

REVIEW

by Prof. **Dobrinka Peicheva**, Ph.D.; Dr. Habil, Southwestern University "N. Rilski"

for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in scientific field 3.5.
Social communications and information sciences with a dissertation on the topic:

"Traditional and new audiovisual media services in the political marketing of modern political parties in Greece,"

presented by Athanasios Gkounas,

full-time/part-time/free doctoral student in the *Department of Communication and Audiovisual Production* at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication

with scientific supervisor: Prof. Dr. Teodora Petrova

I. Presentation of Athanasios Gkounas based on the submitted documentation

The Ph.D. student Athanasios Gkounas has submitted all legally required documents, stating that the dissertation work's official defense is legitimate. The Scientific Jury's elected members are also legitimate, as can be seen from the Rector of Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski." The text is dissertating because it concerns debatable issues, evolving, provides opportunities for conceptualization, for combining theory and empiricism, for highlighting trends and future patterns, and which is poorly developed in its entirety not only in principle but also concerning the Greek reality.

II. Assessment of the qualities of the dissertation text

Relevance and significance of the problem developed in the dissertation

The dissertation work is on a permanently actual topic, insofar as related to the emergence of new parties and voter turnover. The problems have existed since the parties appeared. The actualization of this issue follows the development of political communication and its subjects. As far as its trajectory is transformed, it dictated both under society's influence and its ideological orientations and paradigms. Under the influence of transformations in the media, as essential resources for political power.

- In-depth and comprehensive study of theoretical sources

The dissertation work is built on the classical structuring of dissertations with an excellent survey of the specialized literature. It contains an introduction, several chapters, a conclusion. It is positioned on a broad theoretical and methodological basis, which comprehensively presents the dimensions of the political sphere's main ingredients, within which political marketing. A series of theorizations about political elections and election campaigns, including the use of media resources, occupies a significant place. Apart from the audiovisual media in general, a special place is given to the internet-based media as the main communication tools in our time's political communication. Political concretizations of political election campaigns through traditional media and through the new media positioned on the Internet are presented - websites of politicians and political parties, web platforms, popular social networks. Concretizations of political uses by world political leaders - Barack Obama, are presented, along with theorizations for controlling information and specifics of web pages, "MyBO, Facebook and Obama, YouTube and Obama, Obama v. McCain, etc.

Within the theoretical and methodological foundations, I put the third chapter, which theorizes Greece's political picture. An analytical review is made of the Greek Parliament, the current political parties in Greece, and in particular, SY.RIZ.A New Democracy, PP National Association - Golden Dawn, PP Communist Party of Greece, Independent Greeks from the political party (AN.EA) PP - to Potami; PP - Union of Centrists, PP Party for Change, etc. The connection of each party with the media - traditional and new - is theorized.

In the fourth chapter, theoretical and methodological presentation and analysis are the media's use by political parties and political leaders in Greece. Relevant comparisons of the use of parties on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and a comparison between Greek political leaders and their use of websites and social media are made. The use of traditional and new media by political parties and leaders is also theorized.

Theorizing reveals an excellent knowledge of the world and Greek literature on the subject and an understanding of current media use practices by the leading world and Greek parties and leaders. There is a high degree of bibliographic awareness.

The dissertation work also shows exceptional depth and comprehensiveness regarding the empirical research of the current situation in Greece, as the dissertation is based on a comprehensive empirical sociological survey of the subjects of political communication - politicians and voters participating in the election campaign in Greece, as well of media

products - political advertising and political messages in both types of media - traditional (radio, television, press, etc.) and new media sites of political parties and political leaders.

The text proves empirically significant aspects of existing theories regarding the use of traditional and new media in the political propaganda process during election campaigns.

Chapters five and six are an emanation of the research skills of Athanasios Gkounas.

68.2% of responses were received (142 out of 208 envisaged politicians). The sample of voters was referred to respondents from Athens, Thessaloniki, and some other peripheral cities. The criterion for inclusion was participation in the last election process. The final sample of voters turned out to be 457. Correlation and correlation analysis as a statistical method and measuring the strength of the correlation between two or more mass phenomena and regression analyzes as a statistical method for analysis and modeling of dependencies between mass phenomena, presented on strong statistical scales, were performed and on this basic model for politicians and models for voters were created.

The models result from the answers received for the 18 essential research questions, namely *...Is there a statistically significant relationship between: the choice of media use for political statement and their reliability; the success of political advertising, the impact on voting intention, the effect of the slogan on voters, and the effect of media on the political advertising of the political party and the politician; the politician's recognition via media, political communication between party and voter and the adequate use of media by political parties for communication; the use of media for political statement and whether politicians follow the political campaigns of others? Which factors can predict: the use of audiovisual media services for a political statement by the politicians; the impact of audiovisual media services on the intention to vote? Are there any statistically significant differences in respondents' answers regarding their demographic and media profile characteristics; between traditional and new media regarding their impact on political advertising? Is there a statistically significant relationship between: the voters' use of media for political information and media reliability?; the success of political advertising, the impact on voting intention, the effect of the slogan, and the impact media has on voters through the political advertising of the political party and the politician; the politician's recognition via media, political communication between voter and political party, and the adequate use of media by political parties for communication purposes?; the use of audiovisual media services for political information and whether voters follow political campaigns of politicians? Which factors can predict the use of media for*

political information by the voters; the impact of media on the intention to vote according to the electoral body (voters)? Are there any statistically significant differences between: voters about their demographic and media profile characteristics? the use and effectiveness of traditional and those of new media on political marketing and advertising according to the electoral body (voters)?; politicians and voters regarding the use and the impact of media in political marketing and advertising? Are there any media user typology categorizations for politicians and voters regarding the use of media?

A high-level analysis of the received data has been implemented.

Athanasios Gkounas makes perfect operationalization of the selected methods, questions, and possible answers for research.

Athanasios Gkounas reveals a high degree of accuracy in collecting, processing, and analyzing empirical data and the validity of his research results. The contributions are based on credible data and analyzes, and many of the explicit facts confirm already known theories and interpretations of the role of new media in political life.

Assessment of the linguistic and stylistic qualities of the exposition and the degree of deviation from the literary grammatical, spelling, and punctuation norms

Athanasios Gkounas has a high degree of knowledge and use of specific linguistic and conceptual dimensions of empirical sociology and statistical techniques and variables for information processing and detection of correlations. In general - there is the presence of an academic style of expression.

My overall assessment of the dissertation "Political Marketing and Advertising with the Use of Traditional and New Audio-Visual Media Services of Greek Political Parties" by Athanasios Gkounas is highly praised for several reasons:

First, because it presents a dissectable topic related to issues that are poorly developed in their entirety not only in principle but also concerning the Greek reality;

Secondly, because the chosen object of the research allows for the comprehensiveness of application of the selected research tools for compiling a complete picture of the studied phenomena based on the obtained results;

Third, because it is based on relevant theoretical and methodological tools, the Ph.D. student makes a historical-theoretical reminiscence of the problem and connects with its modern developments.

Fourth, because the accumulated positive political and unique marketing experience from the past is linked to the new opportunities of traditional and new media;

Fifth, because it carries out in-depth research work related to the explication of political parties' activities, party leaders, supporters, voters, practices of interactions and effects, changes in relationships and techniques caused by the ever-increasing opportunities in the new media space.

Sixth, because politicians' conceptualization of the voters has been realized based on the used traditional and new audiovisual media and the dissertation's primary goal has been realized.

The specific profiles of the use of traditional and new audiovisual media in terms of political information, political advertising, and communication by politicians and parties through these media are explained. The profiles of politicians are also clarified to determine the type of use of audiovisual media concerning the political information provided.

Gkounas ultimately reveals the political relations between citizens-voters and politicians, which helps it create a conceptual framework for political marketing and political advertising through traditional and new audiovisual media in its full scope.

As a contribution, I see the argumentation for defining social media as particularly important for political marketing, due to the following dimensions derived by the Gkounas: communication between politicians and citizens; as a kind of political advertisement for politicians and parties they represent; as a focus of information for citizens, offering them accurate information; means of finding new citizens/voters; creating opportunities for digital community and cultural connections between citizens/voters and their organization and all this instantly and at a low cost compared to all other audiovisual services.

In general, I highly appreciate the qualities of the dissertation

III. Contributions to the dissertation research

- Nature of the contributions: novelty for science (new theories, hypotheses, methods, etc.); enrichment and critical analysis of existing knowledge; application of scientific achievements in practice, realized effect;

The conceptualization of the use of the media in political marketing and their impact, based on empirical material, is the most important contribution of the dissertation in theorizing political marketing theory.

It enriches existing knowledge and serves for future verifications and applications in practice. It mainly considers the dissertation's opportunities through his research and opportunities to compare the two media types - traditional and new. The conceptualization of political marketing is complemented by the typology created by Gkounas between politicians and voters, based on their answers.

Examining the political profiles, Gkounas reveals the type and predominant use of audiovisual media regarding the handling of political information, statements, communication, and political advertising from the perspective of voters' views.

The parallels and differences between them allow him to explicate profile characteristics, detect the condition, and make recommendations.

Gkounas reveals with particular certainty the effects and role of reliable media sources in political communication and advertising.

By empirically proving and emphasizing the reliability of the information in individual audiovisual media as a significant factor for political orientation and influence, Athanasios Gkounas enriches and critically interprets the existing sociological knowledge in communication practice. He concludes in this plan that voters use the more media to obtain political information, the greater the opportunity to follow a particular politician and his campaign.

The statement resulting from empirical research that there is a kind of division of the media used by different politicians and voters and that this division can guide future targeting of political messages and advertising is also contributing.

The models for forecasting the use of audiovisual media for political information and political advertising created by the dissertation are of a contributory nature.

Evaluation of the author's participation in receiving the contributions to the dissertation and the publications on it The author's participation in the dissertation *work's* contributions is indisputable. Athanasios Gkounas presents independent research consistent with all dimensions of sociological empirical rules and statistical processing.

The publications with which the dissertation is presented to the official defense are entirely author's and have been published in various European countries - England, Romania, Greece.

Evaluation of the possibilities for using the obtained results.

The toolkit of the research can be used for longitudinal studies, and the results can be used for comparability between individual studies to derive trends, patterns, etc.

Gkounas reveals analytical skills and a perfect connection between theory and empiricism.

His language of expression is academic. Relevant literary sources are used in the dissertation.

Assessment of the correspondence of the text of the abstract with the text of the dissertation

The dissertation work and the abstract are in sync. The abstract fully presents what is created in the dissertation work and the conceptualization possibilities of the dissertation.

IV. Notes and recommendations

Despite the significant findings that the dissertation work has made in the present study, there are some limitations to which he has paid attention. This refers to the research sample itself - it indicates a significant predominance of men, making it challenging to compare gender. A similar restriction exists in terms of age and educational indicators - respondents from the age group 18-35 and respondents with higher education predominate. However, the obtained results are a significant guide for political communication and advertising in general and are especially valid, especially for relatively young and educated people. It will be good if, continuing his work on this topic, Gunas manages to realize a relevant quota sample.

This fact does not detract from the high quality of the presented scientific work.

V. Publications and participation in scientific forums

Gunas are included six publications on his dissertation work, most of which have been promoted at international conferences in London, Greece, and Romania. The mentioned 19 titles, outside the dissertation work topic, refer to predominant participation in international conferences within 15 years in countries such as Malaysia, Greece, Great Britain, etc.

VII. In conclusion, I would like to share that all the requirements of the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski," including for approbation and announcement of the results

of the research according to Art. 5, item 5. and the minimum national requirements under Art. 63, para. 1, item 4 and Art. 69, para 3 have been met.

We have a high-value dissertation work with sociological contributions to the conceptualization of political marketing in digital political communication and advertising. I allow myself to appeal to vote 'Yes' to award the educational and scientific degree of Doctor of Athanasios Gkounas.

Date: 12. 03.2021

Reviewer:

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