk and their traditional wisdom and honesty; it is thus typically anti-elitist and would like to place decision-making in the hands of ordinary people. It can also play on a direct, quasi-mystical relationship

between the charismatic, messianic leader and the people; any forms of mediation (e.g. political institutions) are regarded with suspicion. Populism can also have a distinctive millenialist touch, proposing a grand future vision, based on simple images that appeal to a parochial type of political culture (e.g. an image of society as an organic entity, a family). It usually appeals to popular emotion and enthusiasm and draws on a simple, fundamentalist moral vision. It can be xenophobic, and may promote explanations based on conspiracy theories, thus appealing to various frustrated, marginalized segments of the population. Finally, populism can often propose a radical critique of the social order, the political or economic system; this type of populism is potentially authoritarian and extremist (Ioniță 1998: 206-208).

While acknowledging that not all manifestations of populism necessarily share all or most of the above features, it is nevertheless important to observe that some form of *dichotomy*, e.g. between 'the people' and the corrupt economic or political 'elite' or 'oligarchy', or between 'the people' and some 'enemy' or other is a minimal characteristic of all varieties of populism. Băsescu's populism drew very clearly on the dichotomy between the 'people' and the ex-communist political and economic oligarchy in order to put forward a radical political message. What I identify here as Năstase's particular form of populism was not radical, but on the contrary emphasized social consensus, harmony and continuity along an existing path of development. It seemed to partly draw on a view of the 'intelligentsia as leader', to the extent that Năstase's personal competencies as a lawyer and diplomat and as a highly educated man were emphasized (as against Băsescu's much less impressive intellectual record). But, more importantly, Năstase seemed to put forward an implicit dichotomy between himself, together with his political 'team', as constructive and responsible politicians working for Romania's European future, on the one hand, and 'bellicose' politicians and parties, like Băsescu and the PNL-PD Alliance, on the other. Năstase, in other words, also attempted to some extent to rally the people under a cause, a grand future European cause, and to identify whatever stood in the way of Romania's progress as the 'political enemy'. As I show below, his populism was essentially paternalistic, not radical, but nevertheless based on a dichotomy between the 'people' (frequently conceived as an organic, harmonious community), alongside a political elite concerned with Romania's prosperity and European future, on the one hand, and all those implicitly reactionary and counter-productive forces that were allegedly only concerned with personal 'wars', on the other (see the references to Băsescu in his final message, in section 5 of this paper).

In their classic study, Almond and Verba (1963/1996: 45) defined 'political culture' as an ensemble of (cognitive, affective, evaluative) orientations or attitudes towards the political system and one's place within it. They talked about the political culture of western

democracies in terms of 'civic culture'. In actual liberal-democratic societies, they argued, civic culture is a 'participant' type of culture, inevitably combined, however, with other types of political culture ('parochial' and 'subject'); within this amalgam however, the participant type of culture prevails in any functional democracy.

Along these lines, Mungiu-Pippidi (2002) investigates various types of values and attitudes in contemporary Romania. In terms of interpersonal relations, Romania emerges as a *low-trust* society (among the ex-communist countries, social trust appears to be lower only in Russia). In terms of vertical relations with political authority, Romanian society evinces lower levels (18%) of a *participant* type of political culture and relatively higher levels of a *subject* (or dependent) type (39%) and a *parochial* type of political culture (33%). The parochial type tends to be associated with the rural world and small towns and with a lack of interest in political life and its reflection in the media, and an absence of a sense of citizenship. People may be either satisfied with their modest life (the parochial type), or strongly frustrated and resentful against the system (the subject type), but are basically trying to cope and survive, without believing that they have any capacity to influence government. Participation, when it exists, is itself not necessarily based on the political values of a liberal democracy: activism and protest may be in support of various anti-democratic, authoritarian, nationalistic causes, etc. (Mungiu-Pippidi 2002: 88-90).

The perceived success of all the varieties of populism that were drawn on in the electoral campaign, but particularly of the radical, anti-political type embodied by Băsescu, can be said to reflect both the electorate's particular mix of types of political culture and their particular socio-economic circumstances, the situation of crisis and discontent in Romania. A sensible hypothesis is that Băsescu's victory does not, however, reflect to any significant degree the existence in Romania of a 'participant' political culture of a genuinely civic type, but rather the radicalization of sections of an otherwise dependent (subject) and parochial electorate, and the mobilization of the more actively engaged segments (the participant type) under a radical, quasi-revolutionary cause, together with what was in many cases a purely pragmatic (and skeptical) vote from the civic-minded, liberal-democratic sections of the electorate.

Analytical framework

CDA and pragma-dialectics

According to Fairclough (2000, 2003, 2006), there are three ways in which semiosis (with reference particularly to language) figures in social practices: as *discourses* (ways of representing), *genres* (ways of interacting) and *styles* (identities or ways of being, which include ways of speaking and writing). Populism, for instance, can be looked upon as a

discourse, i.e. a way of representing the world (see Mudde's definition in the previous section). In the 2004 campaign, different varieties of populist discourse were in fact put to work in the construction of both candidates' electoral messages. More specifically, premises drawing on various types of populist discourse were used to construct legitimizing arguments in support of both candidates. For example, arguments such as the following one were constructed in support of Băsescu, by drawing on radical populism:

> If a candidate promises to put a stop to corruption, people should vote for him.
> Băsescu has promised to put a stop to corruption.
> So, people should vote for Băsescu.

Populism can also be regarded as a style, a particular manner of communicating with the public (as Jagers and Walgrave suggest) and can also be discussed in relation to the concept of genre, to the extent that it involves distinctive forms of interaction among the social actors involved and defines certain social relations and roles. The preference for the resources of colloquial conversation, commercial advertising and humour, in Băsescu's campaign, as well as for the direct and informal type of communication achieved by means of the internet campaign on his behalf, can all be discussed in terms of genre choices which facilitated the 'operationalization' of a particular type of populist discourse.

CDA (Fairclough 2003, 2006) uses the concept of 'recontextualization' to designate the process whereby particular texts selectively incorporate other texts, or more abstractly, social practices selectively incorporate other social practices and their associated discourses, genres, styles. Recontextualization (which can be regarded as a colonisation/appropriation dialectic) designates the de-location of a practice (discourse, etc.) from its original context and its re-location within another. Recontextualization manifests itself in the intertextual and interdiscursive hybridity of texts, where recontextualized elements are articulated together and with existing elements and transformed in particular ways, according to an underlying 'logic' or 'recontextualization principle' (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). I take this 'logic' or 'principle' of recontextualization to be closely related to the (political) goals that are being pursued and the strategies (including discursive and argumentative strategies) that are used to achieve these goals.[7]

One of CDA's main theoretical claims is that the connection between texts and the social world is *'interdiscursively' mediated*, i.e. mediated by the way in which texts (as elements of individual events and products of human agency) work together particular socially available resources, particular genres, discourses and styles. CDA gives particular attention to questions of hybridization of discourses and genres, to how distinct discourses are articulated together and how genres are mixed in particular texts or speech events, and

relates these analytical insights to wider social, political, cultural processes of change. In the section on branding, above, I argued that a variety of branding strategies were recontextualized in the 2004 campaign, and that they involved original combinations (hybridities) of discourses, genres and styles, in relation to the overall political strategies that were pursued. In the analytical sections I will also relate political strategies to forms of argumentation and to forms of what pragma-dialectics calls 'strategic manoeuvring'.

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst's (1992, 2004) pragma-dialectical approach views argumentation as a means of resolving differences of opinion by testing the acceptability of a disputed proposition in a process of *critical discussion*. It puts forward a *normative* model of argumentation, a model of how individuals *should* argue, containing *rules* which indicate which moves are admissible in critical discussion and which are not. A critical discussion is defined as an exchange in which the parties involved in a difference of opinion (protagonists, antagonists) systematically try to determine whether the standpoint at issue is defensible in the light of critical doubt or objections. A critical discussion has four analytically distinct stages: the confrontation stage, the opening stage, the argumentation stage and the concluding stage.

In pragma-dialectics, the notion of fallacy is systematically connected with the set of rules for critical discussion (for the rules, see van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 208-209; 2004: 190-196). Fallacies are considered to be incorrect discussion moves which violate particular discussion rules, and thus obstruct the effort to resolve the difference of opinion. It is acknowledged in pragma-dialectics that there is a potential tension between resolving a difference of opinion by putting a view to a critical test, thus upholding a reasonable discussion attitude (a 'dialectical' concern), and resolving a difference of opinion in one's own favour (a 'rhetorical' concern). In their efforts to reconcile the simultaneous pursuit of these two different aims, arguers will make use of 'strategic manoeuvring' (van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2002: 135). This can involve making expedient, self-serving choices from the options constituting the 'topical potential' (e.g. choosing issues one can easily deal with), strategically adapting the message to the beliefs and emotions of the audience (e.g. creating a feeling of communion or empathy with the audience, or adapting the message strategically to their beliefs and preferences), making effective use of presentational devices (rhetorical figures, stylistic devices). When a party allows its rhetorical aims to overrule its commitment to the rules of critical discussion, the strategic manoeuvring gets 'derailed'. Fallacies are therefore also seen as 'derailments of strategic manoeuvring', derailments from critical, reasonable conduct (van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2002: 138-142).

In argumentative practice, it is often not immediately apparent that a derailment from critical conduct has occurred, as fallacious strategic manoeuvring often seems to comply with the

rules for critical discussion; in other words, fallacious strategic manoeuvring is often very similar to sound strategic manoeuvring. Thus, fallacies often go unnoticed, as arguers normally pretend to uphold at all times a commitment to the rules of critical discussion, while a standard presumption of reasonableness is typically conferred by the audience on every discussion move. Violations of rules can be unintentional (i.e. mistakes): the move in question will still count as a fallacy (i.e. as an unreasonable move) although it may appear rhetorically strong and dialectically acceptable to the arguer who makes that move (van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2002: 142).

At each stage in the argumentation process, the participants can be assumed to be trying to maintain a balance between their rhetorical and dialectical objectives, i.e. between the objective of achieving the optimal rhetorical result without at the same time violating the rules for critical discussion, or between upholding a reasonable discussion attitude and effectively furthering their own case. At the confrontation stage, for instance, the dialectical objective is to achieve maximum clarity concerning the specific issue that is at stake and the position that each party assumes. The rhetorical objective at this stage is to achieve a definition of the confrontation that favours the issues each party wants to discuss and the position they want to assume. At the opening stage, the dialectical objective is to establish an unambiguous point of departure for the discussion (intersubjectively accepted procedural and material starting points, or mutual concessions). The rhetorical objective of each party at the opening stage will be to direct the confrontation in the way that is most beneficial from their own perspective, e.g. by achieving a definition of the disagreement that serves their own interests and the most advantageous allocation of the burden of proof. At the argumentation stage, the dialectical objective is to test the tenability of the standpoints that have shaped the difference of opinion at the confrontation stage, starting from the points of departure established at the opening stage. From a rhetorical perspective, the parties will aim to make the strongest case and to launch the most effective attack (van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2002: 138-141).

The study of argumentation along pragma-dialectical lines can offer CDA valuable insight into the way social actors pursue and produce social change. CDA is, for instance, often concerned with the way in which texts (speech events) 'draw on' discourses, genres and styles and recombine them in original ways, e.g. with the way in which what is actually said (by drawing on a certain discourse) may obscure alternative perspectives (alternative discourses) on a given issue; or the way in which interdiscursive hybridities reveal tensions and contradictions between recontextualized discourses and specific realities. CDA is also concerned with the identities that are set up for the producers and receivers of texts, and the interactions between them, and the way in which such choices are linked to political

strategies and goals (questions of genre). Finally, it is concerned with the specific manner (style) in which text producers speak or write about a certain issue. I suggest that such concerns can be profitably looked at in terms of the concept of strategic manoeuvring, in terms of the choices arguers make as to what topics to address and to leave out, how to best adapt to audience demand and how to make an optimally effective presentation of their position. With its resources for analyzing strategic manoeuvring, pragma-dialectics can offer CDA a more comprehensive treatment of questions of strategy, recontextualization, social and political change, more generally. CDA offers in turn the advantage of linking strategic manoeuvring and argumentation processes to the pursuit of, and analysis of, political strategies and goals.

The argumentum ad populum as fallacy and rhetorical ploy

Populism correlates most obviously with the fallacy of the *argumentum ad populum,* broadly defined as an unjustified appeal to popular sentiment or opinion. The *argumentum ad populum* may function as a 'rhetorical ploy' or as a fallacious argument (an informal, substantive fallacy) (Bowell and Kemp 2002). In the former case, it will involve a purely emotional (non-argumentative) appeal to the audience's feelings and social instincts (to a desire for social inclusion, to feelings of in-group solidarity, to prejudices and biases, to feelings of fear, pride, etc.). In the latter case, it will involve a fallacious appeal to premises that ought not to persuade anyone: appeals to majority belief or to common practice (X is true because most people believe it; X is morally right because most people do it, etc.). In the case of this fallacy, the premise that makes the argument valid (i.e. '*Any* belief shared by a majority of the people is true') simultaneously makes it unsound. As a 'hard' generalization, such a premise is false, as the statement it makes is too strong (Bowell and Kemp 2002: 116-117).

In pragma-dialectics, the *argumentum ad populum* (the populistic fallacy) is a variant of the *argumentum ad verecundiam* (argument from authority): the authority of a body of people is invoked in support of a standpoint. As a fallacious argument, the *argumentum ad populum* is a violation of *Rule 7* (the *argument scheme* rule) at the argumentation stage, i.e. an instance of using an inappropriate argument scheme (symptomatic argumentation) by presenting the standpoint as being right or true because everybody (most people) think it is right or true. It can also instantiate the incorrect use of an otherwise appropriate argument scheme (also symptomatic argumentation) by generalizing from an insufficient and unrepresentative number of cases (*hasty generalization*, also a violation of *Rule 7*) (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 158-168). As a rhetorical ploy (Bowell and Kemp 2002) or appeal to emotions, the *argumentum ad populum* is dealt with in pragma-dialectics as a violation of *Rule 4* at the argumentation stage (the *relevance* rule). It is a fallacy in choosing the means

of defence: the standpoint is defended by non-argumentative means, by playing on the emotions and prejudices of an audience (a fallacy of *pathos*) (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 132-135).

As Reisigl (forthcoming) points out, at the heart of every form of populism lies a generalised claim of representation, of speaking in the name of the people, and this claim is realized discursively by means of the 'topos of the people'. This topos (in many variants, involving what the people believe, like or dislike, what concerns them, and – I would add – what specific problems or difficulties they are confronted with, and how they deserve to be treated by political leaders) is used in unexpressed premises that legitimize the move from premises to claim.[8] In the Romanian presidential campaign, for instance, unexpressed premises employing the 'topos of the people' took various forms, among which the following: 'If candidate promises to solve the people's problems (corruption, poverty, etc.), then people ought to elect that candidate'; 'If a candidate shows respect, love, concern, etc. for the people, then people should elect that candidate'; 'A candidate that most people love, trust, etc. is the best candidate', and so on.

The remainder of this paper will analyze different forms of populist appeal used by and on behalf of the two candidates and different forms of strategic manoeuvring, and relate the analysis of argumentation to wider political issues and to the political context in Romania at the end of 2004.

Analysis: The final debate between candidates

The final televised debate of the second round of the presidential campaign (the show 'Destinația Cotroceni'),[9] hosted by the national channel TVR1 on December 8, 2004, included a widely commented on moment of 'sincerity' or 'confession', in which Traian Băsescu raised the issue that both himself and Adrian Năstase had been 'communists' before 1989. While the emergence of the topic as such was probably not as unpremeditated as it seemed to be, the way in which Băsescu developed it was an excellent illustration of the more general type of interaction with the electorate that he engaged in during the campaign, of the types of strategic manoeuvring he pursued in argumentation, and of the strategies of political marketing that were successfully employed on his behalf.

Strategic manoeuvring in the 'two communists' episode: the Băsescu brand in action
Here is an extract from the 'two communists' episode (my translation from my own transcript):

Băsescu: No, Mr. Năstase, we both have a big problem, on my word of honour, let's discuss it honestly.

Năstase: Just one?

Băsescu: No, we have more, but we have one which can explain why there is so much passivity in the population. I don't know why it's occurred to me to say this …

Năstase: But you agree with the decision we have taken?

Băsescu: … but I think that in an electoral race it can be good to say something like this. I was discussing it with colleagues at the beginning of the campaign. What kind of curse is there on this people that in the end it comes to a choice between two former communists? Between Adrian Năstase and Băsescu. In 15 years, not one man has appeared who comes from this world that was not touched by the vices of communism, who has not been affected by anything. What curse is this? And on my word of honour, I felt sorry about it. Then I kept looking at myself,… sometimes I was looking at myself in the mirror, and I say, "Hey, Băsescu old son, do you have respect for the Romanian people?" I was asking myself. I say: "I do." "Have you made a mockery of the Romanian people?" I don't have the feeling that I ever did that. I think that if we think in these terms this discussion should have been – should not have taken place. Maybe now was the time when another type of candidate than the two of us should have come before the Romanians. It's true that I did not live off political work, but I was a party member. But the big drama is not that I was a party member …

Năstase: I did not live off party work either.

Băsescu: No, you just supported Ceauşescu for no reason, just so there wouldn't be any opposition.

Năstase: If you want us to start talking about this …

Băsescu: No, I don't want to talk about it.

Năstase: …. about who you were supporting when you were in Anvers, if you want we can talk about these details.

Băsescu: We can talk about it. In Anvers I was serving my country.

Năstase: You mentioned a problem that we have. Let's see what the problem is.

Băsescu: Yes we have a problem. Do you know what the big problem is?

Năstase: The mirror.

Băsescu: No, this was just a question I was asking myself. But the big problem that we two have is not just that we were both party members. Maybe after all it's not such a shameful evil thing to be a party member in a communist state. This is what the state was like at the time. The drama is that we can't stay with the same mentalities 15 years after communism in Romania. And you convince me every day that you are not capable of understanding that these institutions have to function by themselves.

Năstase: If you will allow me, I will tell you that my big disappointment as far as you are concerned is that you have not understood after so many years that rules must be obeyed.

Băsescu: The rule is that the institutions should function, not that you should push Dan Nica forward to say "It's not true!"

Năstase: The rule would have been not to create a scandal through a press conference…

Băsescu: The elegant rule…

Năstase: You should have respected the institution, you should have tried to find out what the situation was, to come up with proof – you didn't bring any kind of proof …

Băsescu: Yes I did, and you will have some surprises over the next few days.

Năstase: Maybe. Fine.

Băsescu: You will find out that you also had fraud in the computer system…

Năstase: Wouldn't it have been better first to have the proof and then to start talking?

Băsescu: I did have it, but what was your first reaction? "It's not true!" Rather than saying "let the institutions do their job".

Năstase: If you had said concretely that in this or that locality these things happened…

Băsescu: Adrian, Mr. Năstase…

Năstase: But when, Mr. Băsescu, you say that at national level everything is a fraud it seems to me that …

Băsescu: There were major frauds…..

Năstase: … and a lack of respect for the tens of thousands of people who worked ….

Băsescu: I respect them, but those who did their job badly, I have no reason to thank them.

Năstase: You had your own people who sat in the polling stations.

Băsescu: Look, let's not get into …

Moderator: Let's move on.

The range of communicative resources that Băsescu uses includes here the genre of *conversational narrative*, in particular an account of a conversation with colleagues and, most strikingly, of a conversation he claims to have had with himself in the mirror (see also Fairclough 2006: 104-105). His manner of talking is markedly colloquial: in Romanian, 'Mă, tu ai respect pentru poporul român, Băsescule?' ('Hey, Băsescu old son, do you have respect for the Romanian people?') includes the highly informal interjection 'mă' and the colloquial vocative 'Băsescule', with the vocative suffix 'le'. Băsescu also initiates a shift from the second person plural to the familiar second person singular ('tu', 'Adrian'), and only corrects back to 'Mr. Năstase' towards the end of the confrontation. Năstase does not object to this familiarity and immediately adopts the same form of address himself. This enhances the exceptional nature of this 'confession' moment, as in no other part of the show do the candidates address each other in any other way except as 'Mr. Băsescu' and 'Mr. Năstase', using the second person plural. Băsescu is being characteristically populist here in terms of style, not only because he exhibits a particularly close and intimate relationship with the audience and with his interlocutor and shows concern for people's problems, etc., but also because he deliberately suspends the normal rules of the political game he is involved in and, in a typically populist, anti-political manner, engages in man-to-man, informal conversation on an apparently highly personal (and apparently non-political) issue. Throughout the extract, Băsescu is not fully coherent, his speech is halting and hesitant, and he gives the impression of searching for the right word without always finding it. He comes across as an authentic personality, a man speaking from the heart in an unprepared way, who is not trying to assume an identity or style that does not come naturally to him. He was also perceived at the time as a man who is honest enough to have doubts about himself and to 'confess' them in a public context. There is no point in the confrontation where Năstase does anything comparable.

These choices in terms of genre mixes and style made their own contribution to the overall success of Băsescu's (self-)legitimation strategies. In particular, Băsescu's choice to frame the argument as a conversation with himself, to draw on narratives of personal experience and on the colloquial register, together with his spontaneous, improvised, even rudimentary manner of talking, created a highly reflexive, expressive type of political discourse, which (as

shown by many opinions expressed in the media after the talk-show) were naturally converted by the audience into moral qualities of honesty, sincerity, authenticity. By contrast, Năstase's more elegant, fluent style, his more abstract language, were rejected as 'arrogant' and perceived to be closest to the 'wooden' language of communism, i.e. as language without a concrete referent, ultimately a form of deception. It can also be assumed that the latter's choice to talk in vague, general terms about 'problems', 'past mistakes', 'accomplishments' and future 'projects' and *not about himself*, in other words, his avoidance of the stylistic resources of populism that his opponent found so congenial, also contributed to creating this impression.

Throughout the campaign, Băsescu made a number of highly effective topical choices (i.e. in terms of discourse). Besides the campaign's main theme, corruption, Băsescu chose for example to talk frequently about *institutions* and the need for their democratic, impersonal, independent functioning. This emphasis effectively distanced him from Năstase, who was represented as having subordinated all of the state's institutions to the interests of a political and economic oligarchy (the so-called local 'barons', etc.). In addition, it placed a safe distance between Băsescu and Vadim Tudor's extremist rhetoric, i.e. that of the providential saviour who takes it upon *himself* to dispense justice and rid the country of corruption (of the 'mafia'), through exceptional (thus potentially undemocratic, illiberal) authoritarian measures. This is not to say that Băsescu was not frequently authoritarian, in a way that was similar to Vadim Tudor. In Băsescu's electoral message, however (leaving aside Băsescu's occasional blunders), authority tended to be constructed as the authority of institutions (e.g. of the law), not of specific persons.[10]

In the extract I quoted above, effective strategic manoeuvring is evident in the way Băsescu chooses to address the topic of communism (although the need to address it explicitly was by no means evident at that point in the debate) and thus creates a confrontation that he will turn to his advantage. In pragma-dialectical terms, the interaction between the two participants in the 'two communists' dialogue (in the first half of the extract above) involves four stages. At the *confrontation* stage, Băsescu voices his view (standpoint) that 'we both have a big problem' and launches an invitation to his opponent to 'discuss it openly'. At the *opening* stage, both participants seem to agree that there are more problems than one, yet both allow the discussion to focus on the problem that Băsescu has decided to raise. There also seems to be an implicit consensus on procedural issues: Năstase does not object to Băsescu's proposed discussion as irrelevant, or as a waste of time, Băsescu claims that the discussion he proposes is unpremeditated ('I don't know why it's occurred to me to say this') but is probably beneficial in the context. He then proceeds by defining the problem (and the confrontation) in terms of a 'curse' on the Romanian people (subsequently as a 'big drama'),

namely that the Romanians should have to choose between two former communists, that no alternative candidate has appeared. It is important to note that, in the context in which it occurs, the 'two communists' episode is completely irrelevant, and it diverts the discussion (to Băsescu's advantage) from criticism of Băsescu's allegations of electoral fraud and his inability to prove them. Năstase tries to redirect the discussion back to this topic but Băsescu ignores him.

Once stated, the confrontation is redefined three times, and each confrontation is accompanied by its own *argumentation* stage. Every time, Băsescu acts as antagonist of his own previously stated standpoint and protagonist of a new distinct standpoint. He eventually formulates the confrontation as one over *mentalities*: the problem (or drama) is that we have the same communist mentalities even 15 years after 1989 (this is *presupposed* in saying 'we can't stay with the same mentalities…'). As for who this 'we' designates, Băsescu manages to imply each time that he himself is not at issue: the problem is Năstase's only. On the whole, therefore, Băsescu assumes a double protagonist-antagonist role, repeatedly launches a standpoint, then challenges it and redefines it, and eventually proposes a different standpoint, which he supports with various types of evidence.

In the reconstruction below, implicit (unexpressed) premises are placed between parentheses. Italicised sentences indicate participant roles.

1. We both have a big problem: we have both been communists. *(Băsescu as protagonist of a standpoint)*

2. (The problem is *not* that we have been communists in the same sense of the word). *(Băsescu as antagonist of his own standpoint)*

3. (The problems is that you, Năstase, were a communist properly speaking, I was just a party member.) *(Băsescu as protagonist of a new standpoint, redefining the confrontation)*

    3.1. (I was not a communist properly speaking.)
        3.1.1. I did not live off political work.
            3.1.1.1. I was serving my country.
        3.1.1'. (A communist lives off political work.)

        3.1.2. I have not made a mockery of the Romanian people.
            3.1.2.1. I have examined myself in the mirror.
        3.1.2'. (Being a communist amounts to making a mockery of the people.)

        3.1.3. I have not failed to show respect for the people.
            3.1.3.1. I have examined myself in the mirror.
        3.1.3'. (Being a communist amounts to having no respect for the people.)

    3.2.   (You were a communist properly speaking.)

      3.2.1. (You lived off political work.)
        3.2.1.1. You supported Ceauşescu.

4. The problem is *not* that I have been or that we have both been communist party members. *(Băsescu as antagonist of his own previous standpoint)*

    4.1. It is not shameful to have been a communist party member in a communist state.
      4.1.1. This I what the state was like at the time.

5. The problem is that we have the same communist mentalities 15 years after the fall of communism. *(Băsescu as protagonist of a distinct standpoint, again redefining the confrontation.)*

    5.1. (You have a problem of mentality.)
      5.1.1. You are not capable of understanding that institutions have to function without interference.
        5.1.1.1. There is proof for this in your everyday behaviour.
      5.1.1'. (Interfering with institutions is a symptom of a communist mentality).

    5.2. (I do not have a problem of mentality.)
      5.2.1. (I allow institutions to function without interference.)

Băsescu's strategic manoeuvring is particularly effective here because it draws on a distinction which an important segment of the electorate most certainly liked to see being made, i.e. between being a party member nominally (which a lot of people have been) and having communist attitudes and behaviour that are incompatible with democracy. He thus cleverly and explicitly opts out of a fundamentalist, Manichean opposition between 'us' and 'them' as 'anti-communists' vs. 'ex-communists' and draws the dividing line elsewhere, i.e. between the majority of the population (in which he includes himself) and the ex-communist oligarchy (i.e. those communists who did live off political work and who had communist mentalities).

Strategic manoeuvring is also effective in positioning Băsescu as not being all that different from or better than other Romanians, while still being a 'communist with a difference'. Such self-critical emphases are likely to increase the dialectical acceptability of the argument. They are cleverly balanced by a rhetoric which subtly flatters the electorate and invests it with the power to grant Băsescu a sort of symbolic clemency. Băsescu chooses here a position of moral inferiority: it is a 'curse on the Romanian people', he claims, that they should have to choose him; still, as far as bad choices go, Băsescu constructs himself as the lesser evil, by comparison with Năstase. In describing the electorate's predicament in terms of a 'curse' and a 'big drama', he is also exploiting the Romanians' antagonistic feelings towards the political class and particularly their 'fatalism', as an acknowledged feature of Romanian political culture (Mungiu-Pippidi 2003). Băsescu is at once constructing a victim role for the electorate, giving the electorate the moral high ground, and constructing himself

as someone who understands the situation and is full of compassion ('on my honour, I was sorry for it'). All of these are powerful forms of *ad populum* appeal, part of the stock-in-trade of populist leaders everywhere.

As I have observed, the 'two communists' argument is remarkable through the way in which Băsescu redefines the confrontation successively in a self-serving way. What is successively at stake is, first, the standpoint that the 'big problem' is that both candidates have been communists. Then, this is rejected, and the confrontation is redefined as one over the implicit standpoint that Năstase has been a communist properly speaking, while Băsescu has been merely a party member, i.e. a 'communist' in a different sense. In support of this standpoint, Băsescu brings evidence from alleged honest introspection ('the mirror') and from the fact that he did not live off political work before 1989, whereas, by implication, Năstase did. When Năstase denies this and suggests that Băsescu too was serving Ceauşescu as a ship commander, Băsescu replies that he was serving his country, thereby skilfully turning the issue of political allegiance into a question of patriotism (a good example of Băsescu's clever use of populist emotional appeals). Slowly, Băsescu steers the confrontation towards one issue: whether or not he and his opponent still have communist *mentalities*, all other things (i.e. formal party membership) being equal, and concludes (implicitly, yet clearly) that Năstase is still a prisoner of such mentalities, whereas he himself is not.

The argumentation stage that supports each of these confrontations is also extremely effective from the point of view of strategic manoeuvring. A variety of implicit and explicit premises are conveyed as part of a little auto-biographical narrative which appears to make no claim about anyone else but Băsescu himself, yet subtly conveys implicatures about Năstase: Năstase *has* made a mockery of the Romanian people, *has* shown disrespect, etc. The balance between rhetorical and dialectical goals is nevertheless maintained, as Băsescu only *implicitly* claims that he does not have a problem of communist mentalities, and that he has not been a communist in the same way as Năstase, while *explicitly* acknowledging that *both* have been communists, formally speaking. The potential for disagreement with the public which the implicatures in question might carry if they were advanced explicitly, and the danger that the whole argument might seem blatantly fallacious, are thus skilfully defused. It is significant that, in his final redefinition of the confrontation, Băsescu uses the first person plural pronoun ('*we* can't stay with same mentalities…'), yet supports this revised standpoint only with evidence from Năstase's behaviour (it is allegedly Năstase alone who does not allow institutions to function without interference). By implication, Băsescu does not interfere with the functioning of institutions, therefore he does not have a mentality problem. For whatever reason, Năstase does not choose to directly counteract Băsescu's (indirect) claim that he (Năstase) still has communist mentalities, while

he himself does not. Thus, Băsescu is allowed to settle this part of the argument in his own favour.

From this point onwards, Năstase attempts to take the lead by advancing the standpoint that Băsescu does not obey 'rules', which he further reformulates to say that Băsescu does not respect institutions. He supports these claims by premises about Băsescu's behaviour, such as: (a) you created a scandal through a press conference, (b) you did not bring any concrete proof, etc., and corresponding unexpressed premises: (a') creating a scandal shows disrespect for rules; (b') failing to come up with proof shows disrespect for institutions, etc. Năstase is more restrained, polite ('if you will allow me…') and uses indirectness more. He chooses to convey many statements as presuppositions or implicatures of other statements (e.g. 'you should have respected the institution' *presupposes* 'you did not respect the institution'; 'you did not bring any proof' *implies* 'there is no proof' and 'there was no fraud'; 'you had your own people who sat in the polling stations' *implies* 'there was no evidence', etc.), although the corresponding direct assertions would have certainly been more effective. By choosing indirectness and failing to state clearly that there was no fraud and no evidence for it, or that Băsescu's claims of major fraud are unfounded, he also allows Băsescu to repeatedly avoid the burden of proof for his own statements (Băsescu is allowed to insist that there *was* fraud and that proof will appear over the next few days).

Năstase's ironic suggestion that Băsescu's problem is in fact 'the mirror' is subtle but ineffective, as it is left undeveloped (this is surprising, given how easy it would have been to exploit some of the controversial aspects of Băsescu's career as former Minister of Transport). It seems doubtful in fact whether, after his own unambiguous success in the first round, Năstase really thought of Băsescu as a serious opponent in the second round. Strangely, Năstase comes across in this dispute as either incapable of exploiting situations that would damage Băsescu's argumentative success or as deliberately avoiding to do so. He fails, for instance, to use to his advantage the contradictoriness of Băsescu's position on the question of respect for institutions (it was after all Băsescu who had demanded the cancellation of the first round, on scant evidence of fraud, without waiting for the relevant institutions to give their own verdict).

Băsescu's argumentative success in this debate is due primarily to his choice of the 'two communists' topic, and his effective way of handling it. Not only does he repeatedly redefine the confrontation in his favour, but he also chooses a starting point that will serve his own interests best, while at the same time appearing to be operating with a starting point that is accepted both by himself and his interlocutor. More exactly, while appearing to advance the statement 'we have both been communists' as a mutual concession or as an intersubjectively accepted starting point, he is in fact unobtrusively introducing a distinction

between two different understandings of what a 'communist' is and ends up *denying* that himself and Năstase have been 'communists' *in the same sense*. Năstase seems to be caught off-guard, deceived into a false sense of safety by Băsescu's formulation of the starting point and of the confrontation and misses some good opportunities to react. Throughout the argumentation stage, Năstase's restraint, his use of irony and implicit meaning, rather than bold, direct assertions, only damage his own rhetorical objectives, and testify to a poor judgment of his opponent, of what would have worked effectively with the audience, while also revealing his altogether different personal style. The populistic appeal he eventually makes to 'respect' for the people who worked in the polling stations fades almost into insignificance by comparison with Băsescu's bold and unabashed *ad populum* appeals, e.g.: 'Hey, Băsescu old son, do you have respect for the Romanian people?… Have you made a mockery of the Romanian people? … I don't have the feeling that I ever did that.'

Throughout this confrontation, Năstase behaves as if he were in control of the situation. This is evident for instance in the way in which he freely accepts any emerging confrontation ('If you want to start talking about this…') and encourages Băsescu to return to and elaborate on the 'problem' he claims to have identified ('You mentioned a problem that we have. Let's see what the problem is'). He also elegantly allows Băsescu to reject confrontations on uncomfortable issues ('No, I don't want to talk about it', 'Look, let's not get into…',), without insisting that he take them up, although it is fairly clear that Băsescu would stand to lose if he were forced to address these issues.

In this way, Băsescu is allowed to get away with various forms of obstructing critical discussion, among which the most glaring is the way in which he ends up denying his own original standpoint and its associated starting point. From: 'we *both* have a problem', i.e. 'we have *both* been communists', he concludes that *Năstase* has a problem, that Năstase is a communist, in the sense of having a communist mentality, while he himself is not. In so doing, he is arguably violating *Rule 6*: he is denying a premise representing an accepted starting point. However, his repeated acknowledgement that he *is* a communist (albeit, as it turns out, in a different sense), allows this violation to go more or less unnoticed. He is also allowed to get away with blatantly weak or irrelevant arguments in support of the claim that he himself is not a communist properly speaking, e.g. because 'I have looked at myself in the mirror'. Such argumentative support can be discussed in relation to pragma-dialectical *Rule 2*, as a violation of the obligation-to-defend rule by presenting a standpoint – which, in this case, is not in fact accessible to direct perception but is a matter of interpretation – as being beyond doubt or self-evident. It can also be discussed in relation to *Rule 4* (the

relevance rule): one might legitimately ask how relevant such subjective evidential support actually is to the proposition it is supposed to justify.

Invoking the Romanian people in a victim role is a good illustration of Băsescu's typical *ad populum* appeals (as violations of *Rules 4* and *7*). These appeals invoke an emotional solidarity with the Romanians, an 'us' vs. 'them' opposition between Băsescu and the people, on the one hand, and the entire political system on the other, and legitimize Băsescu as presidential candidate on the strength of premises having to do with his emotional and providential relation vis-à-vis the people-as-victim. References to the people and their sensitivities ('I have not made a mockery of the Romanian people') may be dubious both as emotional, rhetorical ploys (violations of *Rule 4*) and as fallacious arguments, to the extent that implicit premises that refer to certain attitudes displayed towards 'the people' are taken as conclusive and sufficient 'signs' that a certain presidential candidate is the right choice (violations of *Rule 7*). In arguments such as these, strategic manoeuvring gets derailed, strictly speaking, although, as I will argue below, the fact that it does is not necessarily obvious, or if obvious, not necessarily unacceptable, to the participants involved.

On the whole, Băsescu's argumentation in the 'two communists' episode is intended to resolve an implicit difference of opinion between himself and his interlocutor and between himself and the public over a legitimacy issue (is Băsescu a better, more legitimate option as president?). From a pragma-dialectical perspective, many of the argumentative moves he makes tend to obstruct, rather than effectively contribute to critical discussion procedure, and I have discussed these as violations of rules. However, it seems safe to say that, in the context in which the 'two communists' confrontation occurred (in the TV debate and in the electoral campaign, more generally), Băsescu's argumentation seemed both persuasive and reasonable to the electorate, or, in pragma-dialectical terms, both rhetorically strong and dialectically acceptable, and an illustration of highly successful strategic manoeuvring. One of the reasons for this perception could be that, while steering the confrontation in his favour (by the particular choice of topic and its successive redefinitions), Băsescu appeared at the same time to be driven by a sincere concern to clarify the matter under discussion, to examine it from all possible perspectives, and by an honest desire to get at the truth, however uncomfortable for himself that truth might be. He thus appeared willing to lay himself open to public scrutiny, without trying to hide anything about his past, and at the same time he did not damage his credibility by making strong explicit statements about how different he was from Năstase. Instead, he allowed these differences to emerge as implicit statements. The impression of sincerity which Băsescu managed to convey, the way in which he advanced his claims as fallible, tentative claims (not: 'I have not done this', but: 'I do not have the impression I ever did that'), his choice to talk about himself and about a topic

that was potentially threatening to himself as well, all contributed to enhancing his credibility and thus the dialectical acceptability of his argument. The balance between 'rhetorical' and 'dialectical' objectives thus seemed to be masterfully maintained. Băsescu apparently managed to uphold a commitment to a critical ideal of reasonableness, while at the same time successfully pursuing his persuasive aims. The fallacious moves that occurred did not, in my view, succeed in damaging the overall impression that Băsescu was arguing reasonably in the context in which he found himself, by adjusting optimally to the situation and the audience, and upholding a commitment to reasonableness.

Moreover, given the overarching political goal of ousting Năstase and the PSD from power by whatever means available, Băsescu's populist style and discourse were welcomed (by large segments of the electorate, but, most significantly, by the anti-communist, liberal-democratic intellectual elites) as well-adapted to the situation in Romania. Paradoxically, *ad populum* fallacies and other examples of fallacious strategic manoeuvring were often perceived by otherwise highly critical people as reasonable contributions to the electoral campaign and effective means of persuading and mobilizing the electorate.

Beyond such presumably strategic, pragmatic considerations, there was also a real convergence of interests between the 'people' and the intellectual elites: both identified the corrupt political and economic oligarchy as their opponent, as the political enemy. A more general theoretical point can be made about the ultimate compatibility between populism and the interests of the intellectual elites in post-communism. As Ioniță (1998) argues, the post-1989 intellectual civic movements, with their emphasis on moral reform, 'anti-political' grass-roots participation and their strong anti-establishment component, were themselves essentially populist in nature: an atypical, civic type of populism, but populism none-the-less (Ioniță 1998: 206). In a country like Romania, where, continuously since 1989, with the gradual consolidation of the ex-communist oligarchy, the majority of the population (including the intellectual elites), have felt they were being continuously excluded from power and that the ruling elites did not represent them, radical populism was bound to have a strong impact and resonance.

Legitimation and strategic manoeuvring in the 'supporters' video-clips
In this section I will continue to look at differences in the strategies of legitimation used by and on behalf of the two presidential candidates in connection with a different type of electoral material: video-clips showing each candidate's 'supporters' (the transcripts are in the Appendix, my translation), as well as their 'self-presentation clips', all of which were included in the final debate of December 8, 2004. I will focus on forms of argumentation used either by the candidates themselves or on their behalf by the producers of electoral material.

In marketing, in general, products can be advertised through 'endorsement' by famous personalities. In electoral campaigns, the campaign staff and other supporters form a 'symbolic entourage' meant to give credibility to a candidate. Argumentatively, this can correlate with appeals to *authority* (the symbolic authority of cultural personalities, politicians) and *ad populum* appeals (to popularity, or to the feelings, emotions, enthusiasms of the audience) – as I have observed, the latter is in fact a variant of the former. Premises making reference to the authority of personalities or the will and emotions of the people are used in 'symptomatic' argumentation (it is characteristic of people who enjoy such authoritative or massive support that they are capable leaders), or may support the normative claim that voting for a certain candidate is recommended, in 'causal' argumentation of an 'if…then' type.

In its simplest form, an *ad populum* argument in the context of an electoral campaign will take the following form (where the second premise, while making the argument valid, also makes it unsound and fallacious):

Most people/ The people believe that candidate X is the best candidate.

Any belief held by most people/ by the people is right.

Therefore, candidate X is the best candidate.

Marketing research is generally used to identify and anticipate the wants and needs of the public, and political marketing involves an identification of the wants and needs of voters (citizens). The 'product' it develops is a manufactured image based on adapting the candidate's political platform, ideology, values, personal qualities, record of achievements, etc. to these alleged wants and needs. The political marketing undertaken in support of the two candidates seems to correlate here with a *problem-solution* argumentative *topos*, in which voting for one or another candidate is presented as a 'solution' to people's 'problems'.

I am drawing here on a view of argumentation on normative matters which regards ought-claims ('we ought to vote for x') as being made on the basis of at least two types of premises, which define (a) the (allegedly) factual circumstances (i.e. the problems people have, their wants and needs, as well as the candidate's qualities and areas of competence) (b) a normative ideal in view of which the ought-claim is made. This is an adaptation of Kratzer's (1981, 1991) analysis of linguistic modality, and was first used in combination with CDA and argumentation theory in Ieţcu (2004, 2006a). Such arguments seem to have the following form: given people's problems, as well as the candidate's ability to satisfy them (circumstantial premises), given what people want, i.e. that problems are solved (normative premise), and given that, if people want their problems solved, they should vote for that candidate (warrant), it follows that it is necessary/ recommended that people vote for that

candidate. I suggest therefore that, besides the simple argument structure I illustrated above, certain *ad populum* appeals take the following alternative form:

1. People ought to vote for candidate X.
      1.1. People have problems.
      1.2. Candidate X is capable of solving people's problems.
            1.2.1. He has the qualities that are needed for this.
                  1.2.1.1. There is evidence for this.
      1.3. People want their problems solved.
      1.4. If people want their problems solved, they ought to vote for
  candidate X .

I am concerned with differences between the two campaigns in terms of what problems were recognized and attributed to the public (in circumstantial premises) and what problems were obscured, of how the problems that were recognized were related to the images that were manufactured for the candidates and to the particular qualities and abilities that were emphasized, and in terms of what normative ideals (what aims, needs or wishes) were invoked on behalf of the people (in normative premises). As the reconstruction above shows, a legitimizing argument in favour of one or another of the candidates will seem more or less acceptable depending on what the identified problems are, on how plausible this identification of problems will seem to the audience and how the candidate's abilities are seen to match those assumed problems. If, for instance, the population's main concern is to join the EU as soon as possible and Năstase is shown as being capable of making that happen, then it follows naturally that people ought to vote for Năstase. The question is, of course, whether the premises which claim to diagnose or identify people's problems and concerns, as well as their normative ideals, are true or false.

A striking difference between the two video-clips is that while Băsescu's supporters are public personalities, most of Năstase's are peasants. Năstase's campaign makers obviously acted on the fundamental premise that in a country with over 40% rural population, a presidential candidate can only win by effectively mobilizing the rural vote. In various instances of causal argumentation, Năstase is described as 'competent' (he has 'training', 'culture', 'moral rectitude', 'experience', he is a 'good politician' and a 'good leader', etc.), he is also repeatedly associated with Romania's European 'future'; he also 'cares' about people, shows solidarity with various groups (peasants, young people); he is 'kind', 'trustworthy' and 'sincere'. On this basis, his supporters legitimize the implicit claim that people should vote for him. Many superlatives are used: he is 'the best', he is 'very, very good', 'the only one' who can do various things. One striking element is the emphasis on representativeness and image, e.g. 'he is a man that can represent us with honour' (16), which ties in with repeated assertions by the press and public during the campaign that Năstase has the 'face' of a president, whereas Băsescu doesn't.

It is however the purely emotional arguments that are really noticeable here, e.g. in the intervention of a peasant woman (1-3) who is holding Năstase's portrait to her chest and saying: 'I don't want anybody but Mr. Năstase. I don't need a pension, I don't need anything, I only want to see him and talk to him… Adrian Năstase… my own soul'. Another interesting intervention, from another peasant woman speaking beautiful archaic Romanian occurs in 27: 'He has a beauty, he has a power bestowed on him by God to lead the people'. Other (more hilarious) snippets include the extended metaphor of the president as the 'flower in the vase', the vase being the prime minister (in 11), in argumentation by analogy. To see peasants living in an impoverished subsistence economy saying 'we are happy with him', 'I don't need a pension… I only want to see him' (i.e. argumentative support which, arguably, verges on the irrational) indicates a circumstantial generosity characteristic of pre-modern societies, generated by the festive, ritualistic context in which these interview snippets were filmed, but also a parochial electorate that is not mature or critical enough to penalize leaders by relating their own bad situation to the performance of politicians. Năstase's appeal in the 'rural' sequences of this clip is primarily of a charismatic type, his presence seems to create a state of grace in which all needs other than emotional ones are suspended.

The legitimizing argument that is constructed in support of Năstase is of the following form: given (1) people's problems, (2) Năstase's qualities and (3) people's normative ideals (their wants, needs, aims), it follows that Năstase is the best option (and people should vote for him). In terms of this model, the claim that people ought to vote for Năstase is supported by (a) (implicit and explicit) circumstantial premises referring to people's emotional needs (people 'need' to see him, they are 'happy' when they see him, etc.), their needs for symbolic representation and protection, as well as to more rational and pragmatic needs (the 'urban' sequences make reference to a capable, experienced leader, one who can successfully take Romania into the EU); (b) circumstantial premises specifying Năstase's ability to satisfy these needs (he is 'sincere', 'highly-educated', has 'moral stature', 'culture', 'training', he is a 'very good politician', 'he can represent us with honour', he 'cares' about the people, he is 'on the peasants' side', he has God-given 'beauty' and 'power', etc.), (c) implicit and explicit premises which claim that, if a candidate is able to fulfil these needs, people ought to vote for him, as well as (d) normative premises specifying the goal in view of which such a claim is made.

What is striking is that, while premises referring to Năstase's personal qualities are numerous, premises referring to current problems such as poverty or corruption are practically absent. People's main problem seems to be the absence of a competent leader, a man capable of leading Romania into a European future, a man capable of fulfilling people's

emotional needs, their needs for protection and for symbolic representation. Judging from what they say, people do not seem to be worried much about poverty and daily survival, or about the present. Factual premises involving economic problems are absent, and presumably not because of lack of 'market research' or failure in tuning the candidate's message to real needs (although this is also possible), but in order to give prominence to assumed problems, needs and wants which match Năstase's real strengths (e.g. in foreign policy). Premises specifying normative ideals are also mainly implicit: the ideal in virtue of which people ought to vote for Năstase is, presumably, a future situation in which people's emotional needs are fulfilled (people feel happy, cared for, etc.) and Romania is firmly engaged on a road to Europe. The only explicit normative ideal is the grand political vision in incumbent President Ion Iliescu's final endorsement (in 30) – 'a better and more just Romania, … a Romania that is more prosperous and more respected, a Romania that is equal amongst the European nations'. Neither the diagnosed 'problems', nor this particular normative vision seem particularly plausible reconstructions of the Romanian people's justifications in voting for Năstase at the time of the 2004 election. The legitimizing argument in support of Năstase, at least as it is conceived in this video-clip, will probably not strike many Romanians as an example of persuasive argumentation, possibly not even as a sound argument (as I am suggesting here and below, most of the premises can be challenged as irrelevant or false).

Video-clips such as this make an implicit claim to representation: implicitly, the people that are interviewed are a representative cross-section of the population. There is, therefore, an implicit *ad populum* appeal, involving either an appeal to majority belief or a (hasty) generalization from a representative sub-set of the population, which is in principle open to the charge of violating the *argument scheme* rule (the fact that an alleged majority or representative sample share a belief should not be taken to indicate that the content of that belief is correct or true). These arguments can also be discussed as fallacies of relevance, as violations of the *relevance* rule. Premises having to do with the emotions that people feel in relation to Năstase are or should be irrelevant to the claim that he ought to become President. In addition, emotional appeal, as a non-argumentative means of persuasion or rhetorical ploy (involved, for instance, in the use of the metaphor of the 'flower in the vase', or in poetic references to God-bestowed power and beauty), is an irrelevant means of defence of the claim in question. In general, the *relevance* rule can be violated either by the use of non-argumentative means of defence (e.g. appeals to *pathos* or *ethos*), or by argumentation that is not relevant to the standpoint (*ignoratio elenchi*), and both types of irrelevance seem to occur here together.

Arguments based heavily on *ad populum* and emotional appeal are used here to construct the image of a paternalist and almost messianic leader, loved and worshipped by a population with markedly traditional, pre-modern features, in exchange for care and protection. The construction of such an image, as discursive and political strategy can be discussed in relation to highly popular and insightful analyses of the post-communist collective imaginary, based on the concept of political 'mythologies' or 'fantasies of salvation' (Tismăneanu 1998). Traumatized and not fully modernized post-communist societies, with their capital of frustration, disillusionment, poverty and insecurity, have inevitably felt the need to replace old myths (communism) by new ones. 'Messianic' mythologies, as well as 'scapegoating' or vindictive mythologies, are one such substitute (Tismăneanu 1998). Năstase's image seems to have been constructed on the basis of this type of political analysis of post-communist societies, as well as on a false, as it turned out, assumption that a paternalistic, messianic message that had worked successfully for a majority of the electorate in the past will continue to be effective in 2004 (and that premises drawing on paternalist populism will provide adequate support in legitimizing arguments for a majority of the electorate). The analysis of 'problems' in Năstase's video-clip seemed to be based on the analysis of the rural, pre-modern collective imaginary of a traditionalist, parochial, infantilized society, which may still match the reality of parts of the Romanian village, but no longer matches the whole country, not even the whole of rural Romania.[11]

Băsescu's campaign, by contrast, was mainly oriented towards the urban population and especially towards relatively young, educated voters, hence the humorous tone of the campaign. Băsescu's campaign designers seemed to choose not to make useless concessions to segments of the electorate which they knew they could not win and to focus instead on mobilizing their own potential supporters. Băsescu's supporters in the video-clip are not anonymous peasants, they are either well-known personalities – politicians, writers, artists that the electorate would presumably recognize (Teodor Stolojan, Mircea Dinescu, Mircea Cărtărescu, Mihai Stănescu) or faces that people would recognize from the leaflets that were used in the campaign. Instead of argumentation *ad populum* based on the authority of an anonymous collective body of people, there is rather an argument from the authority of specific *individuals*. Or, to be more exact, an argument from authority involving well-known Romanian personalities is combined with a modified version of an *argumentum ad populum*, based on a claim to representativeness of a set of ordinary people (the same schoolgirl, worker, doctor, business-man and grandmother-and-child whose photographs had been used in widely-distributed leaflets). Among the most interesting elements of strategic manoeuvring is the absence of superlatives: Băsescu is not 'the best', but a *decent* candidate, therefore a fallible human being, an ordinary man. Humour is again used,

particularly in Dinescu's intervention (16), in the use of two metonymies: the Black Sea (an allusion to Băsescu's career as a sea-captain) vs. Cartierul Primăverii (the residential area of the communist *nomenklatura,* which Năstase was directly associated with): 'If you have confidence in me, vote like me, for Traian Băsescu, because it would be the first time in the history of Romania when the Black Sea might defeat *Cartierul Primăverii'*.

People seem to value primarily Băsescu's moral qualities: his honesty, fairness, trustworthiness, the fact that he cares for others, his integrity, his moral strength, his sense of responsibility, as well as his sense of humour. There is an oddly-worded, slightly ridiculous emphasis on justice (a 'knight fighting for justice' in 6) which one might see as the metaphorical equivalent to the 'flower in the vase' in Năstase's clip. These metaphors say a lot about public perception and needs: Năstase is wanted because he has a presidential allure, Băsescu is wanted in order to start dispensing justice. By implication, the problems that people are faced with are injustice, dishonesty, corruption, and the politicians' habit of not fulfilling their promises. These metaphors correlate in an interesting way with two different understandings of the role of the president: a symbolic figure-head, a mediator that remains above and outside political conflict, a more or less detached spectator (the role which the Romanian Constitution would in fact assign), versus an active and involved president, a 'president-as-player' ('preşedinte jucător'), the role which, in spite of his limited constitutional powers, Băsescu has tried to carve out for himself from the early days of the campaign and up to the present.

The legitimizing argument for Băsescu seems to be of the following type: given what the circumstances are (implicit references to injustice, corruption, inefficiency of institutions) and given that Băsescu can solve these problems (as the testimonies to his qualities indicate), also given the normative ideal of a 'decent' country where 'we can all breathe' and live, where things get done and justice is done (this is what people allegedly want), Băsescu is the best option. There is a clear difference between the two normative ideals proposed by the two candidates: a grandiose and abstract future vision for Romania (expressed in a particularly 'wooden' kind of language in Iliescu's intervention at the end of Năstase's clip) under the leadership of a charismatic and paternalist superlative leader, on the one hand, and the more down-to-earth, pragmatic vision of a merely 'decent' country, where politicians are honest and carry out their electoral promises, on the other. In Băsescu's clip there are no references to the distant future, nor to Europe, but only to current domestic problems. There is no mention of God, either, and the heavy-handed appeal to emotion in Năstase's clip is replaced by a subtle appeal to humour and to a feeling of in-group solidarity with members of Romania's intellectual elite. Băsescu's electoral message in this particular video-clip seems on the whole to be conceived for a modern, not pre-modern society, aimed at and legitimized

by individual and responsible citizens, not by a generic anonymous electorate. For Băsescu, the needs analysis seems to be much more tuned to the electorate's problems of poverty and corruption, which are portrayed as causally linked, therefore to the electorate's need for decisive action: Băsescu *does* what he says, and he hasn't been beaten so far; if elected, he will defeat the ex-communist oligarchy.

Various forms of strategic manoeuvring were evident in the choice of campaign themes (as 'topical choices') for all sorts of electoral material: each candidate addressed those topics that were most advantageous to him, each deployed a variety of rhetorical presentation devices, of which for instance humour (in Băsescu's campaign) turned out to be extremely effective, each sought particular ways of adapting to what were perceived to be the electorate's needs and concerns. The main slogan of Năstase's campaign, for instance, was 'Faptele sunt politica mea' ('Actions are my politics'), and there was a constant reiteration of political and economic achievements. However, as I have said, excessive emphasis on foreign policy achievements gave the strange impression that *these,* not the economic situation, were the major issues of concern for the population. To the extent that a whole range of real problems were obscured in legitimizing arguments of this sort, i.e. argumentation was often irrelevant, and a whole range of potential differences of opinion were not brought out into the open, the overall strategy was open to the charge of fallaciousness, seen as obstruction of reasonable discussion or derailment from critical conduct.

Băsescu's campaign, on the other hand, with its almost exclusive focus on corruption, represented as systemic and institutionalized, and causally linked to the disastrous economic situation of the population, seemed to be better adapted to the reality of the electorate's deliberative situation, which can explain why it was perceived as relatively reasonable and acceptable. His campaign material argued, in graphic and often humorous form, that people are poor because they are being systematically robbed; there are no funds for salaries and pensions because the political clients of the regime are fraudulently exempted from taxation, etc. There was also a counter-campaign to Năstase's campaign, based on a reality vs. appearance argumentative *topos*, showing that what Năstase calls 'actions' and 'facts' translate into poverty for the population, that Năstase and the Social Democrats are using facts and figures in a deceptive way, etc. This is not to say that legitimizing arguments in support of Băsescu were not, strictly speaking, questionable in many ways, some of which I have already analyzed. Yet, as I have claimed, in the political context which these arguments addressed, various types of exaggeration and excess having to do with the particular form of populism they drew on were presumably not perceived as

unreasonable, but as constructive moves in a situation which called for a radical mobilization of as many voters as possible, through any means available.

There is one more topic which the two candidates, neither of whom is particularly religious in private, addressed quite differently: the church and the Christian faith. Năstase made huge concessions to presumed demands from the public for a Christian-orthodox president (presumably on the model of what was effective in the 2000 campaign): repeatedly, he was filmed in churches, kissing icons and crossing himself conspicuously. Băsescu, consistent with his general line of sincerity, avoided references to God and the church, and made instead various inflammatory statements that could have lost him many votes. To quote him freely (in this TV debate): 'When I was on board my ship I didn't have a church or a priest to go to, and I don't think these things are really necessary, all you need to do is to believe that there is something up there, and to behave as if you believed'. Băsescu was thus the first presidential candidate who took a bold stand against displays of religious fervour in the public sphere – an act of sincerity and consistency with his own beliefs which many people certainly appreciated.

Varieties of populism in the 2004 electoral campaign in relation to types of political culture

Differences between argumentation strategies in the 'supporters' video-clips can be taken to indicate different assessments of the political culture of the Romanian population by political advisors and campaign staff. As I have said, Băsescu's electoral message in this type of material seemed designed for an electorate that shared to a larger extent the values of a 'participant' type of political culture – see his repeated emphasis on 'democratic institutions', on justice, democracy, truth, citizenship – while Năstase's was predominantly intended for an electorate that shared a 'parochial' type of political culture. The 'subject' type was addressed in terms of a promise to continue the gradual measures aimed at relieving poverty, by Năstase, and by a pledge, by Băsescu, to 'crush' the corrupt political system that was responsible for poverty. Occasionally, in its emphasis on justice, and particularly on individualism vs. collectivism, as well as through being endorsed by famous anti-communist, liberal intellectuals, Băsescu's message seemed designed to target a liberal-democratic, civic type of political culture.

I have argued that both candidates used populistic appeals in excess. This was also evident in the self-presentation video-clips that were shown repeatedly during the campaign (and included in the TV show on December 8), as well as in their final messages to the electorate. Năstase's self-presentation clip was silent, apart from inspiring music. He was portrayed primarily as a family man, a lover of tradition, a devout Christian, a European politician, and

a candidate in close contact with the poor rural and urban electorate. Băsescu's self-presentation clip involved a narrower range of images (the family theme was not prominent; instead, there were images of Băsescu as a young marine, sea captain and ship commander, followed by images of his later career as Minister of Transport and Mayor of Bucharest) and was accompanied by a voice-over from a presenter and by words in capitals on the screen. In this clip, Băsescu's electoral staff uninhibitedly exploited the theme of the *chosen, providential leader*. The verbal message was, essentially, the following: 'Băsescu has so far had the most spectacular political career … He is devoted to his work … Everyone wanted to serve on the same ship with him… He has always seems to be predestined, fated ('predestinat', 'sortit') … He has always sacrificed himself and the joy of being with his family for the work he has chosen … He is not in love with power … He is not seeking personal glory … People love him and trust him … Power must belong to those who are not in love with it … This is why, for many people, he now seems to be a providential man ('omul trimis'), a 'saviour' ('salvator') … A sailor at the helm of the country? Yes, to prevent us from going down' ('Un marinar la cîrma țării? Da, ca să nu ne scufundăm').

In his final address to the nation, Năstase implicitly presented himself as a son of the people, particularly of the rural world, as someone who had 'listened attentively' to the population's complaints – a populistic touch that many people presumably found hypocritical. The emotional responses that were targeted seemed to be primarily feelings of inclusion and solidarity (Năstase is after all not different from any other Romanian, he is 'one of us'), approval of respect shown for family and religious values, approval of modesty and reverence shown vis-à-vis the electorate, admiration for his professional competence and political skills, as well as for his allegedly compassionate and caring nature. In terms of overall rhetorical strategy, Năstase almost gave up rational persuasion in his final message and produced a purely ceremonial and expressive message, involving mainly thanks addressed to the electorate, a perfunctory acknowledgement of past 'mistakes' and 'errors', a pledge not to repeat them, and an invocation of God on the side of the Romanians ('cu Dumnezeu înainte'). The message held up an almost mythical vision of Romania as being engaged, thanks to his efforts, on a 'road' to Europe, and an identification of what 'we', the Romanians, need in terms of 'continuity', 'peace', 'stability', 'wisdom', 'calm', etc. What the Romanians don't need, Năstase said, obviously alluding to Băsescu, is a bellicose politician. Unlike Băsescu, whose occasionally pathetic emotional appeals to the electorate showed his vulnerabilities, and thus elicited sympathy and solidarity, Năstase chose to behave throughout the campaign as if he had already won.

As I have already argued, a fairly different range of populist resources was used in Băsescu's campaign. In the 'two communists' episode, Băsescu invoked the people in an

emotional context: the Romanians were positioned as victims of the political system and as moral authorities (they 'deserved' a better choice of presidential candidates; the fact that they did not have much choice was unfair on them, a 'curse', a 'drama'). This combined well with his own image as providential, trusted leader and saviour of his nation. What was nevertheless distinctive about Băsescu's electoral message was its radicalism: Băsescu's message was populist in this distinctive radical way in which Năstase's was not, and could not be, and responded to the electorate's deep-felt need for political authority and its mistrust in the political class.

Populism, as I have said, can exploit an allegedly direct, quasi-mystical relationship between the charismatic leader and the people. This was used both in Năstase's campaign, particularly in emotional arguments from 'God-given' beauty and power, as well as in all materials which constructed him as either a 'father' of the people or a 'son' of the village (the final message), but also quite strikingly in Băsescu's campaign, in the theme of the providential leader in times of crisis (the self-presentation clip). While Năstase emerged as a paternalist leader in terms of social stability and consensus, Băsescu was constructed as a providential leader and saviour of his nation in times of crisis. The stylistic potential of metaphors (an element of strategic manoeuvring) was cleverly exploited: Romania was represented as a ship in danger of sinking, unless Băsescu took control of the helm; Băsescu was represented as a 'knight' dispensing justice ('un cavaler al dreptății'), etc. – simple, yet effective images, hooking directly onto the electorate's need for authoritarian leadership in times of crisis.

Populism may also project grand future visions, based on simple images that appeal to a parochial type of political culture (e.g. an image of society as an organic entity, a family). This again was visible in Năstase's campaign, particularly in the vision of reconciliation, harmony and consensus that was constructed, in which all conflict was dissolved, and all problems and difficulties seemed to disappear, under the guidance of a leader offering paternal care and affection. It also appeared in the image of Romania as a prosperous European country in the future (in Năstase's final message and his supporters' video-clip). By contrast, Băsescu's message was more restrained in proposing future visions and limited itself to a radical critique of present-day Romania.

Radical-authoritarian populism did not seem to be perceived as unreasonable or unacceptable for a majority of the Romanian electorate. One of the lessons of the 2000 election (considering the high number of votes that nationalist extremist leader Vadim Tudor had received) had been that the electorate does not perceive an authoritarian regime to be a threat to democracy, to individual rights and liberties, and would in fact welcome an authoritarian leader if he proved capable of dealing with the chronic weakness of the state's

institutions and put a stop to corruption, even through 'exceptional measures' and an 'iron fist' (Beciu 2001). Sociological focus group studies have in fact revealed a contradiction between the (relatively high) level of political information and competence of parts of the Romanian electorate and the nature of their authoritarian political option (Beciu 2001: 115). Other analysts have emphasized, on the other hand, the disparity between the predominant type of political culture in incompletely modernized countries like Romania and the modern democratic nature of the political institutions imported from western societies. Authoritarian options must be seen however in relation to current circumstances, so must be the nostalgia for communism which informs part of electorate's populist options and selectively rehabilitates the dimension of order, authority and discipline of the defunct communist order. These options, strange or incongruent as they might be, are in fact voicing a deep-felt need for justice and political authority in a context that is perceived as anomic and chaotic.

Băsescu's defence of radicalism and authoritarianism managed in fact to keep its distance from Vadim Tudor's extremism, particularly through Băsescu's emphasis on the role of democratic institutions, and in the way in which he rejected various extremist themes – 'international conspiracies', or the anti-western rhetoric of Vadim Tudor's 2000 message. Some of his interventions, however, sounded very similar to the latter's authoritarian message, most notably the emphasis on his determination to be an active, 'strong president', involved in the daily activity of the state's institutions, the use of a variety of humorous campaign leaflets which threatened severe punishment of corrupt politicians, and his blunt anti-corruption message in the final address to the nation: 'As president, I will make justice independent, as president, I will crush the corrupt system, the mafia system that this year alone has drained 70,000 billion lei, which … have ended in the pockets of the clientele' ('voi fi un preşedinte care va zdrobi sistemul corupt, sistemul mafiot….').

In drawing excessively on a paternalist type of populism, Năstase's campaign achieved a relatively poor adaptation to audience demand, and misjudged or disregarded the concerns of a large part of the electorate. Băsescu's radical, authoritarian message, on the other hand, showed considerable sensitivity to these concerns, not least of all by claiming that there were radical and quick solutions for them. To sum up, it was Băsescu's campaign that showed better adaptation to a wider variety of audiences and types of political culture. In addressing a wide range of problems that were immediately relevant to the population (corruption, poverty, etc.), in putting up a clever counter-campaign aimed at deconstructing Năstase's electoral slogans, in the clever use of humour and emotion, Băsescu's campaign makers (and Băsescu himself) contributed to improving communication with the electorate, and enabling people to come to a better-informed decision. In this context, the fallacies that

accompanied Băsescu's campaign tended to go unnoticed and to be perceived as reasonable, as being well-adjusted to the demands of the Romanian context.

Conclusion

My analysis has suggested that one candidate in the Romanian presidential election, Traian Băsescu, was able to gain a small but decisive electoral advantage from a campaign which appropriated and implemented strategies for political marketing in a more sophisticated and effective way than the campaign of his main opponent, as well as using a strategy for political branding.

In terms of analytical method, I have used critical discourse analysis in combination with analysis of argumentation. The value of this combination has shown itself in the analysis of forms of strategic manoeuvring as an element of strategies of legitimation, e.g. in the analysis of the distinctiveness of the 'Băsescu brand' in the 'two communists' episode, as well as in the analysis of the *topos* of 'problem and solution' in the 'supporters' video-clips.

On the whole, Băsescu's campaign showed better adaptation to a wider variety of segments of the electorate and types of political culture. This included a 'participant' type of political culture, i.e. a segment of the electorate who did not necessarily share a strong commitment to liberal-democratic values but who in the end voted for Băsescu on the strength of his radicalism and authoritarianism, as well as a radicalized liberal-democratic segment, who voted for Băsescu primarily for pragmatic reasons, hoping for radical change in the spirit of liberal democracy. This latter type of voters, in principle critical of and not easily swayed by populistic appeals, suspended their critical stance and supported Băsescu's campaign as one which served a perceived 'reasonable' and 'constructive' purpose in the context it was meant address: a situation of crisis, a predominantly parochial and dependent electorate with inertial political options. This would explain why Băsescu was also massively supported by the intellectuals, who did not seem to mind Băsescu's frequent 'derailments' from critical conduct, but chose to back him unconditionally given the overall political goals he embodied.

The 'Orange Revolution' saw the triumph, for the first time after 1989, of a radical-authoritarian populism directed at the entire political establishment, and cemented a new type of alliance between the people and the charismatic populist leader that is likely to set a model for future electoral campaigns.

Notes

1. The earliest version of this paper was read (as a joint paper with Norman Fairclough) at the International Conference on Critical Discourse Analysis organized by the University of Athens,

May 20-21, 2005. I am grateful to John E. Richardson and Martin Reisigl for useful comments on the version submitted for publication here, as well as to Norman Fairclough, Camelia Beciu and the 'Rescaling Romania' Research Group in Bucharest for further suggestions for improvement. An early version of this paper has appeared as Chapter 4 of Ieţcu (2006b).

2. Felix Tătaru, director of the (Romanian) GMP publicity company that was responsible for Băsescu's campaign, claimed (in an interview in *Academia Caţavencu*) that Băsescu was the first Romanian politician to be treated as a 'brand' and explained what this should involve: 'You should not create a false image, a mask for politicians, invent things which are not their own. You should give a politician a coat which suits him, in which he feels good, which he likes wearing. Băsescu's encounter with publicity, with us, was beneficial for both sides. We did not try to do things which were not him. (…) Năstase's campaign was very good but only strategically. From a creative point of view it was deplorable, it created a mask in which he did not feel at ease. This was obvious in the television debate. He was like a bad actor reciting a poem, and one written in a wooden language at that … (my translation).

3. 'Nu pot ei fura cât puteţi voi vota! Să fie dreptate! Băsescu Preşedinte! In turul doi, arătaţi-le cât puteţi voi vota! Ieşiţi la vot! Mulţi, voi şi ai voştri! Faceţi din turul doi al alegerilor un tur de forţă pentru România. Votul spune totul.' (from www.basescu.ro)

4. 'Dragi "internauţi",/ Am fost în cursă, dar nu m-am lăsat prins. Şi nu m-au virusat!/ Ba mai mult, am cîştigat. Datorită vouă./ Voi, cei care aţi participat cu creativitate şi curaj la Guerilla Digitală şi SMS dar şi voi cei care aţi votat./ Tot datorită vouă va cîştiga şi Romania!/ Să dăm un Refresh. Acum./ E High Priority!/ Vă mulţumesc, (semnat) Traian Băsescu' (from www.basescu.ro). The website also included a computer game with Băsescu (as the chilli pepper) and other politicians as characters. The same irreverent and creative use of humour has been evident in a variety of references to him in the satirical and popular press as 'Batman Băsescu', 'Super-Băse', etc.

5. 'Pentru turul doi, mă interesează poporul român… Aliatul meu pentru turul doi este orice român care doreşte să schimbe puterea totalitară pe care o exercită PSD în momentul de faţă… Eu vreau un singur aliat pentru turul doi: cetăţenii României…'

6. Populism, Mudde argues, will be an increasingly regular feature of future democratic politics, erupting whenever significant sections of the 'silent' majority feel that the elites no longer represent them. The success of populism in liberal democratic societies arises from several sources: freedom of the media and the real possibility that uncovering acts of corruption will lead to punishment of the guilty parties; more educated, emancipated citizens, with increasingly egalitarian mentalities, who are no longer prepared to accept that the elites think for them (i.e. a 'demystification' of politics); a move away from accepting the 'legal' authority of leaders (formerly based on their allegedly unique competence, now challenged by increasingly competent citizens) and towards 'charismatic' authority; a desire for more leadership and less participation (i.e. citizens want politicians who know what to do, and who can implement policies in line with their wishes, without demanding too much political participation and effort from them) (Mudde 2004: 552-563).

7. In Ieţcu (2004, 2006a), I showed how particular varieties of neo-liberal, libertarian and conservative discourse were recontextualized from western theoretical or economic practices and appropriated by prominent Romanian public intellectuals as part of their own practices of civic and economic education, and of their public engagement in defence of the new liberal-democratic order. What particular varieties of liberalism were chosen, how they were legitimized, as well as what particular discourses were rejected or ignored, was determined by the logic of the practices in which the intellectuals were engaged, i.e. primarily a delegitimation of communism, socialism, and 'the left', including the post-1989 policies of 'gradualist' reform. The logic of these practices apparently called for the appropriation of the radical ultraliberal theories of Hayek and Mises, rather than for more left-wing varieties of liberalism, as these 'extreme', 'pure' varieties of liberalism were better suited to the (de)legitimation strategies that were pursued and allowed a clear-cut departure from the discredited ideologies of the past.

8. As Reisigl (forthcoming) points out, these premises are 'warrants' in Toulmin's (1958) sense.

9. Apart from the two presidential candidates and the moderator (Marian Voicu), the programme included leading journalist Cristian Tudor Popescu, then editor-in-chief of 'Adevărul' and president of the Romanian Press Club. The format provided for a series of questions addressed by Popescu and Voicu to both candidates, answers from each candidate (90 seconds each) and the right of reply (no more than four such replies for each candidate, 30 seconds each, and a final two-minute right of reply). The format did not explicitly provide for direct debate between the candidates. There was also a short round of recorded questions addressed by a few other journalists at the end. The programme also included two short video-clips showing each candidate's supporters and two self-presentation video-clips.

10. Such emphases, presumably originating from his political advisors or campaign staff, seemed intended to repair the damage that Băsescu did to himself in many of his unguarded, spontaneous interventions. At the beginning of this TV debate, Băsescu was questioned (by Cristian Tudor Popescu) on one such outburst in which he had said: 'I will execute with my own hand [Execut cu mîna mea] whoever is suspected of corruption'. Băsescu replied that he had of course intended this in a non-literal sense, as a 'political execution', i.e. ministers who are under suspicion should be forced to resign.

11. In terms of political marketing, the image that was manufactured for Năstase was modelled on former president Iliescu – the paternalist leader, guarantor of social peace, continuity and stability, and of national consensus. According to reports in the press during the campaign, PSD and Năstase employed the services of an American publicity company, GCS (Greenberg-Carville-Shrum), specializing in campaigns for Social-Democratic parties (Clinton, Blair, Schröder). One element of their strategy was, allegedly, a more aggressive campaign in towns and cities, premised on the belief that the rural world would be easy to control anyway by means of television.

APPENDIX

THE "SUPPORTERS" VIDEO-CLIPS *(my translation, I.I.-F.)*

(a) ADRIAN NĂSTASE'S SUPPORTERS
1 (woman, rural, holding Năstase's portrait): I don't want anybody but Mr. Năstase. I don't need a pension, I don't need anything, I only want to see him and talk to him…
2 (man, rural): Mr. Adrian Năstase…
3 (woman in 1): … Adrian Năstase… my own soul…
4 (man, rural): He is the right man in the right place…
5 (woman, urban): Mr. Adrian Năstase, I think …
6 (woman, urban): I believe he is very sincere in what he says…
7 (woman, urban): Adrian Năstase…
8 (woman, rural): He has good judgment and he does everything well…
9 (woman, rural): He has led us as Prime Minister for four years…
10 (man, urban): Adrian Năstase…
11 (woman in 9) The President of a country is the flower in the vase, you understand…., the vase is the Prime-Minister, … and if the vase has been good, if it is not broken, then it means that the flower will not wither…
12 (man, rural): I trust only him, no one else…
13 (man, urban): Mr. Năstase..
14 (woman, rural): We are contented with him…
15 (man, rural): A very good politician, a good leader,…
16 (man, rural): …a man that can represent us, with honour…
17 (man in 15): …the best Romania has at the moment, and a highly educated man…
18 (man, Bucharest): Of course, I will vote for Mr. Adrian Năstase, because he is the only politician who understands that we have to become a country on a par with the rest of the world…
19 (woman, rural) With the peasants he has been on their side…
20 (man in 18): … and he is the only man that can lead us on this path…

21 (woman, rural): Kind… and we are happy when we see him … a kind word…

22 (man, rural): He is Romania's man of the future….

23 (man, rural) : I just think he cares about young people…

24 (man, urban): Năstase is the best presidential candidate, and I think everyone should vote for him.

25 (woman, urban): Very, very good, very good indeed….

26 (man, Bucharest): Adrian Năstase, moral stature, attitude, culture, training…

27 (woman, rural): He has a beauty, he has a power given to him by God to lead the people….

28 (man in 16): He is a man that definitely has to go forward…

29 (woman in 27): He cares about the people and someone who cares about the people is a man…

30 (Ion Iliescu, incumbent president): Adrian Năstase's victory will be a victory for a better and more just Romania, for a Romania that is more prosperous and more respected, a Romania that is equal amongst the European nations. I wish him success! Victory!

(b) TRAIAN BĂSESCU'S SUPPORTERS

1 Teodor Stolojan (ex-minister and ex-presidential candidate of DA Alliance, withdrawn from campaign for health reasons): I have known Mr. Traian Băsescu for many years…

2 Schoolgirl from the leaflet 'Aşa DA educaţie' ('That's what I call education'): I like him because he is a cheerful man.

3 Teodor Stolojan: We have been through difficult times together… He is a man that you can always depend on.

4 Man from the leaflet 'Aşa DA mediu de afaceri' (That's what I call a business environment'): He is a man of integrity, and he knows what he is saying, that's what I always value in others.

5 Teodor Stolojan: He is a fair and honest man…

6 Woman-doctor from leaflet 'Aşa DA sănătate' ('That's what I call health'): For me he is like a knight fighting for justice… I don't know, I just trust him….

7 Teodor Stolojan: He is man that has strength…

8 Man: One plus one is two, no one has beaten this man…

9 Teodor Stolojan: He is a man who has demonstrated that he can do many things and that he does what he says he'll do.

10 Mircea Cărtărescu (novelist and poet): A decent country, a country where we can really live, where we can really breathe. My hopes are tied to the candidacy of Traian Băsescu from this point of view. I think it is a decent candidacy.

11 Teodor Stolojan: I thank him again for the fact that, at a difficult moment for myself and for the Alliance for Justice and Truth PNL-PD, he took on the political responsibility of running for the presidency of Romania.

12 Granny and child from the leaflet 'Aşa DA protecţie socială' ('That's what I call social protection'): He is the only one that cares about the people.

13 Teodor Stolojan: On Sunday, I will vote for Mr. Traian Băsescu and I am calling on all Romanian citizens, regardless of nationality, to go to the polls and to think carefully who they are voting for…

14 Mihai Stănescu (graphic artist): I wish a happy Christmas to all those who will vote for Traian Băsescu

15 Teodor Stolojan: … to vote for Mr. Traian Băsescu because he deserves their trust.

16 Mircea Dinescu (ex-dissident poet, journalist, talk-show host): If you have confidence in me, vote like me, for Traian Băsescu, because it would be the first time in the history of Romania when the Black Sea might defeat 'Cartierul Primăverii'.

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