

Analysis of political communication and strategy used in online media during the 2021 Albanian election campaign: a case study

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Abstract

This paper is an empirical research which brings its focus to the detailed analysis of the elements of political communication during an electoral campaign developed in 2021 in Albania. This includes speeches, messages, public appearances, compliance with the rules against the COVID virus, verbal and non-verbal communication and more. The analyses focus on all these elements in the case study of the prime-minister's online platforms. The purpose of this scientific research is to find out whether the elements of political communication used by prime-minister Edi Rama on social media were prominent and influential in the 2021's campaign. The study is empirical based on the analysis of social media, speeches and news delving further into the amount of posts that appeared on social networks as well as conducting netnographic analysis of elements of online political communication used by the prime-minister in the election campaign March 25 - April 27, 2021.

Introduction

The Central Election Commission (CEC), as the main institution that makes decisions on elections in the country, decided that the official date for the start of the campaign for the parliamentary elections would be officially held on March 25, 2021. According to this decision, after a month of intensive campaigning by the parties' candidates, the elections would be held on April 25, 2021. The day when the citizens of Albania would make the elections for the country's prime minister for 4 years of government. During this one month, the parties are given the right to communicate their ideals, goals, objectives, and all the main points of the campaign. Experts point out that Albanian political parties spend significant amounts and hire foreign and domestic agencies to develop excellent and professional communication strategies. In these cases, there is special care for the messages and content of the speeches and advertising spots, as well as a special focus to create a campaign that is based on corporate logic. This includes using a strong slogan and the definition of appropriate colors, as well as a special focus on promoting this campaign on all communication channels, especially on social networks (Çela, personal interview 2022).

Other political campaign experts highlight that the Socialist Party and the prime-minister Rama have been running a long campaign since the pandemic started, so that prepared the staff of the campaign (Mile, personal interview 2024). Political advertisements to be broadcast in the media must be paid for. But what does Rama do? As Mile puts it, he makes the appeal and interestingly advertises through his clothes. He uses his position as prime minister to attract the audience, because the situation was serious regarding public health, the pandemic, reconstruction, etc., and he does this because in these meetings he introduces a party element in a "clandestine" way. So the election campaign of Rama started many months before the date of the launch of the election campaign.

In an in-depth analysis of online communication we will investigate below the way prime minister Rama communicated before, during, and after the electoral campaign. On March 9, 2021, in a meeting with journalists, Rama presented the slogan "Albania is our future", a slogan that would accompany the entire 2021 election campaign. Starting with the the decision of the Central Election Commission (CEC) on March 25, the electoral activities took place in Skënderbej Square where the Socialist Party led by Edi Rama prepared the engines for the official start of the election campaign. The Socialist Party held a meeting with the participation of the constituent members of the party, sitting at a distance from each other. What was noticed apart from the instance and the special feature of this

meeting was the visual communication. Rama delivered his opening speech on a podium in the shape of a rose. (see image 1).

IMAGE 1: Tirana, March 25, 2021, opening of the campaign, SP



The scenography for the opening speech of the campaign was an identifying element for the Socialist Party (SP) in Albania. It was carefully constructed down to the last detail. The podium where Prime Minister Rama spoke was in the shape of a rose, while behind him stood a large screen. The statue of Skanderbeg was placed above the big screen. As it was said above, what was observed was the physical distance between the participants, which were only the formation staff and the candidates for deputies. During this meeting, it is worth mentioning that there were no sympathizers or political supporters, for reasons of maintaining the anti-Covid rules. (see image 2).

IMAGE 2: Skënderbej Square, Tirana, March 25, 2021, physical distance



Rama's communication about the opening of the campaign was long and obviously could not miss the attack on the political opponent. Rama emphasizes: "The third mandate of the Socialist Party is to remove any possibility that Ilir Meta, Sali Berisha, Monika Kryemadhi have another chance to drag Albania back". Negative advertising plays a key role in political campaigns. Most political ads are negative, presenting issues or criticisms based on the image of the opposing candidate (Perloff, 2014 p. 348). According to this theory, we understand that a form of comparison between the image of the opponent becomes a kind of personal and in this case party image enhancement. Following on the Joint Effect Theory interpretations (Leon Festinger, 1954), we can say that Rama manages to yield an idea about himself in negative terms drawing comparisons with his opponents. So he personally comments negatively all his opponents. During this attack on the opponents, the image of Lulzim Basha, Sali Berisha, Ilir Meta, and Monika Kryemadhi appeared on the big screen behind him (see picture 4).

IMAGE 3: Tirana March 25, 2021, SP visual communication



Analysis of the 2021 parliamentary election campaign for the Socialist Party: The message as the main element

This description goes to the core of the importance of communication in politics, emphasizing that the message is a key tool to influence public opinion and to represent the political objectives of a party or candidate. Communicating the message, especially during political campaigns, is very important to convince voters and achieve victory in elections. Using clear and simple slogans and messages is a strategy to be effective in communication and to keep voters engaged.

In politics, communication strategies involve considerable expenditure to ensure that the message reaches the audience effectively and to convey the desired messages in a persuasive and appropriate manner. This affirms the importance of the communication strategy for political parties and shows how they use large resources to ensure a successful presentation of their messages. In the current case, the Socialist Party focused on three main points for conveying messages in three dimensions, which were:

- The Socialist Party treatment as a brand with elements such as the logo, slogan, colors and number, etc.)
- Pandemic elements (physical distancing, mask use, vaccination)
- Elements of reconstruction after the earthquake

Socialist Party elements as a brand

Through the use of elements of a brand in all communication formats is a common strategy to strengthen identity and create a sense of familiarity and connection with the public. In this case, the use of elements of the Socialist Party brand aims to emphasize the presence and commitment of the party clearly in the minds of voters.

The rose logo was the most used symbol. The rose was ubiquitous in the masks, in the clothes and all campaign accessories. This is designed to make voters feel connected to the party and create a strong brand identity in their minds. (see image 4)

IMAGE 4: Official closing of the campaign, Tirana April 22, 2021



Prime minister's personalized clothing and the use of the number 12 hat throughout the election campaign served as a tool to convey a message to voters. This aims to strengthen the identity of the Socialist Party and encourage voters to identify more with the party and its messages.

The use of sportswear made him seem more approachable and accessible to voters. This personalized clothing style and the symbolism of the number 12 enables a direct identification with the party and its number on the ballot paper.

The use of the hat with the number 12 in every occasion by Rama, and his unrelenting invitation to the voters to vote for the number 12, is a clear example of an effective communication tactic. This simple and clear use of a number, accompanied by a physical symbol such as the cap, is intended to make a strong and appropriate impact on the minds of voters. (see image 5)

IMAGE 5: Edi Rama with the number 12 hat at the ballot, Tirana, April 25, 2021



This action has several benefits such as focusing attention, strengthening political identity, or non-political verbal communication. (see image 6)

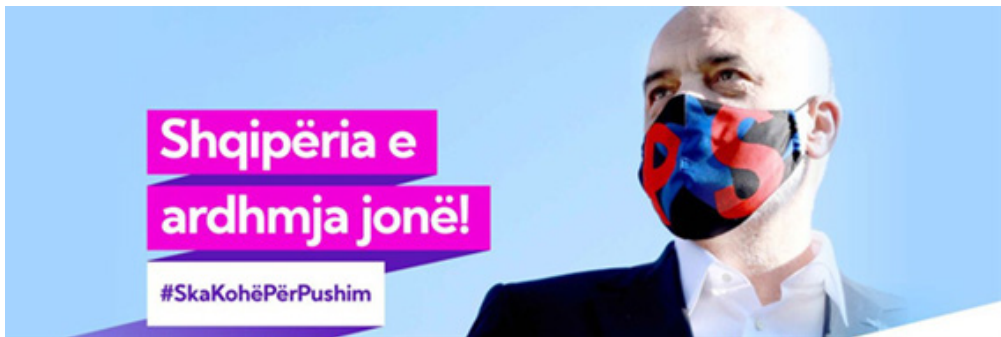
IMAGE 6: Edi Rama shows the customized sneakers, April 12, 2021



Pandemic elements

The adaptation of the Socialist Party to the new circumstances of the pandemic is an important example of the flexibility and adaptation of a political organization in a different environment. The use of personalized masks with the SP logo, the number 12, as well as the party's colors and identifying symbols at every public outing, shows a strong commitment to respecting safety measures and helping to spread important public health messages... So, the use of personalized masks in the electoral campaign shows a successful adaptation of the Socialist Party to the new circumstances of the pandemic, emphasizing the commitment to public safety and political identity. (see image 7)

IMAGE 7: SP poster, parliamentary electoral campaign, Tirana 2021



The use of physical distance as an important element in the electoral campaign has served as a tool for the Socialist Party to reinforce its image as a responsible party that cares about the health and safety of its citizens. This message was used to mention and compare the Socialist Party with the Democratic Party, emphasizing the lack of respect for physical distancing rules and protective measures against COVID-19 by its opponents.

This type of use of physical distance to attack a political opponent constitutes a form of negative advertising, according to studies by communication researchers. In this way, the Socialist Party tries to create a positive image for itself by comparing and putting the opponents in a negative light (Perloff, 2014).

However, according to Mile (personal interview, 2024), the respect in this case was a kind of justification to raise another electoral message, which gave more points to the government against the opposition. It was the time when the risk of the pandemic decreased, and the “war of the invisible enemy” decreased a little. But the rhetoric remained, i.e. enemy, military force, war. This is because it created numerous political opportunities. This is to position yourself in such a way that

you gain points against the opponent. “Having said that, the way the two parties started the campaign, where the DP gathered a lot of people, did not keep their distance. With this, the DP showed that it had more followers and supporters in the square than the SP, which maintained the anti-Covid rules. I think it was a trap that DP fell into! In a form of amateurism. This was seen the next day as the Socialist Party used it to frame the DP in its message” (Mile, personal interview, 2024). Because this is the essence of the campaign, either your message or your opponent’s message will win. It’s a battle between messages. Anyone involved in an electoral race wants their message to triumph. And when my message wins, the opponent’s message goes bad and falls. In this case, the Socialist Party imposed its message by casting DP as the negative side of the message, in the sense that “we are here for public health” as the main issue. And the main question is who is safe and who is not? Who is for the health of the people and who is willing to risk it for the sake of politics to achieve victory” (Mile, personal interview 2024). Experts like Alban Tufa and Suela Musta further comment on the tactical enterprises used during the electoral campaign by the Socialist Party and by Edi Rama in particular.

For Musta, the Socialist Party’s stance on respecting physical distance may have been interpreted as a strategy to avoid verbal confrontations with the electorate. This suggests that physical distancing was not pursued out of concern for public health, but rather as a way to avoid difficult discussions or confrontations with voters. This analysis suggests a more sceptical perception of the party’s motivations for following physical distancing rules. (see image 8)

IMAGE 8: Meeting of the Socialist Party, Tirana, April 25, 2021



Reconstruction after the earthquake

The earthquake of November 26, 2019, turned into a devastating event for Albania, leaving behind incredible material and human damage. Unfortunately, many families were faced with unpredictable losses, including the loss of their loved ones. The Rama government faced the challenge of rebuilding the destroyed homes and rehabilitating the areas affected by the earthquake.

The Rama government's response to this tragedy was swift and precise, engaging numerous local and international forces to help rebuild and rehabilitate the affected areas. This response brought about a significant change in the country's political and social landscape, placing reconstruction as a high priority for the government.

In the context of the electoral campaign, the earthquake and reconstruction efforts became important topics for the Socialist Party and prime minister Rama. Efforts to help affected families and rebuild damaged areas were used as a point of strength to argue the efficiency and responsibility of the Rama government. Due to the great challenges that were faced at this time, promises for reconstruction and improvement of the situation became part of the electoral platform of the Socialist Party.

In this context, journalists point out that the Rama government used shocking events such as the 2019 earthquake and the COVID-19 pandemic to offer big promises and projects to the population (Ervin Leka, personal interview). This crisis was used as a means to gain support and create a positive image for the Socialist Party and Prime Minister Edi Rama. Rama mentions figures in the respective areas of the houses that were being rebuilt after the earthquake. (see image 9)

IMAGE 9: SP poster dedicated to housing reconstruction, election campaign 2021



Analysis of communicationl on Facebook social platform

In recent years, social networks are playing an extremely important role in people's lives. These platforms have become the main means of communication and information. We say the main one because these platforms operate through mobile devices, computers, laptops, or in short any technological device where the only condition is internet access.

Digital platforms provide ease of use by providing various content over the Internet. These platforms include websites, portals, blogs, and media or social networks. Mainly these platforms offer written, multimedia, and other content, organized on different pages that the audience can browse the Internet.

What was noticed was the increase in the number of social network users. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and many others, that allow users to connect, share, and communicate with each other online. Among the main roles that social networks have is direct communication and connecting communication in a simpler form.

However, social media content is widely accessible, up-to-date, and available in electronic format. Therefore, a systematic approach is necessary, as it helps e-commerce researchers, organizations, and governments to understand the commonalities in the various data of online texts that appear in social media. Using information obtained from social media, researchers can gain valuable insights into the beliefs, values, attitudes, and perceptions of social media users regarding the usefulness of user-generated content and trust formation [Karimov et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2012; Wang & Li, 2014]. Consequently, such information can help marketers monitor people's perceptions of social networks and aid organizations in strategic planning.

To address the gap between the availability of user-generated raw text and the contextual information of aggregated data, the present study introduces a grounded theory approach [Strauss & Corbin, 1988] to analyze social media content to identify the structure of the underlying factors of the collected data. information and to interpret the identifier

Content analysis of social media

This section analyzes how Rama managed to use his social networks in favor of his campaign. The most used media was Facebook. First, we must understand that the Socialist Party, or Edi Rama himself, and social networks have strong ties between them. We say this because Rama stands out for his frequent

communications and most of them are made to look very spontaneous. Through this form of communication, Edi Rama as prime minister and chairman of the Socialist Party at the same time manages to convey information that can be measured very easily. These platforms create the possibility of seeing the effect of the information you choose to share. There, the creator of the information sees how many views he has received, how many positive comments, how many negative, how many likes (likes on posted photos/videos), and how many shares (distribution from one person to others).

Politicians and political parties use social networks to communicate with their audiences, promote their political platforms, share information about political events and activities, and mobilize their supporters. Another way is to influence public opinion. Social networks provide a platform to express political opinions and views. People often share articles, videos, and posts that contain political analysis, their comments, and personal views on political issues.

Voter mobilization is another way of persuasion that parties manage to create through social networks. Political parties use social networks to mobilize voters and encourage participation in elections. Through political ads, social media campaigns, and calls to action, they try to convince people to vote for them.

Monitoring public opinion is another essential point. Politicians and political parties monitor social media activity to obtain information about people's views, feelings, and reactions to important political events. This can help tailor their political messages and strategies.

The main focus in this section is the Facebook campaign developed by Rama. Here we find another main point of the use of social networks by political parties, that is, the engagement of political campaigns and financing. Social networks are a part of political campaign strategy and often serve as channels to distribute messages, advertise, and raise funds for campaigns. These platforms provide a quick and effective way to reach audiences and collect voter input.

In general, social networks have transformed the way politics is communicated, mobilized, and influenced public opinion. They provide an open and interactive platform for exchanging political ideas and engaging people in political debate.

Edi Rama on Facebook, before the 2021 election campaign

Today, social media are not only an online platform for the distribution of various contents, but they are taking over the role of traditional media. Actor role theory by Gibson and Rommel (2001) shows that online media offer a new way to communicate and create opportunities for new interaction between political actors and voters. This theory focuses on political parties and their professionalized campaigns.

Rama appeals and advertises through the clothes interestingly. He uses his position as prime minister to attract the audience, because the situation was serious regarding public health, the pandemic, reconstruction, etc., and he does this because in these meetings he introduces a party element in a “clandestine” way. (Mile, 2024).

Rama posted various political, cultural, and many other content on his Facebook every day. In the first posts of 2021, i.e. in the period January-February, Rama posted mainly about different regions where his government had taken measures for the reconstruction of roads, hospitals, schools, etc. He created a form of content pattern on his platform, where he started with a “good morning from X city” and during that day he posted about the developments undertaken by the government in that city, meetings held but also his personal photos.

In electoral terms, the political content of online media, such as Rama’s Facebook posts, political rallies, and the number of people reported vaccinated, were essential for informing the public. Also, the April 25 election focused on the visual aspect and the use of 3D technology to attract the attention of the online audience. He accompanied each post with photos/videos/lives from ERTV that took place that day. Normally, his meetings were also broadcast on television.

Also, he created some hashtags like: #WorkNoSleep #NoTimeforVacation #ALL ATTENTION TO YOU #BeatifulAlbania #Albaniasmiles, etc. Hashtags took center stage as each description began or ended with a hashtag depending on the topic or post. The most used was #WorkNoSleep. This hashtag was also used in posts published late at night, but also in the early hours of the morning. This string of words is a direct attack on his political opponent, Basha, depicted by Rama as not working and sleeping. Post descriptions were short and the gist was clearly conveyed. The descriptions were in very few sentences and often in very few words. The main focus was on the earthquake, the pandemic, and the measures taken by the government for security, mobilization, and the return to normality.

Edi Rama on Facebook, election campaign 2021

The time period from March 25 to April 27 was accompanied by an intensive mailing campaign by Edi Rama. According to Mile, “Rama used a direct communication with the people, bypassing the institutions. So we have a prime minister who communicates directly with his people, without the need for advisers or other government agencies, bypassing also the traditional media. On the other hand, Rama was not exactly a pioneer in this matter, that is, in the sense of communicating directly with the people, bypassing government experts, the media, etc. (Mile, personal interview, 2024. A politician like Donald Trump has used this method of communication since 2016, through the Twitter network

and other media where he communicated directly with the people. He did this without the help of the media as he considered them to be against him. And through social media, he conveyed direct, sincere and honest communication. Rama did the same practice, that is, to be closer to the voters. Through this communication, he always distances the television media where they could receive his communications and where they could paraphrase or convey the information to the audience according to the interests of the media. Rama presents in his social media what he wants to present to the public. "I wouldn't consider it a bad thing, it's just a direct way of communication that is used a lot. In that period due to the pandemic and the conditions that the country offered channeled the communication in online media. Normally the flow of political communication would be different. Therefore, we can say that Rama has used a strategy which was valid and justified under the conditions of the pandemic (Mile, 2024).

Below we will analyze a random post taken from Edi Rama's Facebook dated May 31, 2021. The purpose of this analysis is to understand that Rama's online campaign did not end on the day the victory was announced. A month after the electoral campaign there was still intensity and attention paid to the points held in the campaign such as the earthquake and the pandemic. (see image 10)

IMAGE 10: Facebook, Edi Rama, May 31, 2021



The information and content of the post were mostly brief, indicating the essence and purpose of the post. In this case (see figure 10) Rama shows the quantity of Pfizer vaccines that arrived in our country and the total number of vaccines that our country had in that period. It shows the country (“Mother Teresa” Airport), the number of vaccines (11,700), the number of vaccines in total (858,750), the number of vaccinated (776,461), and the last goal of 1 MILLION vaccinations within the month of June. Always in social media, the main message is left at the end so that the audience remembers it as a detail. In this way, the main essence of the information is given clearly, with figures, and this aspect affects the audience’s conviction.

The post is accompanied by a photo. The photo was taken at the moment of the arrival of anti-COVID vaccines at Mother Teresa Airport. In this photo taken in this real place, there are two gentlemen employees who are dressed in the appropriate clothes and masks. This spontaneously shot of the employees taking the boxes out of the plane door also ties in well with the written information that “They have just arrived...”

Another important element of a social media post is creating a hashtag. In this case there are two hashtags. The first one is: #Albania Smiles – this was actually not only a hashtag but at the same time it was also the slogan used for the vaccination campaign in Albania. The hashtag is associated with a flower which was also in the form of the logo of this campaign held by the Rama government for the vaccination of citizens. This hashtag opens the information of this post, making an introduction form for the reader and informing him in advance that the following information is about the vaccination campaign.

The second hashtag used is #NoTimetoRest accompanied by a running man icon. Through this element, we understand that Rama ironizes and attacks his political opponent Basha. This phrase was used a lot during the speeches and meetings that Rama held with the party and citizens during the campaign. (see image 11)

IMAGE 11: Facebook, Edi Rama, 31 May 2021



The election campaign overall took place in far from normal conditions due to the measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19. As a result, electoral meetings were held with very few participants sitting at a distance from each other. Given that the conditions were such, there was a kind of lack of direct communication with the voter, which should have been more frequent and easy to understand.

During the pandemic, the whole world understood more than ever the importance of the Internet in general but also in creating relationships and direct communication between people. People have become more intense users of online platforms and especially of online media.

Rama's daily content started with a "GOOD MORNING from (name of the city where the electoral meeting was to be held). Usually, this post could be a selfie photo from Rama himself or a photo from the place. (see photo 12)

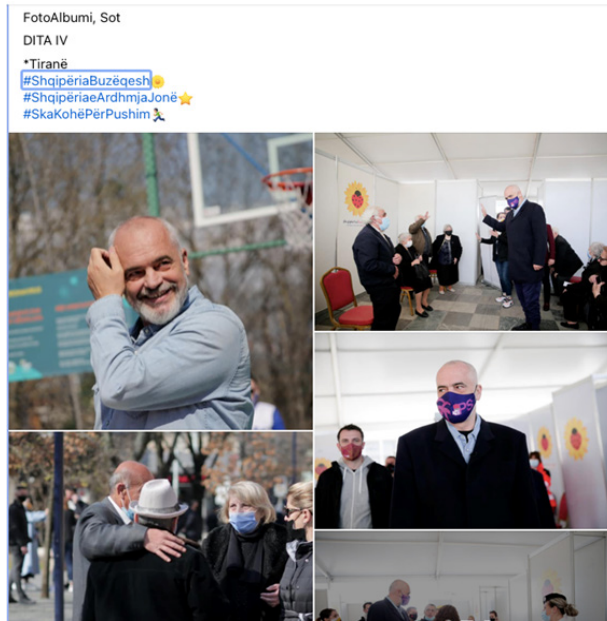
IMAGE 12 : Edi Rama, Facebook 2021



As you can see, the post is accompanied by a video. The inscription is very simple, a good morning with a rose (symbol of the Socialist Party). And then it follows with the two hashtags used during the campaign: #AlbaniaOur Future(associated with the Albanian flag as a symbol of our nation) #PS2021 (also associated with the SP symbol, i.e. the rose.

Through this form of posting he informed the audience that the city to be visited was the one that would be greeted with a post in the morning. (see photo 13)

IMAGE 13: Edi Rama, Facebook, 2021



The cycle of Facebook posts was completed with a PhotoAlbum. The photos of the album were taken during the meetings that Rama had held during the day. (see photo 14)

IMAGE 14: Edi Rama, Facebook, 2021



The description of the photos was done in the following way: PhotoAlbum, Today, Day X and then in the description the names of the cities where different activities were carried out were listed. The day continued with photos, videos and live broadcasts from ERTV from the city that SP had chosen to hold the electoral meetings. In addition to albums from meetings, he also posted albums from other developments. We should point out that he was still the Prime Minister in power, and he showed this when he published vaccination figures from different cities. He accompanied these figures or statistics with photos taken from different cities of the country.

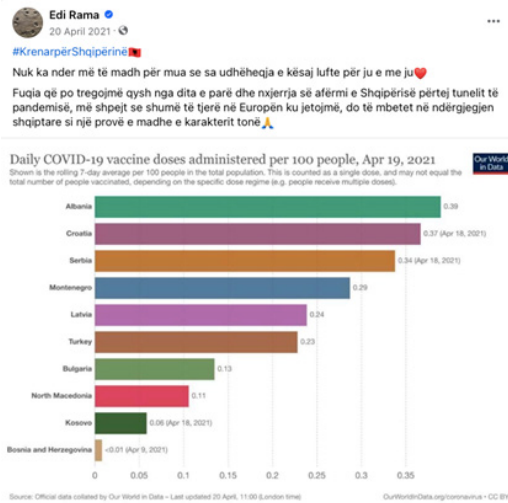
IMAGE 15: Edi Rama, Facebook, 2021



IMAGE 16: Vaccinations, Edi Rama, Facebook, 2021



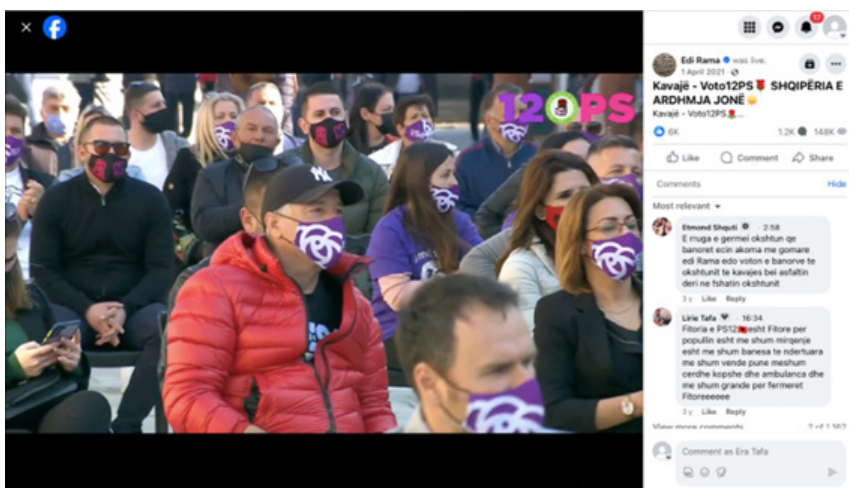
IMAGE 17: Vaccination figures in the Balkans, Facebook, 2021



As shown in photo 15 above, the focus was on the elderly, as it was the elderly among most of the victims and the greatest care during the pandemic should have been towards the elderly.

As it was mentioned above, for every meeting held in each city of Albania, the broadcasting was live from ERTV Chanel. The special feature of this LIVE broadcast was the description that always accompanied it. Mainly the description was short, it could be “Grand Finale”, the slogan: “Albania, Our Future”, “Good morning”, etc. and the name of the city where the next electoral meeting was held. (see photo 18)

IMAGE 18: Edi Rama, Live on Facebook 2021



In addition to serious and formal posts or emotional and touching posts with fragments from the earthquake and the pandemic, Rama also posted funny pictures, memes or shows where he could have participated during the day. (see image 19)

IMAGE 19: Edi Rama, Facebook, 2021



Attacking the political opponent is an extremely essential point in political communication during an electoral campaign. It is precisely this that took up a specific space in the posts intercepting the electoral campaign. During the 2021 election campaign, a total of 26 posts addressed to the political opponent were posted. Posts on social media with comparative photos of the activities of the Socialist Party and the Democratic Party aim to improve the image of the SP and qualify it as a responsible party, contrasting with their political opponent. This comparison came after the activities that the SP carried out were shown to respect the rules established by the state, anti-COVID, and on the other hand, the activities of the DP were not organized for respecting physical distance or wearing masks. In addition to the comparison, irony and jokes against the political opponents were present. (see photo 20,21,22).

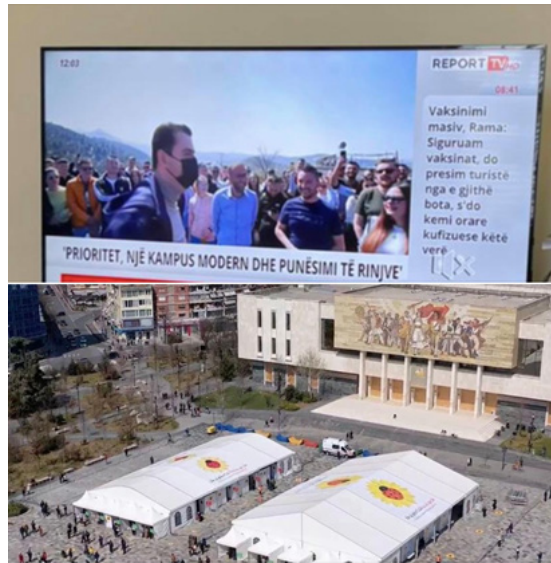
IMAGE 20: Posted by Edi Rama on Facebook, 2021



IMAGE 21: Posted by Edi Rama on Facebook, 2021



IMAGE 22: Posted by Edi Rama on Facebook, 2021



In addition to political and electoral goals, he also posted various content, such as a motivational expression, family photos, etc. This is to remove a little focus from the campaign and to be more accessible to the audience. (see image 23)

IMAGE 23: Posted by Edi Rama on Facebook, 2021



Apart from the posts, the most important part of communication in online media is the comment space. There is real interaction and the real thoughts people may have in the concrete case with Rama. What was noticed was that in Rama's Facebook posts the negative comments were not deleted, but instead most of them received a reply from Rama himself. Normally he did not shy away from the frame of irony and sarcasm (see pictures 24, 25)

FIGURE 24: Edi Rama, Facebook, 2021



IMAGE 25: Edi Rama on Facebook, 2021



Edi Rama on Facebook, after the 2021 elections

After the victory, what was noticed on Edi Rama's Facebook was the continuity of a same line of posts. Rama was re-elected and the first post was about the victory as a recognition and greeting through some exciting lines that Hashim Thaçi had written about Rama's victory. And in the following days, the posts started as normal, about various political developments as prime minister and as chairman of the Socialist Party. The topics were various such as those of political meetings, developments on reconstruction after the earthquake, vaccinations, other infrastructural developments, etc.

Conclusions of the Netnographic Analysis

Netnography is a research method used to study online communities and cultures. It involves analyzing data collected from online data sources, such as online forums, social media, and blogs, to gain insights into the behaviors, attitudes, and interactions of individuals within those communities. In this article, the ethnographic analysis is focused on the posts that Edi Rama published on his Facebook page during the month from March 25 (starting of the electoral campaign) until April 27 when the campaign concluded with a third term victory by the Socialist Party. This analysis focuses more on the posts about Tirana. The purpose of this analysis is to compare the percentage of space that Tirana as a crossroads had in Facebook posts from Rama, with posts from other cities in Albania. Below there is a table from the netnographic analysis conducted as a bachelor thesis in 2022. (Tafa, thesis 2022)

TABLE NO. 1. Netnographic Analysis, Facebook, Edi Rama March 25 - April 27, 2021 (Tafa, 2022)

	Total	Tirana	Prime minister in Tirana	SP Leader in Tirana	Tirana vs Total
Video	283	34	20	14	
Posts with photos	84	23	11	12	
Live broadcasts/ERTV	75	25	12	13	
Posters/Infographics	12	7	5	2	
TOTAL POSTS	454	89	48	41	20%

Analysis of table no. 1.

In table number 1, the posts of the chairman of the Socialist Party Edi Rama from the time period March 25 - April 27 are presented in numbers. This table is divided into four sections: videos, posts accompanied by photos, live broadcasts via ERTV and finally posts accompanied by infographics or posters. While the other division is in three in the way Edi Rama focused on his content on Facebook:

- Tirana was detected - the main focus was Tirana since as the capital of Albania it received a lot of attention in the posts
- Prime Minister in Tirana - this section is dedicated to Rama as during the campaign he was the Prime Minister in power, as such he held many meetings in the cities of Albania but the focus continued to remain in Tirana

- The head of the Socialist Party in the campaign in Tirana - this section refers to the posts that Rama kept as the head of the SP in the meetings or developments he carried out with the citizens for a totally electoral focus and purpose

In total, from the day the campaign started on March 25 to the day it closed, where the Socialist Party and Edi Rama crowned the victory as prime minister and his third term as governor, a total of 454 posts.

Among the 454 posts posted during one month of the campaign, the posts in percentage were:

- 283 videos, where 12% of these posts were only related to the city of Tirana. Not without reason, since Tirana, as the capital of the country, had the highest focus of the speeches given. 34 posts with videos were attributed to Tirana alone. Among these videos, we have 20 posts where Edi Rama appears as the prime minister (in power) in Tirana. Here the videos were mainly inspecting earthquake reconstructions, visiting vaccination centers, reconstruction of schools in the capital, road repair and many others. Among them, 14 as the head of the Socialist Party in the activities developed in Tirana as electoral developments. The videos mainly contained the content of the meetings held during the day, the new investments being made in the Tirana region, visits to vaccination centers in Tirana, visits to small or new businesses, etc.
- 84 posts were accompanied by photos. From where 30% of them were identified for Tirana. A total of 23 posts with photos. Among them, there were a total of 11 posts, where Edi Rama appears as the Prime Minister, where he shows the work that is being done in infrastructure, school constructions, etc., that is, work that belongs to the SP as a government. And 12 posts where Edi Rama appears as the chairman of the Socialist Party. In these posts, Rama appears in electoral meetings with candidates and sympathizers for the district of Tirana).
- 75 LIVE links from ERTV. Of these live broadcasts, fully 33% of these broadcasts were attributed to Tirana. In this percentage, Edi Rama appears in 12 of them as prime minister and in 13 of them he appears as the chairman of the Socialist Party, always for Tirana
- 12 posters or infographic design presentations - these posts were mainly related to the latest developments in the activities of the Socialist Party, but also to the number of vaccinated people. Among these posters, fully 58% of them with 12 infographic posts are specific to Tirana. In 5 of them, Edi Rama appears as the prime minister in Tirana, and only 2 of them are as the president of the SP. This was to stay more in the mind of the audience of

the current prime minister and who may be so in the future. Here we must emphasize that these infographic posts were also road posters or citylights in the cities of Albania and especially in Tirana.

- From the total of 454 different posts in one month on Edi Rama's Facebook for the 2021 electoral campaign, 20% of these posts were attributed to Tirana

Attacking the political opponent is an extremely essential point in political communication during an electoral campaign. It is precisely this attack space that took up a specific space in the posts intercepting the electoral campaign. During the 2021 election campaign, a total of 26 posts addressed to the political opponent were posted. In the content of these posts were comparative photos of the activities carried out by the Socialist Party and on the other hand by the Democratic Party as the main political opponent. This comparison came after the activities that the Socialist Party carried out were shown to respect the rules established by the state, anti-COVID, and on the other hand, the activities of the DP were not organized for respecting physical distance or wearing masks. (Jaupi, Elements of Political Communication used by Edi Rama in the 2021 parliamentary election campaign in Tirana, 2022)

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