



### Scientific Opinion

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for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in scientific field 3.5. Social Communications and Information Sciences.

Dissertation on the topic: “ **Political marketing and advertising in traditional and new audio-visual media services of modern political parties in Greece**“

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The dissertation of Mr **Athanasios Gkounas** meets the requirements for a dissertation for obtaining an educational and scientific degree "Doctor". The dissertation is systematized in seven chapters, introduction, conclusion and bibliography. Attached to the text is a list of publications that are related to the topic of the dissertation. The doctoral student has attached a report on the main scientific contributions of the scientific research. The Summary of the text also meets the general requirements for that type of text.

The structure of the research logically integrated and the chapters represent thematically the parts of the work. The text includes 22 graphics 65 figures and 117 tables that graphically enrich the text but most importantly envisage the findings of the research done by the author. That also can be seen as authors' input to the text. There are more than 230 sources in the list of sources in the text.

This research is focused on the use of audiovisual traditional and new media services in the political scene. It explores the impact which traditional media and new audio-visual services might have the political marketing and advertising in Greece. The research explores the citizen-voter and the politician relationship in decision making process in voting process and how political advertising in new audiovisual media services influences the decision. It separates the use of new audiovisual media services and the use of traditional ones. The first category includes media services of previous generations such as newspapers, radio and television, while the new ones include the internet and social media platforms which younger people use. So the text also envisage the discussion of the Greek parties and their use of audio visual media services based on their official audio visual services supported by their official political websites as a main source of political information. The research



investigates empirically the politician profile of high ranked politicians, parliament and regional to determine the type and use of audiovisual media in terms of political information, statements, communication and advertising. The text examines also empirically the citizen/voter relationship using media and what access and use to social networks they have and what influence the politician and the party might have. It also outlines the profile of political figures in terms of political information, political advertising and communication received from politicians and parties using traditional and new media. The research creates a conceptual framework-tool "that will contribute to a holistic view of political marketing and political advertising through the use of traditional and new audiovisual media" as the author writes and I do agree.

I do agree also that "Citizen/voters and elected politicians (parliament and regional) within Greek parties are the means to understand the issue of audiovisual services and political marketing" as Mr. Gounas has written. The evolution of the use of audio-visual services and of social media as a tool of political marketing and advertising was born in the USA and it is researched as a phenomenon in the text, as well as the research goes over other areas, such as Europe. He makes a comparison of the use in Greece and in USA. This is one of the researches that study these developments they and have affected European countries like Greece, this as the author says have not yet been studied, taking into account their own particular political history. Mr Gkounas has a Diploma in Marketing – Solving Business Problems, University of M.I.T. in Boston, USA, MBA, Roosevelt University, Chicago (USA) an MBA in International Marketing, University of Sunderland (England) and Bachelor of Arts in Economics, University of Sunderland (England) and has practice as Economist-Promotion Manager so I assume it helped him to design this research choose the research questions of this research.

The aim is to research is to provide understanding on political communication and political marketing among members of a political party, a politician and a citizen/voter, under the roof of traditional and new audio visual services in Greece. At the end of the dissertation scientific and scientific-applied contributions contained in the dissertation are outlined. I find them completely relevant. I do believe that this work has a strong particle applied character and the conclusions of the doctoral student could be useful to political teams managing the political marketing and advertising of the Greek political parties. They can be helpful to develop a strategy for political parties in Greece, and as well as not only in Greece.



Proving with new means of essential aspects of already existing theories, hypotheses, etc. I can say that the use of audio visual services in political marketing and advertising as well as the current evolution of social media is a phenomenon is pointed was done with a historic background as Greece as a country that only after “the political changeover<sup>1</sup> that began in 1974, with the fall of the dictatorship (Junta) freely allowed the use of political advertisements, to all political parties ”a country “that has faced a devastating economic crisis since 2008”, “and a major shift in the political dipole that has been the norm for the past 35 years”. Such peculiar political characteristics were the criterion for Greece to be selected for this study with reference to political marketing and advertising through the use of audiovisual services (traditional and new) by the two interrelated players, the citizen/voter and the politician.

The theories used in the text help the study. It is absolutely true what has been cited that “Where there is technology, there is embedded politics (Sussman). In other words, the progress of technology plays a key role in the evolution of political reality (Allison). Audiovisual media of older generations (printed, radio and television) were, and still are, a tool of political information as well as of advertising for politicians and their parties”. The link between politics and the use of social media as a tool for election campaigns is pointed in the text was strengthened in the elections of 2008 in America, by Barack Obama who was then a candidate.

“Political science is based on political philosophy” and Mr Gkounas starts with this. The research starts with philosopher Plato was the founder of political philosophy that the theory oversees the “panspermia” of views on the definition of political science, political marketing has its own "party and room" and the use of its "tools". The historical overview in the text of the definition of political marketing with the aim of presenting not merely a chronological report helps for its clarification. This communication bond between citizen/voter and politician that forms a new political landscape and political culture. Part of the study in many surveys of the scientific community that have been overviewed in the text (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011; Effing, van Hillegersberg, & Huibers, 2011; Loader, Vromen, & Xenos, 2014; Shirky, 2011; Tumasjan, Sprenger, Sandner, & Welpe, 2010; Vitak et al., 2011).

The scientific research is a review of the political scene in Greece and it shows the use of traditional new audiovisual services and describes the 8 parties Greek political parties entering the parliamentary

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<sup>1</sup> The transition from the military dictatorship or Regime of the Colonels to a multi-participatory democracy (Kassimeris, 2005).



elections in Greece on September 20, 2015<sup>2</sup> (SYRIZA, New Democracy, Popular Association - Golden Dawn, Communist Party of Greece, Political Party Independent Greeks (ANEA), To Potami, the River, Union of Centrists, Party for Change, and their political leaders and the audiovisual media they use (traditional and new<sup>3</sup>) as well as social media as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

As up to the methodology of the current study Quantitative research method was used, in order to measure the specific variables through appropriate questions and collect the necessary information to answer the research questions. The quantitative data collection tool was a questionnaire related to the research topic. Ultimately, the study aims at the creation a conceptual tool that will contribute to a (holistic) well rounded picture of political marketing and political advertising through the use of both traditional and new audiovisual media. The research method and research methodology and models and data collection tools are outlined in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6 we can find Data analyses. I can say that a credit for the overall perception of the dissertation is the professional language in which the dissertation is written, and the correctly set research Questions chosen by the doctoral student.

I can point some of his Scientific and applied thesis contributions. I do agree with the ones he has pointed which are the following : creation of a conceptual framework for the use of traditional and new audio visual media in political marketing and their impact on voters and politicians in Greece; outlining in present days of the media/and new audiovisual services and social networks on which political marketing and advertising is based on in Greece; creating a holistic approach point of view to explore the politician as well as the citizen-voter in relation to political advertising and audiovisual media/services, findings based on empirical extensive discussion of the Greek parties and their use of audio visual media services based on their official audio visual services supported by their official political websites as a main source of political information; creation of media user's typology both for politicians and voters which can be used as a tool for further political marketing and advertising research concerning politicians with regard to their political strategy towards voters; Voters' empirical answers of the reliability of audiovisual media services during a campaign. It investigates

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Vouli-ton-Ellinon/To-Politevma/Ekloges/Eklogika-apotelesmata-New/#%CE%99%CE%96>

<sup>3</sup>All the sources for this information, as mentioned in other parts of this study, are the official website of the parties, as the main official source of political party information.



the recent politician profiles to determine the type and use of audiovisual media in terms of political information, statements, communication and advertising.

As Critical remarks and recommendations I can say that each text can be improved and edited. This text as well, but I would recommend the PhD student Gounas to systematize and publish the results of this work, as it can be used in the selection of training strategies in the political campaigns.

My recommendations are connected to a proposal for further work of the doctoral student to presented the scientific findings to scientific and political forums

Publications presented by the PhD student are on the topic of the dissertation. They are related to the to the content of the dissertation. The PhD student has presented to the Jury as author and co- author publications which are closed to topic of his dissertation. Some of them are: Gounas A. – Savvidis P. , “Political Advertising : a longitudinal analysis”, NHIBE, 25-26 August 2011, Chios; Gounas A. – Pavlidou M., “Political Marketing & Advertisement in the Municipality Hellenic Government”, ICCMI 30 June-03 July 2015, Kingston University, London, Gounas Athanasios, “Political Marketing & Media in Hellenic Political Parties: Different Voices – Different Strategies”, 5<sup>th</sup> ICCMI 21-23 June 2017, Thessaloniki, Hellas, Gounas S. Athanasios – Ourania Gouna, “Political Marketing in Audio Visual Services & Social Media : The Beginning “Obama Phenomenon”, 6<sup>th</sup> ICCMI 27-29 June 2018, Athens, Greece, Gounas Athanasios , “Greece Traditional vs contemporary mass media to communicate political messages: Voters perspectives”, 7<sup>th</sup> ICCMI 2019, 10-12 July, Irakleio, Crete and others. He has presented a list of 22 scientific publications.

## Conclusion

The dissertation work presented by **Athanasios Gkounas is under the requirements** and generally accepted obligations for a research work for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences.

We have a study research with conceptual dimensions for mutual influence between politician and citizen voters. As a result of the work we can say that there is a created a conceptual framework-tool that can contribute to a holistic view of political marketing and political advertising in Greece regarding the dynamic and non-dynamic access and use of new audio-visual services and traditional media of political parties and voters which can be used as tool on dividing the audience, either politicians or voters, into subgroups based on the use of media and new media for their political



statements and information. I can also say that the findings of the research can be used by political market experts and political analyzers and politicians in other countries.

That is why I propose to the highly esteemed Scientific Jury to award **Athanasios Gkounas** an educational and scientific degree "**Doctor**" in professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences and I myself am going to vote in favor of that.

**15.03.2021**

Prof. Theodora Petrova PhD