

The Use of Social Media in Political Campaigns: The Case of Croatian Local Elections

KISIC Alen, Director at the Center of Competence for Renewable Energy Sources, Varazdin,
(CROATIA)

Email: kisic.alen@gmail.com

DOI: 10.26352/DJ02F5001

Abstract

Social media appears as an important public relations tool which enables political parties and candidates to interact with citizens. Extensive literature review has shown multiple benefits of social media usage such as gaining publicity, spreading messages and mobilization of the voters. Most of the previous studies have been performed in the developed countries and there is lack of evidence for developing countries. Our study thus seeks to fill this gap and investigates the social media usage of political candidates in Croatian context. Aim of the research is to examine Facebook usage by Croatian political candidates during the 2017 local elections. Following research questions are set up: (i) To what extent are Croatian candidates using Facebook to interact with citizens? (ii) Which political candidate was most frequent in using Facebook? (iii) What social media functions did the candidate use? (iv) With whom candidate interacts and how frequently? (v) Which is the reach of the candidate's posts? (vi) Is there significant correlation between candidates' results and social media activity? To address research questions, primary data are collected. Data set consists of posts on the Facebook pages of the candidates for the capital city major and descriptive data analytics and correlation analysis were performed. Results of the research serve as guidelines for the formation of campaigns strategies.

Keywords: social media, campaign strategy, political campaign, election prediction