



ОPINION

by Prof. Dr. Margarita Pesheva, Varna Free University

for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in scientific field 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.5. Public communications and information sciences.

with a dissertation on the topic: "Political marketing and advertising using traditional and new audiovisual media services of Greek political parties" (political advertising and audiovisual services),

presented by Athanasios Gounas, free doctoral student in the Department of Communication and Audiovisual Production at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

with scientific supervisor: Prof. Dr. Teodora Petrova, Head of the Department of Communication and Audiovisual Production at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Grounds for participation of a scientific jury: according to a decision of the Faculty council of Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" from 14.01.2021, Protocol №6.

1. EVALUATION OF THE QUALITIES OF THE DISSERTATION TEXT.

1.1. Relevance and significance of the problem developed in the dissertation.

The problem of interactions between traditional media and new digital media formats is especially relevant in the context of the rapid development of online communication and social networks on a global scale. It is particularly important and relevant with regard to the development of political marketing and advertising in the public life of Greek political parties in the context of elections.

The dissertation examines the political parties in Greece, which in the context of the election campaign increasingly including in their media arsenal the Internet and social networks. Very relevant in Greek political life are the questions of the study of which media are more desirable and useful in a pre-election situation -the traditional or online media? To what extent are political authorities gradually being replaced by new authorities - popular bloggers and influencers, who gathers huge support and followers on social networks?



PhD student Athanasios Gkunas uses integrated methodology in his scientific analysis which includes theoretical and empirical indicators that are taken from different scientific fields. With theoretical and empirical instruments, the dissertation examines in detail the current political situation in Greece during election campaigns. The text shows serious knowledge of democratic traditions, the authoritarian nature of the Junta, the great activity and resistance of student movements and numerous left based movements. The presented dissertation is written vividly and fascinatingly, based on knowledge of contemporary Greek political life and the election platforms of the main political parties, which is an evidence of a serious and in-depth scientific study.

1.2. Depth and complete focus of the study of theoretical sources.

The dissertation presents a bibliography that contains over 230 sources in English and Greek. The doctoral student Athanasios Gounas shows serious theoretical knowledge, which determines the value and quality of the scientific analysis. The main goal of the dissertation is to create a theoretical conceptual framework that examines the influence of traditional and new media in Greece on political marketing, and its impact on voters and politicians.

1.3. Proving with new means of essential aspects of already existing theories, hypotheses, etc.

The dissertation examines the development and change of political marketing in Greece in two scientific contexts. The first scientific context analyzes the impact of new digital technologies in the US election campaign of Barack Obama. The use of social media during the election campaign / Obama's website / his political in social networks such as Facebook, You Tube, etc. is consistently presented. The second scientific context analyzes in great detail the main political parties in Greece - Syriza, New Democracy, Golden Dawn People's Association, Communist Party of Greece, Independent Greeks, Potamia and others. Based on the American and Greek experience, the doctoral student traces the main trends that relate to the huge role of social networks in any election campaign, in the development of its political marketing, no matter who the country is, what the party is and what its election campaign looks like.

PhD student Athanasios Gkunas leads the construction of common online political practices, which are based on radically different political marketing, which in elections depends mainly on the campaign that is managed in the most popular social networks no matter whether it's a presidential election (Obama's campaign) or a parliamentary election (the election campaigns of each one of the Greek parties). Political marketing today is developing predominantly on the Internet and in social networks, and it depends on the ability of politicians and their media consultants and PR experts to use skillfully social networks to reach their youngest voters.

1.4. Operationality of the selected research methods



Athanasios Gkunas uses an integrated / complex methodology, which includes methods and indicators from various sciences - media studies, political science, political marketing, political history, political sociology, online journalism and others. This integrated methodology allows him to consider much more comprehensively the development of political life in Greece, the specifics and peculiarities of political parties, their forms of participation in election campaigns, the rapid penetration of the Internet and social networks in the election campaign - through social networks such as Facebook and YouTube, campaign messages can to be equally well encoded with words and images

. 1.5. Creating new classifications, methods, technologies, etc.

The dissertation research simultaneously examines the development of political marketing and political advertising in the election campaigns of political parties in Greek political life. At the same time, it is based on a comparative analysis with current online political practices in the United States, empirically examined in Barack Obama's presidential campaign. It is no coincidence that the dissertation begins with an analysis and definition of some basic concepts such as: political marketing / election campaign / elections / audiovisual service / internet / new digital technologies. Their clarification allows the doctoral student to argue better his main theoretical theses, which reviles that in a pre-election situation, modern campaigns are increasingly deployed on social networks, whether in the United States or in Greece.

1.6. Correctness of collection, processing and analysis of empirical data.

Athanasios Gkunas has correctly compiled and processed a large database related to the election campaigns in the United States and Greece. His empirical analysis is unfolded in two Fields. First, the PhD student thoroughly reviews and analyzes Barack Obama's Facebook and You Tube campaign, his campaign website, his slogans and campaign messages. Secondly, the doctoral student performs a comprehensive empirical analysis of the political model in modern Greece - the Greek parliament, political parties and the use of the most popular social networks in the election campaigns of all major parties in Greece that play an important role in the modern political life of the country. A comparative empirical analysis of the activities of the main political parties in Greece in the conditions of elections - on Facebook, Twitter and You Tube, which arouses respect with its scientific scale.

1.7. Reliability of the material on which the contributions are built.

The scientific contributions of this doctoral dissertation are based on a very large and reliable theoretical and empirical material. The doctoral student devotes two chapters in research to present the problem in theoretical analysis and research worldwide, he defines the basic concepts and presents the theoretical framework for the participation of online media in political life and the election campaign. At the same time, he examines, analyzes and summarizes a very rich empirical material from contemporary political



marketing and political advertising in Greece, which create the various political parties in the country. The doctoral student is a direct witness to the development of this political marketing and advertising, which gives very high credibility to the empirical facts used, based on "maximum common memory" of political material - and theoretical and empirical knowledge and assessments of the doctoral student, which is an integral part of life in modern Greece.

1.8. Obtaining and proving new facts.

The doctoral dissertation really proves new facts concerning the extensive observations on the leading social networks - Facebook, Twitter and YouTube - their participation in the election campaigns in modern Greece, the creation of new political marketing and the use of new forms of political advertising. This comparative analysis is scientifically based on a wealth of empirical material taken from contemporary US political life - and in particular Barack Obama's election campaign on Facebook and YouTube.

1.9. Obtaining facts confirming already known theories, interpretations, etc.

The empirical facts that the doctoral student uses to present extensively the political life of Greek parties on social networks are based on the theoretical analysis of the development of political marketing on the Internet, and specific observations on American political practice in some popular social networks. Through this comparative analysis, the doctoral student shows the existence of the same trends - in the United States and in Greece in terms of the development of political marketing and political advertising in some particularly popular social networks. Online political practices have common media rules everywhere. And at the same time - some national specifics and features that naturally distinguish them

1.10. Bibliographic awareness.

PhD student Athanasios Gkunas shows respectful bibliographic awareness - he presents a bibliography with over 230 titles, which shows that he knows a number of American authors who have very serious research on Barack Obama's election campaign and building political marketing and political advertising in the Democra party network of the United States during this campaign. As well as a number of national surveys of political life and online media in Greece.

1.11. Compliance with the compositional requirements to the dissertation text.

The dissertation text is very well composed. The exposition is built on a deductive principle - it develops from the general to the particular. The first chapters in the scientific analysis are general theoretical, they deal with basic theoretical concepts and definitions, and the next chapters are empirical and deal specifically with the impact of the most popular social networks on Greek political life presented through the websites and online activities of leading political parties in Greece.

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

The doctoral dissertation has been translated into Bulgarian, its presentation is fully compliant with the language rules and norms in the Bulgarian language.

1.13. Evaluation of the conformity of the text of the abstract with the text of the dissertation.

The abstract presents all the main requisites of a dissertation - object and subject of research, main goals and scientific results, scientific contributions and scientific publications.

2. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION RESEARCH.**2.1. 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.**

What is new in this dissertation research is mainly the comparative analysis between political marketing and political advertising in the election campaigns in the United States (during Barack Obama) and in the Hellenic Republic. This comparative scientific analysis is the first of its kind and is based on both theoretical statements and empirical observations on the most popular social networks, their specifics and features and participation in the election campaign.

2.2. Evaluation of the author's participation in receiving the contributions to the dissertation and the publications on it.

The author's participation of Athanasios Gkunas is the strongest in the theoretical and empirical analysis of the online events in the election campaigns of the main Greek parties. According to the doctoral student, the application that all Greek parties use universally is YouTube, Facebook and Twitter are the social networks that all Greek parties mainly use, they are too important for the development of Greek political life. Flickr and Instagram are most often embedded in the official website of the Greek party, which allows even ordinary photos and archives to become a dynamic tool for political marketing and stronger online communication with citizens. PhD student Athanasios Gkunas analyzes in detail the behavior of Greek political leaders and the coverage of their party events - both in the traditional media and on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube. The doctoral student makes a vertical cut of the major Greek political parties such as: Syriza, New Democracy, Golden Dawn, Communist Party of Greece and others. He carefully examines their political experience - both in the traditional media and on their websites, which allow them to stay in touch with their constituents and to react quickly to political crises and internal party splits.

2.3. Evaluation of the possibilities for use of the obtained results.

The results obtained in this dissertation research can be used by all political parties in Greece, which can



correct their election events, expand and enrich their political participation in social networks. This research is very original, it allows the big parties in Greece to look at the focus of serious and in-depth research, which very clearly shows what are their main advantages and disadvantages.

3. NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

3.1. Motivated proposal for the directions of further work of the doctoral student in order to improve the presented work.

The dissertation is the first large-scale comparative scientific study of political marketing and political advertising in the United States and Greece. The scientific research contains many important theoretical generalizations and valuable empirical research, which will be especially useful as a media comparison of: political methods and means in the conditions of elections / preferred slogans and political messages / leading social networks. That is why I recommend that this scientific study be published, after some editing.

3.2. Motivated notes, accompanied by an assessment of their impact on the quality of the presented scientific (applied) contributions.

The presented scientific and applied contributions in the dissertation will have an impact on numerous and different, by education and interests readers-researchers in the field of media studies, political science and political marketing, current practitioners in the field of political advertising and election campaigns, experts in political research and sociology specialists in political rhetoric, enlightened readers.

4. PUBLICATIONS AND PARTICIPATIONS IN SCIENTIFIC FORUMS

The doctoral student Athanasios Gkunas presented the number of publications (22) that meet the requirements for a doctoral dissertation. The requirements of The Regulations for the conditions and the order for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions in Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for approbation and announcement of the results of the research according to art. 5, item 5 and whether the minimum national requirements under Art. 63, para. 1, item 4 and Art. 69, para. 3.

5. CONCLUSION

Considering the original scientific research of political marketing and political advertising in the election campaigns of Greek political parties, which makes an in-depth scientific analysis of their election campaigns on the Internet and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, while revealing personal image building of their leading politicians in traditional and online media. Considering also the comparative analysis of the political marketing and advertising in the US election



campaign of Barack Obama and its comparison with the political online campaigns of the major parties in Greece, the scientific conclusions and summaries, I strongly recommend the distinguished members of the scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" of Athanasios Gkunas for his dissertation on the topic: "" Political marketing and advertising using traditional and new audiovisual media services of Greek political parties ", scientific field 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.5 Public communications and information sciences.

Sofia, March 8, 2021

Author of the opinion:

Prof. Dr. Margarita Pesheva