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**Panel 1: *Media and Communication***

**“A Media Anthropology: Greek TV News”**

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## Introduction

The significance of television these days is widely known and accepted. It is also considered common sense to the majority of spectators that TV News is, and has been for quite a long time now, an inseparable part of our lives. Greek society is not an exception of this international phenomenon. Greek TV was born in 1968, during the dictatorship, but it is from 1989, when private TV was born, that each channel, aiming to capture the largest audience, has largely invested in evening News. The evening News<sup>1</sup> became the main competitive field among the different channels. A new era on Greek television was inaugurated: Commercial TV was born. Of course, Greek commercial TV is governed by the same rules of the market that determines these days all mass media in the world. Since a channel like CNN was born, the world of information and the images of information have radically changed.

Our interest on Greek TV and more specific on the TV News are based on our PhD in progress, in the Department of Information and Communication, in Paris III, Sorbonne-Nouvelle, under the direction of Professor François Jost.

One tool for examining this aspect of TV News will be the anthropological thought. The Media Anthropology, or Anthropology of the Media, a new-born of the discipline, finds its way to the academic world. The first attempt of an anthropologist to analyse media was the study Hortense Powdermaker had undertaken concerning Hollywood films in 1950<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, the term of Media Anthropology appears for the first time officially in 1969, during a meeting of the *American Anthropological Association* from a group of anthropologists, whose most important representative is Susan Allen<sup>3</sup>. Anthropology is considered to bring the sixth “W” in the existing five of journalism of information: the “whole”. Let not forget, though, the contribution of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, in the 30’s who were the first to inaugurate the use of camera by anthropologists, just like Franz Boas had done before them for the use of the phonograph. The use of technology concerning the image was until recently accorded to Visual Anthropology as a means of work. The first Media Studies considered media as a strong totalitarian medium that could put in danger people’s free conscience. This was H. Powdermaker’s idea, but it was also believed by

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<sup>1</sup> Concerning the four channels that will interest us on this paper, the evening News start on NET channel at 21.00, on MEGA at 20.00, on ALPHA at 20.00 equally and on ALTER at 18.45.

<sup>2</sup> Hortense Powdermaker, (1900-70), *Hollywood the Dream Factory: an Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers*, 1950, Arno Press.

<sup>3</sup> See more details in : Mihai Coman, *Pour une Anthropologie des Médias*, PUG, 2003, page 6.

the theorists of the Frankfurt School, mostly Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. A different approach in media was attempted by the British cultural studies, with Stuart Hall, John Fiske, Ien Ang in the 70's: for the first time, attention was not attributed only to media production but also to media reception. "Rather than consumers, audiences were accorded recognition as active producers of meaning."<sup>4</sup> Marshall McLuhan takes one more step to accord importance on the power of the medium itself<sup>5</sup>. Anthropology was encouraged to open its horizons towards media through the work of Palo Alto, Edward Hall, Dell Hymes, Erwing Goffman, Victor Turner, Richard Schechner. More recently, the work of Elihu Katz and Daniel Dayan was of great importance, introducing to the study of media the "Media Events"<sup>6</sup>. The Media Anthropology is now days represented in the States by a team of Anthropologists that have very recently (2002) edited two books using for the first time the term of the discipline on their titles: "The Anthropology of Media" and "Media Worlds, Anthropology on new terrain"<sup>7</sup>. For the European continent, the only edition entitled in French "Pour une Anthropologie des Médias" appeared in 2003 by the Roumanian anthropologist Mihai Coman<sup>8</sup>. In his work, he insists on the relation of myth and rite<sup>9</sup> with media, and examines the mythology and the symbolic role of media today, criticising the American approach, above mentioned, to be restricting Media Anthropology to the study of "us" and "others" and to an ethnographic fieldwork of reception<sup>10</sup>.

Our thesis on this paper, even though brief and fragmentary, is registered on the field of this recent discipline that brings together Anthropology and Media. Our approach will treat the depiction of the community's mentality<sup>11</sup>, Greece in our case, in its proper media. We believe that Greek television is structured according to Greek mentality's particularity<sup>12</sup>. We

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<sup>4</sup> In: Askew Kelly, Wilk Richard, *The Anthropology of Media*, London, 2002, Blakwell, page 5.

<sup>5</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 1964, Mentor Book, and  
*The Medium is the Message*, 1967, Bantam books.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Dayan, Katz Elihu, *Media Events*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1992.

<sup>7</sup> Faye Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, Brian Larking, *Media Worlds, Anthropology on new terrain*, University of California Press, 2002. For the: *The Anthropology of Media*, see: note 4, see also a PhD dissertation entitled: *Mass Media Anthropology*, by Francisco Ossorio, 2001, Department of Anthropology at University of Chile.

<sup>8</sup> See note 3 for the Mihai Coman's book. We also mention the recent work of Stéphane Breton, anthropologist and visual anthropologist: *Télévision*, Ed. Grasset, 2005. It's a series of articles first published in the magazine *Esprit* in 2003.

<sup>9</sup> For an approach to rites and media, and media rites, see also: Kondylidou Areti, *La télévision dans les Rituels Funèbres Grecs*, (to be published), participation on the conference: *Malemort, Deuil et revenants dans les Balkans et dans le reste de l'Europe*, XVIIIème Atelier du Réseau Fer-Eurethno, du Conseil de l'Europe, 10-12 Septembre 2004, University of Cyril and Methode, Veliko Tirnovo, Bulgaria.

<sup>10</sup> See, the article at the magazine: *L'Homme, Revue Française d'Anthropologie*, n° 167-168, 2003, p. 350-352: Kelly Askew, Richard Wilk eds, *The Anthropology of Media: A Reader*, By Mihai Coman.

<sup>11</sup> For the role of community in Modern Greece, see the work of Michael Herzfeld.

<sup>12</sup> Another approach of an "Anthropology of a report" (Anthropologie d'un reportage) through the study of body language in TV images and its relation to Greek mores: Kondylidou Areti, *Images des corps en douleur: le cas*

will have the opportunity to abort only one aspect: the importance of individuality and the disbelief towards anonymity that characterises Greeks and their television.

For the purpose of our PhD, we have recorded one week's evening News on four different channels (end of November to beginning of December 2004<sup>13</sup>), we have analysed the way all four channels structure their News and the various (and often similar) techniques used to gain market share ("eyeballs"). This comparative method aims to examine how each channel, one public (NET) and three private ones (MEGA, ALPHA, ALTER) present the same topics: their priorities, their exclusivities, their similarities and differences. However, our specific interest is focused mainly on social issues and the way they reflect Modern Greek mentality. On this paper we will not be interested on the agenda setting of News and its priorities, we will not examine the content of News and its significance for the particular case of Greece, but we will take a look on the role of non-anonymous personality in Greek TV News.

## **Greek Television: an "eponymous" TV**

The English language, like all languages derived from Latin, contains many words of Greek origin, but often the meaning does not coincide with the meaning of the Greek word today: a case in point is the word "eponymous", which in English means<sup>14</sup> "being the character after whom the stated book, play, etc. is named: *Hamlet is the eponymous hero of Shakespeare's play Hamlet.*" Eponymous in Greek means the opposite of anonymous therefore we choose to use it in that sense for the purpose of this paper.

What do we mean by "eponymous television"? Why would Greek TV be any different from others? And what is the exact meaning of the opposite of anonymity in terms of television?

We will study the phenomenon in three different media functions on Greek TV News.

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*d'un reportage à la télévision grecque*, Journal for Studies in Ethnology and Anthropology 2003, p. 323-333, Ed. Aius, Craiova, Roumania.

<sup>13</sup> In fact, we have recordings that start on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2004 and finish on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2004, but not in all four channels. Those recordings wouldn't be possible without the help of friends in Greece therefore some lacks in the corpus are quite understandable.

<sup>14</sup> According to: Longman, Dictionary of Contemporary English, Longman Group UK Limited 1987 (Second Edition).

## 1. *Deus Ex Machina*

By watching the evening News recorded for our research, we have realised that on all four channels there is an obvious tendency to criticize the *res publica*, the bureaucracy, the function of public service (concerning taxes, health care, public transport...) All the mistakes or mistreatments of the law are exposed in a way that dramatically victimizes citizens. But what is peculiar is the resolution of the problem: in a miraculous way, as soon as a certain case is broadcasted on the evening News, just like a “*Deus ex machina*” a minister appears “live” to solve it. The journalist, cast in the role of lawyer, rehearses the charges against the responsible authority, whose representative has already been contacted, has agreed to appear in public and to take charge of the case. This method is quite effective since Greeks lately call upon journalists to challenge governmental rigidity in the flexible and effective TV way<sup>15</sup>. As a result, the reliability of the state has been undermined, the government, as an organised ensemble does not inspire confidence; on the contrary, trust is channeled to “men of power”, to individuals instead of action groups. The governmental team is put out of order, the functional mechanisms of authorities and laws are cancelled and journalists, hand-in-hand with politicians, non-anonymous, therefore “eponymous” people take power in their own hands. The power of “eponymity”, if we can be allowed to invent the term!

A case of that kind was the one that MEGA channel screened on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2004: a young disabled boy whose financial aid from the government had stopped. The story was also treated by the morning show of the channel, by the journalist N. Kakaounakis. As a result, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2004, that is 24hours later, during the evening News of MEGA channel, we learn that the boy’s problem has been taken care of and resolved. On the next day, another case has been miraculously resolved by MEGA channel: N. Kakaounakis in cooperation with the minister of Interior, N. Panagiwtopoulos (ex-journalist), manage to find a solution for a family of 8 children who owes an important amount of money to the public service.

Greek people do not trust the anonymity of state procedures therefore they prefer to have someone they know take over their case, someone who has already been recommended by someone else...and so on. This is no news to Greek society; on the contrary it is quite

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<sup>15</sup> See the case of a disabled person that called MEGA channel, in order to be filmed having difficulties to circulate on the streets of Athens, MEGA channel, 4/12/04, it was the report for “MEGA THEMA (SUBJETC)” topic of the day. For this topic, which is quite new, small written announces are aired during the evening News asking people to call a number so that MEGA channel’s journalists’ will investigate and solve their problems.

characteristic of small societies, where the sense of community is still strong<sup>16</sup>. There is a saying in Greek that claims that “any stone you raise, there’s an acquaintance below it”, in order to show the small size of the country and the strong “eponymous” relationship between people. It is quite obvious that TV News is based on the same pattern or at least functions akin to this. Greek people, even though they accuse Greek governments, have a personalised point of view of politicians as individuals, especially if they take measures on a case that concerns them<sup>17</sup>.

## 2. Journalists-Judges

We couldn’t help but realise that this tendency of personifying the News is also depicted on the journalists’ attitude. Anchors often conclude information by their own opinion on the subject. Sometimes their comments concern ethics or morality, or they make proposals as to solutions or even make judgements distinguishing right from wrong<sup>18</sup>. The anchor, whose personality is tied closely to the presentation of each channel’s evening News, is therefore not only presenting but interpreting the news and more than that he/she is making judgements<sup>19</sup>. But what are the parameters behind these judgements? The journalist always takes the side of what is supposed to be the viewers’ public opinion. He/she speaks the viewers’ language, in contrast to the politicians’ formal language and owes the TV audience an “easily digestible” version of things. That way the distance between people from both sides of the screen, viewers and journalists is limited and the audience is easily identified on the anchor’s discourse.

The public appreciates the journalist’s personal indication, since he will consider the fact that “Hatzinikolaou said that” or “it was aired on Evangelatos’ News”. N. Hatzinikolaou,

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<sup>16</sup> The feeling of belonging in Greek people is largely associated with the region of origin, the “particular country”, (ιδιαιτερη πατρίδα) as Greeks call the town or village of their origin. The strong feeling of the local belonging has always been characteristic of the Greek identity and created powerful local communities. Often the feeling of local belonging exceeds the feeling of national identity. Therefore, relationships in the interior of a small community are always “eponymous”, reinforced sometimes by family bonds.

<sup>17</sup> See, Michael Herzfeld describing all Mediterranean rural people’s “amoral familism”: “to put personal and family interests over general moral considerations” in: *Anthropology through the Looking-Glass, critical Ethnography in the margins of Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 35.

<sup>18</sup> It is what François Jost calls “the evaluation of the event by the anchor”, see: *Introduction à l’analyse de la télévision*, Ed. Ellipses, 1999, p. 82, and his/her capacity to “communicate the suitable feeling for an information”, p.83: 3a, “Identification and Intimacy”.

<sup>19</sup> On that occasion, we mention a new TV show on ALPHA channel called « Differences », in the sense of disagreements. It is broadcasted from Monday to Friday at 18.45 and presented by Eliza Vozemberg. She is a lawyer, now playing the journalist as well as the judge to virtual processes that aim to resolve citizens’ problems. We mention the similar shows on the French channel TF1 by Julien Courbet, “Doubtless” and “The 7 capital sins”, who denounces and resolves with the help of lawyers the problems of citizens that prefer TV from courtrooms.

ALPHA channel's anchor, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2004, during a discussion on the air with his colleagues who appear on "windows"<sup>20</sup>, is commenting on the situation of politics at the time by the following: "Why do I believe that this situation arranges G. Papandreou?" On the same day, N. Evangelatos, the anchor of ALTER, commented on T. Erdogan's winning award for being the European of the year: "With everything that T. Erdogan is up to, calling him the European of the year might be doubtful!" On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2004, on MEGA channel, the anchor Mara Zaharea, makes her own comments concerning two cases where citizens denounced the malfunction of the emergency numbers of hospitals: "Yesterday Ladies and Gentlemen, in Katerini someone lost his mother because none was answering the hospital's number, today in Athens there was none to answer the emergency number of EKAV and a 5 year old boy was lost. It is certain that the Ministry of Health has to see what's really going on with this matter." On the next day, she gives us her point of view concerning the screening of the film about Alexander the Great, that provoked controversies at the time: "By the way, the fact that this film is discussed so much, one thing is certain: the profit is on the producers!"

We are no longer at the stage of "I saw it on TV" therefore it's true<sup>21</sup>! TV is quite credible of itself, but Greek TV needs "eponimity"! The criterion of plausibility and transparency is not as much the medium, that Greeks often accuse and criticize just like they do for their government, but the personality of the individual. To paraphrase M. McLuhan's idea who believed that "the medium is the message" we believe that in this case the "individual is the message"<sup>22</sup>. It goes without saying that for the image of a "TV persona", a term familiar to Greek audiences lately, can evolve on both ways: the same journalist might be synonymous to seriousness for some and to populism for others.

### 3. "Windows"

Last but not least, another way for "eponimity" to prove its importance on TV News, is the existence of the famous "windows" that appear on the screen in order to allow someone's intervention who is not on the same studio at that time. Far from being a Greek media invention, it is widely used, often abused, by all Greek channels during the News. It is used for interviewing either politicians, or specialists on the topic concerned, or even for the

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<sup>20</sup> We will refer later on this paper on the role of "windows" in Greek TV News.

<sup>21</sup> See, in Greek, the book of Maro Douka, *Karre Fix*, 1976, where an old woman, Marianthi, is amazed by the miracle of TV, and accuses her daughter of consuming a bad coffee, since it does not pass on TV: "Απόδειξη, δεν τον δείχνει η τηλεόραση, ποιός τρελός θα έπινε αυτό..."

<sup>22</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1964, chapter 1.

journalists of the same channel that are called upon to give their personal vision of current events. Everyone looks at his camera and all of them face the viewer. The windows vary from one or two, to as many as six at a time. Is it the joy of being in crowd that McLuhan describes? Is it about the significance of numbers<sup>23</sup>? Sometimes, the number of speakers called to testify exceeds the number of windows appearing on the screen therefore speakers are presented alternatively.

We wonder though, especially in cases where journalists-colleagues working on the same channel appear to discuss “on the air”, what can possibly be the reason for this apparently pluralistic dialogue. The division of duties and the distribution of roles for the preparation of the evening news are only natural. But isn’t the anchor’s role to be the representative of the channel’s News? His/her colleagues are presented to be the specialists on certain issues, but doesn’t the anchor know exactly what his colleagues-journalists are supposed to say<sup>24</sup>? Isn’t it all well prepared in advance? Therefore, what need does the presence of other journalists meet? First of all, it creates the feeling of being informed by one specialist for each topic. At the same time journalists and viewers are accomplices to an apparent democratic procedure of plurality where freedom of speech and opinion are respected and even demanded. The presence of this “crowded” screen contributes to a feeling of diversity of opinions, which is absolutely erroneous.

Let’s see the use of “windows” in all four channels on the same day, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2004. ALPHA channel is the one that uses the most this technique: N.Hatzinikolaou discussed with his colleagues through “windows” 11 times during the evening News. We should mention the fact that in ALPHA channel every journalist’s name is written at the bottom of the “windows”<sup>25</sup>. MEGA channel is also using this method, less though; on the same day, we saw M. Zaxarea 5 times on “windows”, which did not include only journalists of the channel but also men of politics. Two more times, we saw fragments of Kakaounakis’s morning show, on “windows”, and two more times we saw another method

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<sup>23</sup> See note 3, the chapter 11 about « Numbers »: “In theatre, ball, stadium or in church, the individual is happy by the presence of others. The pleasure of being in crowd is a feeling of joy that results from the multiplication of numbers, a fact that used to seem suspicious for a long time to the most educated members of the occidental society” (page 132, on the French translation).

<sup>24</sup> At that point we can remind the idea of Stéphane Breton who believes that on TV, “we watch the speech” rather than hear it, we watch it because the image on its own doesn’t mean a lot on TV without the speech: in *Esprit*, January 2003, “On parle à la télé”, p.218.

<sup>25</sup> We can consider that a transfer of the written press, where every journalist signs his article. For the transfers of the written press to television, see: Jost, Introduction à l’analyse de la télévision, p. 78: “les titres ressemble a lot at their “cousins” of the written press...” and Jost Fr. La télévision au quotidien: entre réalité et fiction, Ed. De Boeck Université, Bruxelles, Ina, Paris, 2003, p. 73 : « before being a human of images, the journalist claims to be believed on his saying, the images come just to reinforce his/her sayings.”



being used, the “screen into the screen”, where the report is introduced to the studio through a screen that the anchor is watching. Not all journalists’ names are mentioned. NET channel used 5 “windows” on that day without mentioning the journalists’ names either. NET is also using the method “screen into the screen”. ALTER is using “windows” mostly in one part of its evening News: “the voice of the citizen<sup>26</sup>”. On that day, “windows” are used 3 times. Just like MEGA channel, on ALTER, journalists’ names are used only in case of four “windows” or more, where there is a debate on an important subject. ALPHA channel is proved to be the most “eponymous” of all four. Many journalists’ are presented every day and everyone’s name is always not only mentioned but also written. Equally, it is the only channel that reminds the anchor’s name at the beginning of the evening News.

T.V. audiences often comment upon the choice of people being regularly called by the same channel to give their opinion. Each channel has its own group of “eponymous” people always available to appear on screen. Isn’t this attitude responding to this same need for “eponimity”? As much for the journalists as for the viewers. Journalists want to become “eponymous” therefore they have to stand for an opinion. Spectators expect this of them, since they are “eponymous”, they should always stand up for that same opinion. The public knows in advance the speaker’s opinion and his discourse. “Let’s see what Kakaounakis has to say”. T.V. audiences often do not care so much for what someone has to say but are interested in seeing who will be called upon to express his/her point of view. For viewers “eponymous” people carry their opinions along with their image and the public doesn’t like surprises.

## **Epilogue**

Greek TV News is therefore “eponymous” News<sup>27</sup>! The fact that even News is passed through a personified filter is relevant to the usual familiarisation of Greeks to society’s institutions. Jill Dubish refers to it on her study of Greek behaviour inside churches<sup>28</sup>. She

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<sup>26</sup> ALTER is separating the evening News in three parts: the “First subject” that starts at 18.45, at 19.00 the “Main News” to be followed by “The voice of the citizen” till 21.00 o’ clock.

<sup>27</sup> We would like to mention that in Greek the word “eponymous” is also related to “eponymo” which is the family name. Therefore, we consider that Greek TV News have first name and last name. This expression is familiar to Greeks by an advertisement about the chocolate “Lila Pause”, at the end of which the famous Harry Klynn, Greek comedian used to say: “σοκολάτα με ονοματεπώνυμο!” We also remind that the same comedian was one of the first to criticise Greek TV on 1978, on his satiric program “Χάρυ Κλυνν...για δέσιμο” with his song « Τελεβιζιόν ».

<sup>28</sup> Jill Dubish, *In a different place: pilgrimage, gender and politics at a Greek island shrine*, Princeton University Press, 1995, (see, page 96-97 in the Greek translation).

believes that Greek religious feeling is very strongly tied to images, and that Greeks are very much interested in public images, in the feeling of community and even inside a church they feel “completely at home” since they consider church as “familiar”. We tend to believe that Greek “eponymous” television is as familiar a place for Greeks as the church in their neighbourhood or their preferred coffee house.

The importance of anchor’s personality becomes evident by the fact that spectators follow their favourite journalists whenever they change channel. Just like the carrier of footballers, journalists often change “teams”. In contrast to football fans, TV viewers don’t believe in the “team-channel” but on the “footballer-journalist”. The Greek audience didn’t really watch the news of MEGA channel for so many years they watched the News of Hatzinikolaou. That’s why they continue to watch *his* News on ALPHA channel, even though there certainly is a difference in the agenda setting of news he used to present in the past. Evangelatos’ fans may have associated him with ALTER but surely they will “follow” him to his new TV shelter<sup>29</sup>.

The personalised relationship that Greek spectators have with the TV News’ anchors, is marvellously depicted on a very interesting short-film documentary by Eva Stefani called “The Box<sup>30</sup>”. The film shows an old lady and her everyday relationship with the anchor Hatzinikolaou. The old woman impatient for evening News to start everyday, is having conversation with “her Nikos”; she is touching the screen, talking to him during the News, asking him questions. She has a personal relation with the journalist.

Greek people feel the need of belonging to a “team”, to a community and this is no different for the case of their TV. Greek TV resembles Greek people. Greeks used to spend a lot of time discussing loudly about politics as a hobby, in the coffee house of their neighbourhood; the “kafeneion” is largely replaced, especially for older people, by the “kafeneion” of “windows” on their screen. The use of a technological medium, common to the whole world, is characterised by the specificity of his user. In times of globalisation, we realise that the apparent uniformity is superficial. The particular characteristics of communities persist to find their way to be expressed through new mediums, even through television.

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<sup>29</sup> This journalist’s wife who is also a very famous TV persona, informs spectators through her show, that deals with famous Greek personalities’ private lives, if her husband has decided yet or not in which channel he will continue! Are the spectators asking the question, or is the journalists’ attitude that creates the suspense?

<sup>30</sup> The film received the price of the best short film on The Festival « Cinéma du Réel 2005 » that takes place every year in Paris, on the Pompidou Centre: “The box” (To Kovti), 11’, Greece, 2004, prod. Eva Stefani.

This is what obliges Anthropologists today to renew their tools of study and their fields of research, to take advantage of the interdisciplinary “*air du temps*”; to take a look at television as a not sufficient but important source of information. A simple confirmation of the conclusions on the field through television is not our intention. Through Media Anthropology we intend to observe the interaction between Greek society and Greek media.

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# **Public Political Communication and Media. The case of contemporary Greece.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Modern politics are increasingly shaped by the dynamics of public communication. As a consequence, the success of governments that historically are interconnected to the State in general, is to a large extent dependent on their ability to communicate effectively to the broader public. In significant are the EU Publicity and Promotion Community Directives, which oblige the national governments to increase their communication with the Public/ the citizens.

The Media are now playing an active part in the political field. They compose a societal institution for the political management of the public sphere, and the media-centric logic emerges. Governments, in order to comply with the forenamed commitments and these newly coming trends, employ new communication policies and strategies. Furthermore, they set off modern public information tools such as "infoganda" (information + propaganda).

This paper builds upon my ongoing PhD thesis, the basis of which is the academic oriented research of Communication Science, prominent dimension of which are Public and Political Communication. Its main objective is to be as a reference point for the recording and the analysis of the Public Political Communication in Greece. The aim and aspiration of the thesis is to examine the existence of this complex framework in Greece and its extent by registering today's society depiction regarding the structure of power and the power of the institutions in Greece. The mapping of today's complex of influence among and within the political actors/ power vehicles (the government/ state and the Media) and the society/ public in Greece, will reveal how governments/ the state communicate and manage politically the public sphere, but further also, the "sexual" side of the Public Political Communication.

Specifically, the thesis addresses the following research questions;

- 1) How Public Communication is structured?
- 2) Which is the role and the contribution of the Media, in reinforcing the above-mentioned hypothesis and in the effectiveness of Public Communication?
- 3) Which are the new public opinion communication and information tools that support the Public communication and information strategies campaigns (communication of the State)?
- 4) Is the phenomenon of "infoganda" detected in Greece? If yes, in which form?
- 5) Which are the implications for the future of democracy and the evolvement of a Civil Society in Greece?

**Keywords:** Political Communication, Public Communication, Public Political Communication, Politics, Government, Media, Infoganda

## **Introduction**

Modern politics are increasingly shaped by the dynamics of public and political communication. Political communication is the role of communication in the political process, as Chaffee (1975) suggests simply and perhaps in the best way. (Lee Kaid, 2004) Government is a legitimate player in political process, and communication to the public is a legitimate element of this process. Public information, dispensed by government and other social groups, has become an increasingly vital aspect of politics. What is the role though, played by communication in the conduct of government and the making of public policy? In moral suasion, government communication is the governance tool itself. Appropriate public communication is necessary for them to become effective. (Engel, 2005) Most other governance tools do not automatically reach their addressees. As a consequence, the success of governments that historically are interconnected to the State in general is to a large extent dependent on their ability to communicate effectively to the broader public. Moreover, should government be allowed to spend public money on communication and public relations? The negative answer is easily prompted, if the question is framed that way. Yet government communication serves more purposes. These purposes should be analyzed in terms of politics, society and culture.

What is the role played by the media and principally the news media, in the above process? How do they interact with government and the public? Are citizens bombarded by crafted presentations? And, should the media be fully disentangled? Seemingly almost all communication scholars agree that the media are playing a growing role in modern politics. Contemporary news media function as a vital, but unofficial, intermediary branch of government. (Cook, 1998) However, the nature of that role is changing in uncertain ways that lead to speculations regarding their role in and effect on the transformation of the democratic process in the western contemporary societies.

Interweaving all the above-mentioned, the notion of the public political communication emerges as well as its potential to capture public opinion and interact with it in the socio-political context.

The challenge in this paper, which builds upon my ongoing PhD thesis, is to 'unmuffle' itself from the potential distortion of elections that tends to outweigh against the governance effect. (Engel, 2005) This paper attempts to achieve that, by interpreting governmental communication and public relations as a bundled product, and by examining it in non-electoral settings that have heretofore received only limited analysis and empirical research. Thus, it models the people as the principal, and the political parties running government as the agent, whereas the media lie as a linkage in between.

By observing newborn phenomena, the paper attempts to depict the governance effect and further, to establish whether the distortion effect of electoral periods is observable also within the governance effect and charge to the latter the characterization of the culprits for transformation as well. This set-up of the model invites a mapping of today's complex cluster of flow of information and influence among and within the political actors and power vehicles such as government/ state and the media, and the public, in terms of design.

## **Political Communication**

Political communication is perhaps the most "encephalic combination of art and science". Countries all over the world are becoming the land of the "politics overbuying" (Keriakakis, 2000). The offspring of the latter is the notion of political communication to be always current.

Why did political communication finally become an academic 'Eden' for many scholars?

The reason is simply that when the urge for mutual collaboration is stronger than disciplinary prejudices, scholars forge a multidisciplinary effort. This effort is a driving force in developing an individual field of study (Lee Kaid, 2004)

The study of political communication is a branch of contemporary communication studies that began at the turn of this century. Although this notion is not an invention of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its origins can be traced back many centuries e.g. Aristotle's and Plato's works in ancient Greece, as a cross-disciplinary field of study it began to emerge in the 1950s. Traces of the evolution of political communication and a greatest amount of scholarship can be found in the all the areas of the world, America; Europe; Britain and Germany, and Asia; China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Japan (Lee Kaid, 2004) However, political, social, cultural and media system differences should be acknowledged (Swanson & Mancini, 1996)

Political communication has emerged as a focal point to scholars in political science, communications, and allied social sciences. The label political communication first appeared to describe an intervening process by which political institutions and citizens interact with each other and political influences are mobilized and transmitted. (Lee Kaid, 2004) Over the past 30 years, there has been a widespread sense among political communication scholars and researchers, and so, have the mounting evidence presented, that "political communication is undergoing rapid, perhaps profound changes in many countries of the world and that the character of these changes might be worrisome" (Swanson, 1999).

That "still emerging, phase is marked by the proliferation of communication, media abundance, ubiquity, reach and celerity". (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999) This third called age is more multifaceted than its two<sup>1</sup> predecessors, since it is more an amalgam of conflicting crosscurrents such as intensified professionalizing imperatives, increased competitive pressures, anti-elitists populism, and it is a process of 'centrifugal diversification' and changes in how people perceive and receive politics, than simply a dominant tendency. (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999)

Historically as a field of inquiry, political communication is intellectually rooted in five research traditions. These five traditions later evolved in to two dominant approaches in political communication research; rhetorical criticism and social-scientific analysis. These two approaches have generated most of the studies in the field. These studies are usually considered mainstream political communication research. In the field of political communication research both of the above dominant analysis / approaches make important contributions, but neither of them establishes hegemony. (Lee Kaid, 2004) Yet, the diversity of research topics and methods are the basic features that reveal the maturity of the field.

A research tradition that made its unique contribution to the emergence of the new area of the communication study (political communication), is the tradition of political propaganda study during the period of post World War I to post World War II. Scholars like Lasswell and Doob, focused on how different governments used propaganda / persuasive messages to influence public opinion. Lasswell's (1927) quantitative analysis (content analysis) of messages generated by the government demonstrated the power of mass political communication in forming public opinion (Lee Kaid, 2004)

Another tradition is the tradition of institution study of the press and government and their relation to public opinion. The political effects of the mass media according to this tradition

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<sup>1</sup> The first age is temporalized in the first two decades after World War II, and the passage to the second age has been made in the 1960s where the nationwide, limited-channel television starts to dominate.



are the result of the media agenda – setting process in which media may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling people what to think about (Lee Kaid, 2004)

In general terms, many of the earliest contemporary communication studies were generated by analyses of propaganda / persuasive messages, mass media effects on voting and public opinion of political and social issues. (Lee Kaid, 2004)

Politics, as an ongoing conversation about social issues, encompass a broad scope of political communication and demonstrate the ubiquity of political communication in contemporary life and in non-electoral periods. Internal and external political communication channels are the nerves of government. Political system can not function without effective networks of such channels capable of transmitting political messages. (Lee Kaid, 2004) Hence, there is much concern about political communication such as an inactive and uninformed public at the societal level, as most political action and power relationships operate at that or other systemic levels; the latter leads to the seeking of a more properly functioning democracy. Moreover, this new DNA of political communication, clearly a product of the second half of the 20th century, with television situated in the centre of today's politics, is the reason for many to support that today's "politics have entered a world, which usurps cultural values, a world that changes its face like a chameleon, which speculates miscellaneous identities" (Kathimerini Newspaper, 2000).

While charting the evolution of political communication's dynamic, scholars are now orientating to concepts such as the "modern publicity process"<sup>2</sup>, the loss of the traditional form and function of the political parties, the competition for control of the media, public and political agenda, the media power in and control of politics, the development of the political marketing and the professionalism in campaigning, the rise of infotainment and the permanent campaigning, the appearance of political professionals in the decision making process within political parties, the audience's reception of politics, and the 'Americanization' and / or 'Modernization' hypothesis. On the whole, all the forenamed are describing current changes of political communication.

In addition to the above, comes the fact that the principles of political communication are undergoing ongoing changes so as to comply with the demands of the times that of globalization, e-democracy, civil society, etc. Consequently, modern public communication and information tools are developed. As a result, in terms of politics, western contemporary democracies are experiencing the transformation of the political party in power, in the long run, to a governing party exclusively. Continually, the governing party ends up privileging itself, directly or indirectly, in order to empower its positing in the national political scene. As any other innovative tendency finds birth in the United States so this phenomenon detected firstly there and is now being observed over the world.

This phenomenon of having political communication practices introduced to the world by the Americans, Americanization, has been stressed by many researchers. Countries such as Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Israel, Russia, Spain, Sweden, many Latin American countries, and others have seen this trend, and newly developing democracies in East and Central Europe are also being affected. This new boundary, which is being transgressed in the democratic societies, has as most striking feature the fact that patterns and common

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<sup>2</sup> This term involves a comparative struggle to influence and control perceptions of key political events and issues through the major mass media, and it has been used in Habermas, J., (1962), "*Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Politischer Funktionswandel der Öffentlichkeit*", Neuwieg and in Ferguson, M., (1991), "*Public communication; The new imperatives*", SAGE Publications, p. 103-111.

implications are taking place simultaneously in different countries, whose contexts are so dissimilar in many other respects. (Swanson, 1999) Many democracies share changes with a great amount of common themes despite great differences in their political cultures, histories, and institutions. Hence, many researchers encapsulate these changes in, and characterize this pattern of innovation as 'Americanization' of the media and the political process. (Butler & Ranney, 1992) For all the modern features, which are apparent in all democracies, the United States has been a pioneer and almost all of the other democracies have followed later. Thus, the term of Americanization suggests itself as an easy characterization, since it facilitates the description of "the social, political and economic make-up of the West", and not a more general fundamental cultural phenomenon. The American experience may have been the prime source of inspiration, but not a perfect 'fit' into the political systems of other nations. (Negrine, 1996)

Actually in this Americanization approach as in the globalization concept, the procedures are more complex. United States communication consultants have been used in Britain, yet there was also a reverse of exchange communication expertise. Proportionately, the same case is with Greece for example; there have been used communications consultants from Europe as well as the Americans and Greek communications consultants have offered their expertise also in other countries such as Bulgaria, Albania, Cyprus (Papathanasopoulos, 2004)

In charting the progression of political communication as a distinctive field, we reach nowadays; an exiting time for research in political communication. The field's attraction is not only because of all its above transformations, but also because of its shift from a one-dimensional reliance of survey research to the current flourishing of methodological diversity. (Iyengar, 2001)

## **Public Communication**

The objective of public communication is to transmit messages targeting the public and enabling it to have an overall view, while at the same time is able to retain its distance from the general strategy and the central messages being transmitted by government so that to achieve its goals and policies. This way allows the public to discover the connection between the politics of the Ministries and other public institutions or organizations and the central politics of government; regardless it impresses it as either positive or negative.

Not any political message can find an application without the public. But, what exactly does the term public stands for?

According to Thompson (1999), the term public can be seen through two prisms during the evolvement of the western democracies. The first aspect, concerning the dichotomy between public and private, is based on the relationship between the field of institutionalized political power, and the economic and other activities that do not fall under direct political control. The public space includes the state and semi-state owned institutions, whereas the private refers more, to the economic and market oriented organizations. Of course, this distinction during the historical evolution of contemporary societies has never been definite or strict. The second aspect sees this dichotomy as it appears in the social and political speech. According to that the term public means open and available to the public; visible and observable from the public and effectuated in front of it. Thus, public has to do with publicity and diaphaneity / transparency.

With the evolution of the media, however, a new intermediary space is being established between those two, regardless the prism through which they are seen and, thus their boundaries are being redefined. New publicity forms and formats make their appearance;

the mediated publicity, with which all get acquainted and further, attempt to tame its evolving nature by finding ways to manage it. (Demertzis, 2002) This process nevertheless, has affected to a great extent the circumstances under which the political power is being exercised. Further, this positing of the news media as a central political force in national governments, as Cook supports, raises also, questions for government officials and citizens. (1998) Reaching today's times, it could be argued that society is in a phase, where all these political rulers and power holders are discovering other new ways and forms to mold public communication in the everyday governing and away from electoral periods.

Public space means the space, the whole spectrum where the polity operates. Consequently, the meaning of the management of this public space refers to the political operation of those power institutions that play a decisive role in the formation of political opinion and will, in the societal and state level. According to recent researches (Mavris, Givalos, Vernardakis, Karapanagiotis & Findanidis, 1998), in Greece for example, the basic categories of institutions are considered to be: businesses, the media and government. In this triangle is being detected today's society depiction regarding the power structure and the power of the institutions. Moreover, still according to the forenamed research, the positioning of government in the power structure is not autonomic, rather is being overmastered by the dominant power of the other two basic power institutions, businesses and the media. Thereupon, the political supervisor of the executive authority (government) does not merely by itself constitute the balancing point of the power nexus nowadays. The political management of the public sphere in contemporary democracies has been devolved to other hands. Could it be that their communication is too?

Communication practices and technologies have come to dominate media – government relations. This systematic professional control of strategic public communication applies to democracies on both sides of the Atlantic. (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999) Media control is widely thought to be essential for governing. Politicians and officials use publicity to make news, to get the attention of other policymakers, to set agendas, and to help persuade others into action. This link between governing and publicity in all political institutions has news media as the facilitator for enabling politicians to accomplish their policy goals. (Cook, 1998) Moreover, more sophisticated news management operations that enable officials to retain control of key political messages, restoring the media – government balance in favor of government, arise. So, there is more to the story of media – government relations and the political content of news media than simply that the media are dependent upon official sources. (Bennett & Livingston, 2003)

### **The media in modern politics**

Political action is apprehensible and tangible through the relationship among political institutions, the public and the media.

The media constitute a societal carrier for managing politically the public sphere. They act politically within the framework of the broader societal system, and today their interposition in the polity's operation with the development and the constant evolvement of the technology, is powerful. A fundamental element of the centrality of the media to today's politics is the near-instantaneous delivery of political events and issues by television and Internet. By any objective standard, the media are critically important to government and politics. Most significant is the extent to which politicians use various methods to communicate with their constituencies, which renders the media to a linkage institution. The media may be key elements, or objectively important to government and politics since

they constitute a vast economic power. This concentration of economic power is likely to be accompanied by political power as well. (Leighley, 2004)

Moreover, the media have a critical role in the communication of the government with the public. Thus, considering they might shape public opinion, they have a share also in the shaping of the political will. The media have several responsibilities within a democratic society. Among others are: a) to inform and educate the public accurately and completely and b) to independently investigate claims made by biased sources, most notably the government.

The last 20 years have witnessed important changes in news content patterns. Pinpointing the changes that have occurred between news and politics are media logic and entertainment formats, meaning the packaging of events for media attention that will appeal to audiences. The format and logic of newsworthy information shape the nature of discourse itself and have consequences for the content of political communication. (Altheide, 2004)

Through out the last years there has been sufficient demonstration that the media is in desperate need of reform. The absence of substance in news content has a great deal to do with the structural and organizational constraints that constantly bear on the news decisions of media, journalists and even politicians maintaining the gatekeeping function. Lance Bennett offers a four-pronged, multi-gated model that drives the modern news cycles; application in different historical and political contexts, the reporter's news judgment values, bureaucratic or organizational news gathering routines, economics, and information and communication (Lee Kaid, 2004)

This leading role of the media in political communication and their anagoge to a linkage between government and the public is largely favored by the absence or the weak presence of a civil society in the countries. And thus, the Americanization process in these countries is more intense. Such paradigms are the South European countries particularly Spain and Greece, in contrast to the North and Central European ones. (Papathanasopoulos, 2004) Nevertheless, the form of the Americanization process in these countries is shaped differently as Papathanasopoulos argues; the bureaucracies of the political parties remain powerful, and there is a lack of communication among the party members and their constituencies or the public in general, which retains that the power of the clientele system has not faded out. Political parties much more their leaderships are closely dependent on the media so as to bring themselves forth to public view. (2004) And hence, they end up adopting the media logic regarding their public communication. Moreover, the traditional carriers (parliament, direct contact with the citizens) of political communication lose their special weight and subserve the entering of Americanization and telecracy in these countries. (Papathanasopoulos, 2004)

### **Public Political Communication**

If all the above interwoven, interrelate, inter-collaborate and interact with each other, the applied field of the study of public political communication is shaped; a field that borrows characteristics from all the above fields of study distinctively, and interlaces them so as to provide a framework for another form of study of political communication. It might be another side of the 'Eden' of political communication unleashing its scientific and academic charm.

In contemporary society public opinion is generally mediated by the mass media, which has come to encompass the Habermasian 'public sphere'. This arena is now characterized

by the conflict between market and democratic principles, by competing interests of politicians and the media. The presentation of information for debate becomes distorted. The opinion of the 'public' is no longer created through deliberation, but is constructed through systems of communication, in conflict with political actors, who seek to retain control of the dissemination of information. (Savigny, 2002)

Government and people communicate via various forms and channels; advertising a new policy or communicating changes in an older one, promoting or propagandizing certain ideas, etc. Specifically, government publicity and public communication can be distinguished in the types of a) electoral, b) advertising meaning the promotion of the services / "products" of the public institutions, c) propagandistic and d) informational.

As a form of political communication, political advertising is both celebrated and reviled. Government is free to advertise. But advertising is costly in that it generates a handicap at the next elections. (Engel, 2005) Political advertising has evolved into the dominant form of communication between government and its constituencies. Furthermore, in a variety of forms and styles, it has also become a staple of communication among government and the public in democracies around the world (Lee Kaid, 2004) Although politicians and statesmen have sought to promote themselves and their ideas throughout the history and evolution of democratic systems of government, political advertising is often considered a relatively modern form of political promotion. Differences in political systems, media systems and cultural constraints have accounted for many differences in the speed and extent to which other democracies have adopted political advertising as a central component of the communication of their politics in both electoral and non-electoral settings. (Swanson & Mancini, 1996)

In the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, government and public institutions increased their use of advertising a public policy tool in non-electoral settings so as to attain political and image enhancement goals. Sponsored by public or private entities and designed to influence public opinion, has occupied a unique place in the political system, because it often blurs the line between commercial and political speech. On the one hand the purpose of the advertising can be seen as offering information and viewpoints on a political issue. On the other hand it is also often the case that such advertising had the ultimate purpose of influencing policy that may have political or economic implications for the promoter. (Lee Kaid, 2004)

The use of strategic communication and political public relations by governments has also increased in the last decades. Governments are changing the face of politics by attempting to directly "sell" their message to the public, rather than having complex policy matters debated in Parliament or disseminated by more traditional media (television, radio, newspapers). The rise of this trend is symptomatic of the decline of the public dialogue. (Rose, 2000)

Campaigns are a communicational technology of planned social change. They are organized and sustained communicational strategies of social engineering. National campaigns are set out as an instrument of social governance. Engineering social change via communication campaigns is a widespread practice across the globe. (Lazar, 2003) Thus, they provide the socio-political framework within which the changing nature of the relationship between politics and communication can be examined.

Although campaigns have been a constant feature of governance, the design and management of the campaigns have not remained static, but have changed over the decades, consonant with shifts within the political field of government; a notable shift in the political field has been the difference in the style of governance practiced by the different political parties in power each time. (Lazar, 2003)

In significant are the European Union Publicity and Promotion Community Directives, which oblige national governments to increase their communication with the public. Further, all countries boast an internet site, and many individual ministries have their own homepages. Strategic communication is contracted sometimes out by private agencies, rather than done by the government itself. These agencies advise government as to how best to package their policies in order to gain approval in the domestic scene, how and when to control access to news and information so that they appear to best advantage in the media, and how to communicate with and through the news media. They teach them what to say about their policies and activities. They help governments to control access to information, potential news makers, and events, and to generate newsworthy or stage media events.

The rise of this trend of government publicity has led government and more in particular the political party in power, on top of its own budget allocations for publicity and promotion to also exploit those budget allocations of the public sector institutions, in order to promote the government work, itself and in extent the specific political party. This in turn has impacts on the communication of the public sector institutions, which makes their communication, depended and directed, without any open space for communication initiatives. Further, such attempts evoke more public criticism about government using public money to publicize and promote ideas and a discussion of the nature of the discourse between government and the public; whether it reflects, under the guise of providing information, an effort to change public opinion, to persuade the public indirectly. Thereby, creating a demand for information, when not identified from the public, brings government fighting off charges of propaganda. Is something else going on here, something of far greater significance?

The aftermath of the above is the abridgement in practice of those types of public communication, the propagandistic, the informational and probably the electoral, in an indivisible one, the "communication of the achievements". Government campaigns may be a form of domestic propaganda, designed and evaluated by a set of communication scholars drawn from various social sciences (Lee Kaid, 2004) Therefore, it seems that public communication can have a multiple effect apart from public action. Thus, the moral of communication emerges as a focal point. So, how effectively governments communicate? Which is the role and the contribution of the media in reinforcing the above and in the effectiveness of public communication? What is the factual media's role in contemporary politics?

The public character of politics is often conflicting to the desire of the politicians to survive in the political scene, and thus at times it gets sacrificed. As a result the public might receive as information in the public sphere, an incomplete and segmental picture of the reality. The actual fact of the encryption is withheld from the public. The manipulation of the public and the withhold of information are practices that derive from the political actors and are being exercised via the media, which at times are supervising in favor of the public interest and at others, they consent. The difference between persuasion, traditionally recognized as a political actor's act, and the manipulation, which encompasses propaganda elements, is difficult to define. Therefore, transformed to a tool, manipulation holds an increasing attention in contemporary democratic politics.

The media and particularly the news media began to discover the importance of the above-mentioned as publicity tools and acknowledged their significance as a major force in the socio-political discourse. Media consultant Tony Schwartz who produced the famous 'daisy girl' spot for Lyndon Johnson in 1964 observed long before others seemed to

understand what it meant that in the past political parties were the means of communication from government to public. The political parties today are ABC, NBC and CBS etc. (Lee Kaid, 2004)

Media agendas can have substantial impact on the priorities and behavior of government, but they also suggest that the influence is sometimes from government to the media, rather vice versa, and that journalists and government officials often cooperate with each other to raise the salience of various issues and problems without first involving public opinion. (Lee Kaid, 2004)

Who sets the media's agenda? There are many different agendas in society and many different agenda setters. Of course, different cultures and norms of politics and journalism lead to different outcomes, different norms and interactions result in quite different political agendas. The active agenda setting role of the media assumed by many public agenda setting studies, is nowadays questioned. The media may be merely passing on agendas set by other influential actors and institutions in society, which makes inaccurate to think of the media as the dominant agenda setters. Government sometimes influences the subsequent media agenda and sometimes follows earlier media and public agendas. Specifically, important news sources influence on the media agenda is the corps of government public information officers and other public relations practitioners. They subsidize the efforts of news organizations to cover the news by providing substantial amounts of information. Prominent personalities and government sources as well as polls and personal conversations and affiliations are more influential news sources. Moreover, journalists are ready to use government or party – initiated material. Catalysts are the formal and informal transactions between journalists and officials. So, considering that news organizations have their substantial reliance on government communication and public relations sources, the key role that information subsidies play in the formation of all media agendas, is being underscored. And, that in turn might leave some open untutored space available to be cultivated, maybe with modern public communication and information tools? Modern tools that influence the media agenda for issues traditionally owned by the political party in power, that invent the advantage of exerting control over the message conveyed to the public, and thus escaping the gatekeeping function of the news media.

Media influence is enhanced or diminished by the political power or weakness of other players in the political arena. The expectations that the media foster democratic governance and guard against abuses of power by government officials are tempered by the realities of power struggles. (Graber, 2001) The news is in a state of continual change, defined and redefined by economics, journalism, technology, politics and public. Today's news system has evolved as an essential tool of government at a time where audiences increasingly mistrust politicians and journalists. Moreover, it evolves under pressures of commercial political profit and political spin. (Bennett, 2003) The political power structure tries to shape the news content directly and indirectly. Government's officials try to manipulate the media to their advantage, to foster their preferred policies and to win favorable publicity. Communication structures in many ways map the social connections and their practices express cultural habits and understandings.

2003 and 2004 seem to confirm the suspicions of a public already dubious about government communication. Although the news media provided a window on the world of politics, the content which the public received was subject to widespread criticism. (Stanyer, 2004)

Characteristically are the following cases:

The Department of Health and Human Services in United States sent out a video news release to extol the virtues of the Administration's new Medicare prescription-drug benefit, complete with fake reporters and a shot of President Bush receiving a standing ovation as he signed the bill.

«A government spokesman, said in defending the fake TV 'news' stories, with pure Orwell-speak : *"Anyone who has questions about this practice needs to do some research on modern public information tools."* ..... It is hard to argue with that. In a world of infomercials, advertorials, and docudramas, what's more imposture? ..... *"They created a whole new category of fake news — infoganda,"* Rob Corrdry said. *"We'll never be able to keep up!"* ..... But Mr. Corrdry's joke is not really a joke. The more real journalism declines, the easier it is for such government infoganda to fill the vacuum. .... Moreover, George W. Bush tries to facilitate this process by shutting out the real news media as much as possible. By the start of 2004, he had held only 11 solo press conferences, as opposed to his father's count of 71 by the same point in his presidency. (Even the criminally secretive Richard Nixon had held 23.) George W. Bush has declared that he rarely reads newspapers and that he prefers to "go over the heads of the filter" — as he calls the news media — and "speak directly to the people." ..... There's no point in bothering with actual news people anyway, when you can make up your own story and make it stick, whatever the filter might have to say about it. No fake news story has become more embedded in our culture than the administration's account of its actions on 9/11. .... After 9/11, similar fake-news techniques helped speed us into "Operation Iraqi Freedom." The run-up to the war was falsified by a barrage of those "modern public information tools" .....» (New York Times, 2004)

« ..... Infoganda missions; the effort of the U.S. government to shape public opinion by going around traditional news outlets with positive stories about its policy initiatives. Media observers worry, however, such efforts further colonize U.S. news organizations, and by extension public opinion, in ways similar to the effect televised coverage sent home by embedded reporters had with its overwhelmingly upbeat but sometimes misleading accounts of the war in Iraq ..... » (Zewe, 2004)

The above are Bush administration's recent attempts to produce propaganda videos, intended for broadcast during actual news programs, for both the Iraq war and the much-criticized Medicare prescription drug plan.

The fusion word of infoganda has been coined by the correspondent Rob Corrdry on Comedy Central's "The Daily Show"<sup>3</sup>, Wednesday 17th of March 2004. After that, the word has gotten mainstream acceptance with its use in an Op – Ed column by Frank Rich of the New York Times. The journalist extended infoganda to the range of ploys the United States Administration has used to spin news coverage, from the manipulation of the Jessica Lynch story, the "Mission Accomplished" photo op aboard the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln, and the editorial direction it offered to Showtime's movie "DC 9/11" to the TV blitz by Condi Rice and others aimed at discrediting Richard Clarke. (Nunberg, 2004)

Since then, several attempts were made in order to capture its meaning. Simply said is the obliteration of the line between news and propaganda.

Another definition is the one that describes it as the act of using public information networks such as newscasts or newspapers in a misleading, devious, or mischievous way,

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<sup>3</sup> It is a satirical 'fake news' program. One of the sharpest political commentary US TV shows: in 2004 has been honored by the Television Critics Association by winning for Outstanding Achievement in News and Information, beating out traditional news shows in the category.



to disperse a hidden propagandistic message that seems plausible to the population. (<http://keywords.oxus.net>, 2005)

One more definition is that infoganda is a term describing a dramatic or literary work that contains both elements of an infomercial and propaganda. The term was sporadically used in both the popular media and in blogs since 2001. Infoganda is a form of propaganda<sup>4</sup> in which the message is delivered in a format that imitates an infomercial<sup>5</sup>; a commercial message that purports itself to be purely informational. The combination of an infomercial and propaganda is an advertisement or show that pretends to be neutral (typically a news source) that has a real agenda of promoting the biased viewpoint of a large organization, typically a religious or government entity. (<http://en.wikipedia.org> , 2005)

Infoganda is a relatively new phenomenon. The word infoganda though, is not a new invention. For first time the press used it during the Gulf War of 1991 in order to name the reports and footage that the Pentagon was furnishing to journalists. Being critical about the word, one would say that it could have been coined in other occasions too and that it seems like a natural name for this sort of thing; it fits the pattern of those spliced – together portmanteau words like infotainment and docudrama, which can be thought as genre benders. (Nunberg, 2004)

Many historical instances of propaganda were very close to being infoganda. Filmed news reports of World War II, the Korean conflict, and other wars can be seen as having carried propaganda in a news format.

Definitely this new word came to describe the government – produced fake news, but why was there need for a new word? Were not things adequately covered by the word propaganda?

Propaganda<sup>6</sup> entered, the everyday vocabulary in the First World War, when the British and Germans began to use the new techniques of mass advertising and public relations to rouse popular support for their cause. As one journalist observed, "before 1914, 'propaganda' belonged only to literate vocabularies and possessed a reputable, dignified meaning ..... two years later the word had come into the vocabulary of peasants and ditch-diggers and had begun to acquire its miasmic aura" (Nunberg, 2004)

Americans got more closely acquainted with this practice in its current sense when President Woodrow Wilson took the country to war against Germany in 1917<sup>7</sup>.

After a long journey throughout time, the use of propaganda declined and met its end in the period of the Vietnam War and the fall of Communism. Since then, the word is just another word without so common reference. (Nunberg, 2004) A characteristic depiction of this tendency is demonstrated in the following chart, which brings forward two explanations.

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<sup>4</sup> Propaganda is a message with an underlying agenda. That agenda can be obvious or not. Typically propaganda is used to refer to dramatic or literary works created by highly biased government or religious entities

<sup>5</sup> An infomercial is a work of commercial speech (typically a television advertisement) whose purpose is to advertise a commercial endeavor. These commercials can often include fake news anchors that pretend to be neutral observers even though they are all participants in a ruse to sell something.

<sup>6</sup> Propaganda was originally coined by the Jesuits in the 17th century as the name of the Vatican committee charged with propagating the faith.

<sup>7</sup> That is when the first Committee on Public Information was set up to do the propaganda work and became known as the Creel Committee after its chairman, the journalist George Creel. Later, when Roosevelt decided to join the war against Germany (in 1941), he set up an Office of Facts and Figures to mobilize public support.

### **Average Annual Frequency of "Propaganda" in *The New York Times* , by decade**



(Source : Nunberg, 2004)

Firstly, offers a rationale basis on why the new sophisticated word made its first mainstream appearance in the New York Times. Secondly and much more substantial, provides a fertile ground according to linguist Nunberg<sup>8</sup>, for explaining why people felt the need to coin the new word infoganda to describe the fake news shows and contrived photo ops that are designed to blend seamlessly into the media background.

Is it the rebirth of propaganda? There may be nothing new about these techniques, but the current administration of the United States has exploited them more deftly than anyone since Roosevelt's day, as Nunberg supports. And, they have found a fertile ground for their plantings in the modern media setting, which already blurs the lines between journalism and advocacy and reality and fiction. (Nunberg, 2004) The latter speeds us into 'operation Iraqi freedom' with the fake news techniques, the secretly release of fake news stories, the fusion of unrelated events to make a point, and the use of terrifying matters of national security to distract public.

Moreover, it is supported that the difference between propaganda and infoganda is that the second is propaganda, only dishonest in addition; a covert propaganda, which makes it even more dangerous. In the case of infoganda, the disseminator's agenda is hidden behind the cover of objective reporting. Whereas propaganda, although it means an overt and usually dishonest attempt to influence opinion via biased and unbalanced reporting, the information used is not necessarily dishonest, since propagandist does not bother to hide his/her agenda. The message presentation aims at serving an agenda. It is honest in that regard, if someone could say. The aim of propaganda is to actively influence people's opinions, rather than to merely communicate the facts about something. The most common use of the term is in political contexts. (<http://casadelogo.typepad.com> , 2005) Despite superficial similarities with propaganda, the term infoganda refers to a very peculiar kind of propaganda. The infomercial format that has developed in the United States since 1990 has a specific format, which includes fabricated names of reporters, scripted interviews with other supposedly neutral people, a maximum use of authority-projecting (costumed) professionals (doctors, lawyers, etc.), the use of statistics in the

<sup>8</sup> GEOFFREY NUNBERG is a linguist at Stanford's Center for the Study of Language and Information. He adapted this article for Perspective from a commentary that aired on NPR's ``Fresh Air.''

same way that news organizations use it, and other similarities to local news. Infoganda is the use of this format to sell propaganda to the viewers. (<http://en.wikipedia.org> , 2005)

In a publicist – driven culture where it's an art form to blur the line between truth and fiction, television is increasingly awash in fake anchors delivering fake news, some of them far more trenchant than real anchors delivering real news. Real journalism and its evil twin merge into a mind-bending mutant that would defy a polygraph's ability to sort out the lies from the truth. Moreover, with trust in politicians and public institutions already at an all time low, attempts of this kind give evidence for further government's mendacity, foster a corrosive cynicism and may destroy any little trust there is left in government communication. (Stanyer, 2004)

### **The case of Greece**

The development of the Greek media is closely interrelated with the political circumstances that characterize the Greek history. Thus, the media were used to a great extent as tools of political propaganda. The latter in correlation with the fact that the media market development has been relatively slow and weak, has lead the media to build up and to sustain a dependency and reliance with the state, political parties and other institutions. This in turn has restrained their professional evolvement and their emertion as autonomic institution. Although the changing forces of today's global media environment such as globalization, commercialization and life style / aesthetics, have contributed to the change of media structure and work, and have affected the communication system structure as well, the media in Greece as in other Mediterranean countries, can not shake off the above-mentioned historical legacy, which still has its influences on their overall structure and actions. (Papathanasopoulos, 2004) Having the press evolved as an institution that mainly reflects the political world rather than the market dynamics, and with a non mass circulation character, due to economic and political factors, the media did not mature until the middle of the twentieth century. Consequently, Papathanasopoulos comes to the conclusion that the only factual media in Southern Europe and therefore in Greece, are the electronic ones; television. The high and still ongoing, rates of average television viewing in the countries that matured in the mid of the twentieth century, comes to confirm the above conclusion. (2004)

Moreover, journalism has an interpretative style. The media tend to have political nuance and their reports emit a political essence, since journalists and media owners have often political commitments or alliances.

In addition, the media are controlled by private interests. The latter leads to the media's exploitation for political and business purposes and, transforms them into tools for political pressure. (Papathanasopoulos, 2004) The Charta of the forth estate in Greece is noticeable that officially has not yet been sketched out and de-structured, albeit the efforts of the National Audiovisual Council and Greek government's regulation regarding the "basic shareholder".

Public television is under the direct control of the government and hence, government policies find a channel to be publicized and promoted and if not consented, then definitely not doubted. There is a great politicization of the televisual field. (Swanson & Mancini, 1996) This intense indeed, politicization of the public televisual field and the loose supervision of the private one, results to the deregulation of the societal role of the media and their services.

To that comes as an addition the fact that journalists themselves believe that the media exercise power instead of controlling it, in a percentage of 53,9%, that they are vulnerable

to “side” interferences during their work (79,7%), and that journalism is dependent on political (69,5%) and economic (82,8%) power, which in turn applies restrictions on the journalistic work (83,8%). (Papathanasopoulos, 2004)

Audience confirms the above by stating that businesses have the first role as a power institution (80,1%), and businesses’ (85,4%) and media owners (78,8%) are the two factors apart from influences from abroad, that shape political decisions. (Mavris, Givalos, Vernardakis, Karapanagiotis & Findanidis, 1999)

Taking as paradigm the following case study regarding the engagement of journalists and power in Greece; their occupation in public positions and their multi-positing, an essence is being emitted. An essence of what, is the examining subject of my PhD thesis and research.

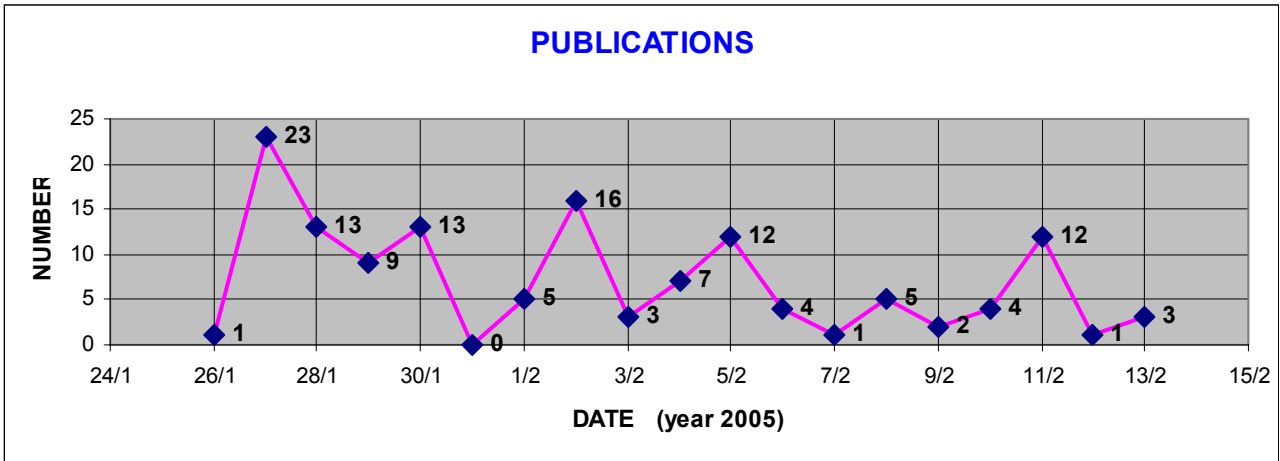
Corruption is an issue that the Greek public with a percent of 87% nowadays, believes that it has to be fought off. Moreover, the Greek public (57%) feels that this government is determined to fight it off. (Kathimerini Newspaper, 27/1/2005)

So, in 34 newspapers and in a period of almost 20 days the issue has entered the news. The media agenda has been apparently set. The variability of its stressing in the media agenda is shown below (Graph 1 & 2). Considering that the issue has two natures; it is news for the media and a direct reference to the media and the journalistic profession as well, made it more crucial, heavy and essential. And, adding to the above that it was upheaved by the government particularly by the State Minister (Greek Administration) under whose authority are the media and the communication of the Greek government, put on more eccentricity. So, framing the issue this way, it is suggested by itself that the government set the media and the political agenda sensing and exploiting to its advantage the public vide. And, the striking thing is that it used the actual media themselves to make clear how sets the agenda.

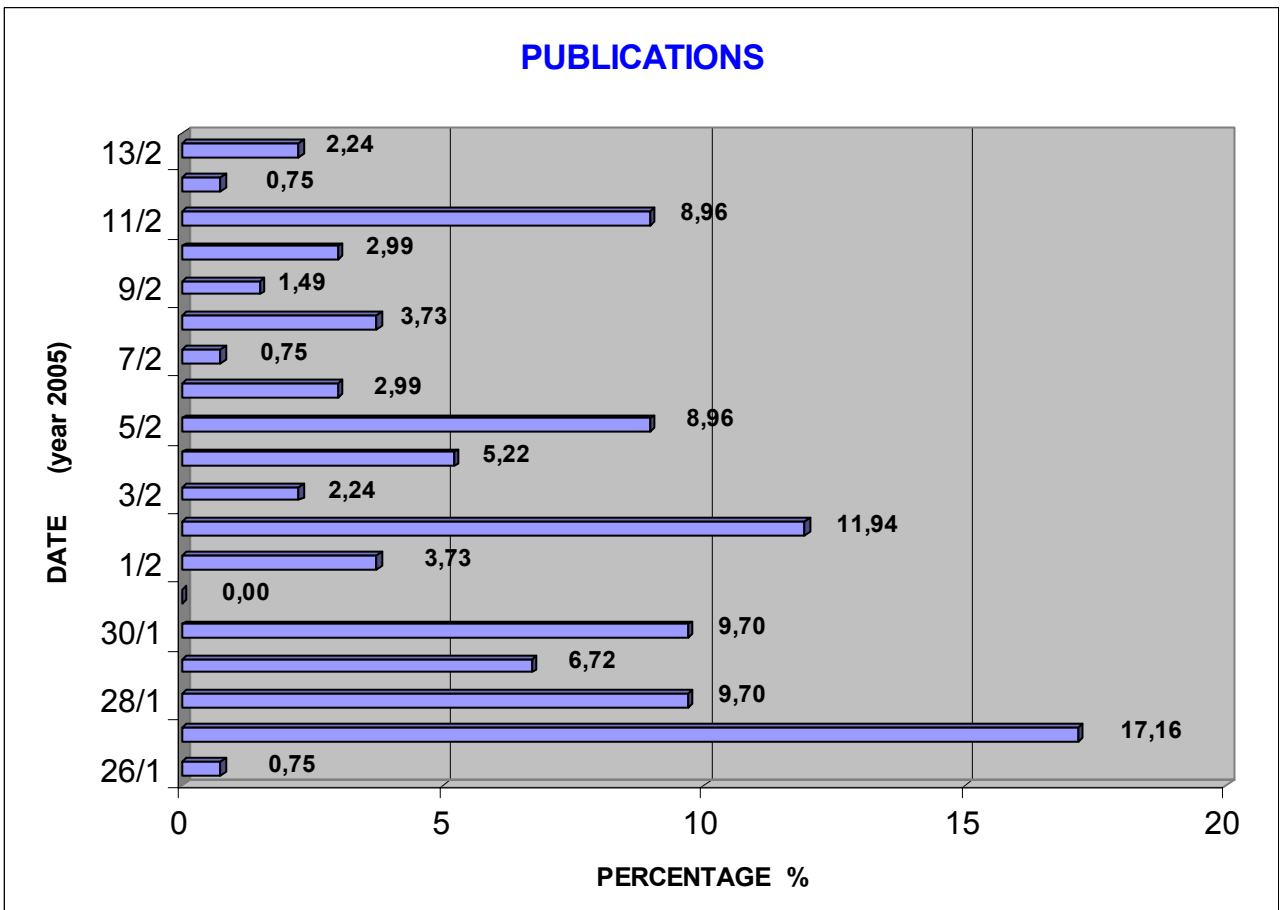
The pick points demonstrate each time the government administration sources provided more data and information to support their first position towards the issue. Firstly, by opening the subject of corruption while making references to names’ lists and bringing out media’s reactions, secondly by triggering comments and reportages over the issue also by the professional union (ESHEA), thirdly by releasing the list to ESHEA and coming in conflict with it, then by passing the ball of the publicizing to the court of the other player, ESHEA, regarding this issue, and lastly by introducing policy solutions.

It could be argued that the path of the issue reveals a felicitous even masterful media management operation, planned carefully enough by the Greek Administration so that government establishes itself in the eyes of both the public and journalists; enjoying public approval for its initiatives and also tangling with the media to that extent that pinpoints kindly who sets the agenda, even by using the media themselves as an issue to achieve that. The paradigm just examined the tactics employed to persuade public of government’s intentions and to tame the media at the same time. Nevertheless, this can not be considered at this stage, as a solid conclusion for the fragile trust on government communication, because it derives from one specific paradigm. It gives a taste of how to better understand the concepts behind this kind of communication strategies by looking beyond the flow of messages from senders to receivers to the social and political context in which the exchange takes place. Simply, it just introduces the grounds on which my PhD thesis will unfold itself.

**Graph – 1 –**



**Graph – 2 –**



**My PhD Thesis**

The scope of my PhD thesis is to underline the objective of public political communication, by narrowing it down to the sphere of the government / state activity that refers to governmental politics (governing party, ministries, and organizations with solely shareholder the state) and by analyzing their ability to communicate and further to manage politically the public sphere.

All societal issues are accompanied by estimations of the role of the media, given the fact that everything nowadays is materialized via or with the use of the media. Continually an examination of, if and how the media constitute the carrier or the tool in this process, since they are a political actor from one side and an actual part of this process due to economic and ownership affiliations from the other, will be made. The analysis of the media is an essential prerequisite and has as continuity the understanding of the political procedure. The latter is studied through the prism of the socio-political system of the country; its idiosyncrasy and pathogenesis. Most theory and research regarding the role of the media in democratic politics focuses on news and public affairs genres, where politics is assumed to reside. Thus, news media specifically, is the one selected to be studied in order to identify the existence and the extent of the public political communication phenomenon of infoganda.

Through my research, my intention is to analyze the governmental public communication strategy. Attempts to map today's complex cluster of influence among and within the political actors and power vehicles (government and the media) and the public, in Greece, will be made. This depiction of the climate will reveal the realities of public political communication in Greece.

Why was there need for infoganda to appear?  
Where was the fertile ground for infoganda to appear?

Gleaning some of the potential answers to the above questions, I will try to set the framework within which the factual reasons should be examined, and which will actually constitute the scope of my ongoing PhD thesis.

Could it be because ..... ?

There have been changes on the economic and societal level and the administration patterns are now developing horizontally. Moreover, the influence circle of the governmental responsibilities and the influence over the public sphere is being reduced, because of the European Union policies that come to develop direct relationships with the national regional administration entities, overlapping the government.

Could it be because ..... ?

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, governments for their prosperity need to communicate with a broader public, the global public (supranational presence) and not to restrict themselves to a simple governing. Thus, the space-time expanding of the media and the global public are the ones targeted in the public political communication nowadays.

Could it be because ..... ?

The old commonly known propaganda is being mutated to infoganda according and simply complying with the demands of today's era and reflecting current shifts in political practice.

Could it be because ..... ?

It was time to transfer communication practices exercised in international public communication to the domestic environment. Especially, since they were tested and found effective in the international scene. It is common knowledge that in international diplomacy, countries master communication strategies in order to place themselves felicitously in the international scene and gain a beneficiary position that in turn will facilitate their goals and politics. In this nation's packaging and the systematic effort to manipulate another nation's media and news images to one's advantage, a growing body of evidence can be traced. (Graber, 2001) More interesting in the present case and context is the fact that all this communication and political public relations activity,

encapsulates some forms of propaganda too, which, with the intention to persuade, takes the form of news management and information control. If that is the case, then a factor has not been taken into consideration; the fact that whatever presented in the domestic scene can be searched or witnessed and confirmed. It does not refer to something being far away as the case in the international environment, in such a distance or places that can not be verified or reached.

On the other hand, it could be the fact that government, since it tried, up to now, to comply with the demands of the times, as the media-centric logic, in order to facilitate its work, perceived that the media were evolving to a powerful political institution with an active role in governing. Therefore, in order to subdue this tendency and also empower government's positing in the power structure, invented a new public communication and information tool exploiting at the same time the current circumstances.

The public is really sensitive towards mere propaganda due to its historical experiences. An informed public is the base for every democratic society. Government wishes to receive positive stances regarding its actions and policies, which will subserve its governmental work now and, at a later stage, will be translated to support and more importantly to votes in electoral periods. In today's reality of the hyperbolic plethora of images through television and information, the media crave for more images, information and real time stories. All the above interwoven provide the appropriate climate for the appearance of the fusion of infoganda; a dose of information so that government does not detach itself wholly from its original destination, and a dose of propaganda so that it achieves its goals. Could it work? Thinking superficially and quickly, a positive answer could suggest itself. But, what are the consequences of this information miasma whether they are political or more importantly relate to the democracy itself? Where can such initiative lead if looking in a more penetrative way? No one doubts the necessity of government communication with the public. The positing of information in this procedure nevertheless is fundamental so that society and democracy further will be enhanced. So, what does the future hold?

The former explanation puts distrust on government, politicians and politics in general. A tendency that has been multiple times recorded in researches. The following transfers the distrust or it adds up to it, distrust to journalism and the media.

Another explanation can be sought in the nature of the journalistic profession as it has been shaped nowadays. Journalists in order to 'feed' this 24hour ongoing news media system and prove that it does inform instead of merely communicating, have adopted new practices. Drifted from the gush of the live transmission, they are looking frantically for it. As a consequence the substance of the information and the credibility has transformed, and captured in the phrases: for the first, no need to understand it, I am witnessing it and for the second, it is real because it is technological. Media end up being reproduction news machines. They get caught up in and preserve at the same time this frenzy of infotainment and spectacle industry. Moreover, as to the media's economic and ownership affiliations; the pressures being exercised regarding the content of the information should be co-estimated. Further, the latter puts the autonomy of journalism under question, and underlines the mutual tolerance and interdependence among the media and politicians.

Having in mind all the above, a question preoccupies public's mind. So, how or what sets the media agenda? Are the media still the forth estate?

Skepticism, distrust, reservation are the dominant feelings of the public towards government and the media. The public, although is able to recognize and also state what the power structure is, is completely weak to determine from and to which direction the influences flow. It is diffused the feeling that there is something flowing, but there is an absolute lack of ability to impress it. Even more, due to the fact that these paradigms

referred above, are describing a newborn phenomenon, the wherefore is indeterminate. Explanations should be looked into the historical, societal and political phases of public and political communication. These further, have to be interwoven with the notions of journalism and politics. And in continuity, should be placed in every country's special idiosyncrasy and pathogenesis as well as in the framework of the new global order of all levels.

What happens when an attempt to peek over the horizon of political communication, to set new priorities, reopen and revisit long-standing issues of democratic theory and track down future directions and dimensions of the field, and to devise fresh models of institutions or notions suited to this complex age of political communication, is made? Will these attempts overturn some old orders and create a future that is quite unlike the past? Will they be the key elements that will constitute the drivers of change of the nature of the notion, and arise some new aspects of the context of the next age of political communication? These are some fundamental questions that arise for the reform of political communication and the shape of the future of democracy. And, set someone's thinking considering also that as back as Antiquity, the Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle sided that 'individuals are political human beings', and as, another essential part of the human nature is communication, these two characteristics are "indissoluble affined, and lead to human desire for public effects, and farther on to human action, moreover to political action". (Katz, 1997) So, politics are the master of arts as Aristotle again, supported.

So, someone justifiably could think what is there left. With this crisis of trust towards and between politics and media, how can be the political dialogue enhanced? How can the political vehicles be detrimental to the health of the public dialogue? An answer could be the civil society. Informed and active citizens participating and molding their everyday reality could be the answerback. Therefore, they will comprise another potential player / actor added in the depiction of the power structure. A more balanced depiction that also reveals the public's potential to serve as a reliable partner in government decision making. This is what should lie in the essence of the civil society. May be also, then, eventually a form or formula for propaganda and information which can be used in a positive way for the benefit of society will be found.

This paper reveals my academic quests regarding particularly, the public space where government puts in and interrelates with the media and the public. The aim and aspiration of my PhD thesis when reaching full completion, is to unfold how government / state communicate and manage politically the public sphere and thereto, the 'sexual' side of public political communication. My PhD thesis' objective is to be a reference point for the recording and the analysis of the public political communication in Greece and trigger further geographical scientific researches.



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# THE EVOLUTION IN THE IMAGE PRESENTATION OF PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES IN THE GREEK PRESS

Iordanis Kotzaivazoglou<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

In the past 15 years political communication in Greece has changed significantly in comparison with the past. It could, in fact, be argued that it has passed into what Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) call the *'third age of political communication'*. Contemporary political communication in Greece shares many common features with the American model, to the extent of justifying talk of the *'Americanisation of Greek campaigning'* (Negrine and Papathanassopoulos, 1996; Negrine, 1996, ch. 7; Papathanassopoulos 2000; Yannas 2002; Samaras 2003) and of political communication more generally. The primary characteristics of the current political communication model are mediatisation, marketisation, professionalisation and personalisation.

This evolution is the result of major social, political, cultural and technological changes that have taken place within Greece and elsewhere. These changes are connected with (Papathanassopoulos 2000, 2001; Doulkeri, 2003; Chondroleou, 2004; Ikonomu, Kotzaivazoglou and Papageorgiou, 2005; Samaras 2002):

(1) Social modernisation. The transition of Greek society from the *'traditional archetype'* to the *'modern archetype'* (Swanson and Mancini, 1996; Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, 1995) was accompanied by a questioning of the existing political system and the bodies that represent it, a weakening of party identity, a significant increase in the number of floating voters, the predominance of the mass media and the prevalence of the logic of the marketplace in all sectors, including that of politics.

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(2) The supremacy of private commercial television. Deregulation of the broadcasting system sparked the emergence of private television, which has taken over the communications landscape, supplanting state television and the press. Private television has brought pluralism and greater objectivity to information, but has also imposed its own logic, based on commercialisation, infotainment, trivialisation and an emphasis on image and spectacle.

(3) The blunting of ideological differences between parties. The collapse of Existing Socialism, the modernisation of Greek society and Greece's participation in EMU led to a crisis in the ideological identity of the country's political parties, to their de-ideologization and, in the end, to their transformation into '*catch-all parties*' (Kirchheimer, cited in Scammell 1999, 726; and Mancini 1999) with generic, middle-ground, sound-good positions.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND QUESTIONS**

This research is part of a broader doctoral project. Its objective is to study the pre-election presentation, in local and Athenian newspapers, of male candidates standing for election to the Greek Parliament in the Thessaloniki 'A' electoral district in the period 1989-2000.

The specific timeframe was selected for two reasons. The first was that this was the period when the significant changes described in the introduction occurred, which substantially altered political communication. It is therefore interesting to study the chronology and – even more – the extent of the change in the way in which MP candidates were promoted during that period. The second reason is that a total of six elections took place between 1989 and 2000. This is a number sufficient to permit the drawing of conclusions with regard to the change in how candidates were presented in the pre-election period.

The study looks at how frequently, and how, candidates were presented. A distinction is made between those who were elected and those not elected, so as to permit a comparison of the frequency and manner of presentation between the two groups. There is no analysis of discourse, but only of the image presentation of the candidates. The paper also studies the changes that occurred in the frequency and manner of presentation of candidates within the period considered, and the differences in their presentation as between local (Thessaloniki) and Athenian newspapers.

Finally, an attempt is made, through comparison of the presentation of elected and non-elected candidates, to draw conclusions about whether and to what extent this affected their election.

The research, then, attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How frequently were candidates given space?
2. How were the same candidates presented?
3. Were there any differences in how elected and non-elected candidates were presented?
4. Were there any differences in how candidates were presented in local and Athenian newspapers?
5. Did their presentation in the press change over the course of the period in question?
6. Did the frequency and manner of candidate presentation affect their election to the Greek Parliament?

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodological tool used was that of content analysis, both quantitative and qualitative. The basic method was quantitative analysis, with qualitative analysis being used in supplement, focusing on specific candidate references.

Although it does have certain disadvantages and limitations, this particular method was chosen because it is eminently suitable for processing, describing and comparing text data (indicatively, Berelson, 1952; Krippendorf, 1980; Weber, 1990; Sepstrup in Rosengren 1981; Hansen and others, 1998; Trowler, 2001; Prior, 2001; Bertrand and Hughes, 2005). It also allows the researcher to observe the subjects of the study (messages, transmitters, recipients) without having to consider the possible effect of his observation upon them (Budd, Thorp and Donohew, 1967: 2).

As mentioned earlier, the research covers the period 1989-2000, during which six elections were held: in June and November of 1989, in 1990, in 1993, in 1996 and in 2000. It was carried out in selected newspapers, during the official pre-election period, that is, one month prior to each election day. More specifically, it was carried out over the four last weeks before each election, or over a period of 28 days prior to each electoral contest.

The choice of newspapers was effected by random stratified sampling. The sample comprised a total of eight newspapers, selected on the basis of their political leanings, circulation, where they were published (Thessaloniki or Athens) and whether they were published throughout the entire survey period or not.

The newspapers that were finally selected were: TA NEA, ELEFTHEROTYPIA, KATHIMERINI, ELEFTHEROS TYPOS, AVGI and RIZOSPASTIS from Athens, and THESSALONIKI and MAKEDONIA from Thessaloniki. It should be noted that the two newspapers from Thessaloniki were not in circulation during the 1996 pre-election period.

Every reference to the candidates was recorded, from a simple mention of their name to a double-page spread devoted to them. These references were studied with regard to their frequency, size, position (front page or inside), and whether or not there was an accompanying photograph of the candidate. Variables were constructed relating to the image presentation of the candidates, namely the location of the appearance and the manner of the appearance. All the variables used for the research are presented in Table 1.

Finally, the candidates were differentiated by whether they were elected or not. All the references to all the candidates from the Thessaloniki 'A' district who were elected were studied, as well as all the references to an equal number of candidates from the same parties who were not elected. Only male candidates were studied, because the dissertation, part of which is this study, is focused exclusively on the image of male candidates. In order to get more validated results, the party leaders elected in Thessaloniki were excluded. Thus, a total number of 156 candidates were studied; 78 elected and 78 not elected. Excluded from the research material were cartoons and references in printed inserts distributed with the newspapers.

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### **1. Page size**

- Double page
- Whole page
- Three-quarter page
- Half page
- Quarter page
- Eighth page
- Sixteenth page
- Simple mention

### **2. Front page mention**

- Mention on front page
- Mention in other pages

### **3. Reason for mention**

- News, editorial or reportage
- Candidate interview or article
- Press release
- Advertisement

### **4. Mention accompanied by photograph**

- With photograph
- Without photograph

### **5. Setting in which candidate appears**

- At home
- In the office
- In a public place
- In Parliament
- At a social event/ speech
- At a symbolic point of the city
- Indeterminate

### **6. How the candidate appears**

- Alone
  - With members of his family
  - Near the people
  - With politicians from other countries
  - With the leader of his party
  - With colleagues/ associates
  - With other candidates
  - With celebrities/ opinion leaders
- 

*Table 1. The variables used in the research.*

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The research findings are presented below, together with an analysis of the reasons for them.

### **(1) Total frequency of reference to the candidates**

A total of 4770 references were recorded for the 156 candidates surveyed (78 elected and 78 not elected). There is a clear preponderance in the frequency of



mention of candidates who were elected in comparison to those who were not (Table 2): 3665 references to the former (76.8%) and 1105 to the latter (23.2%), or an average of about 47 and 14.2 references<sup>2</sup> per elected and non-elected candidate respectively. This difference is especially significant, since the ratio of appearance of the two categories of candidate is, again on average, 3.3 to 1 in favour of those elected.

<i>References to candidates</i>			
	<b>Total</b>		<b>Per candidate (average)</b>
	References	Percentage	
Elected candidates	3665	76.8%	47
Non-elected candidates	1105	23.2%	14.2
Total references	4770	100%	30.6

**Table 2.** *Frequency of mention, in total and per candidate.*

The reasons for this ‘inequality’ in the newspapers’ treatment of candidates are summed up below:

(a) The great majority of elected candidates had held important political office before the elections. They were already members of Parliament, deputy ministers, even cabinet ministers. Others, who may not have held political office, were familiar to the public in other ways. The candidates who were elected, in other words, were public figures, active participants in the political life of the country. This means that their activities were considered newsworthy even when they were not purely political but concerned other aspects of their existence, such as details of their personal lives, attendance at some social function, and the like.

By contrast, most of the non-elected candidates had not occupied an important position in politics prior to the election and in general enjoyed no significant degree of recognition. Consequently, their doings were usually of little interest to newspaper readers, with the result that they remained in ‘communication invisibility’.

<sup>2</sup> All numbers are expressed to one decimal place, rounded off appropriately.

The reasons behind the newspapers' selective publication of candidates' activities are, in other words, to a certain extent commercial. The elected candidates were presented more often than those not elected because they 'sold'.

(b) Precisely because of the offices they had held, the elected candidates succeeded in developing good personal relations with the gatekeepers of the press, relations of mutual support and often with significant interlinkage. These relations gave scope for more frequent and more favourable mention. The non-elected candidates, on the other hand, without the advantage of public position, were unable to develop the kind of relations that would facilitate their presentation by the press.

(c) The elected candidates usually invested more capital in their election campaigns and implemented better news management plans. They placed more advertising (see Table 7), hired expert consultants, developed personal relations with the journalists, kept them constantly informed of their activities through press releases, created news through '*pseudo-events*'<sup>3</sup>, made many public appearances and so on.

By contrast, the non-elected candidates usually invested far less in their campaigns, and their news management was less effective. This was due to lack of financial resources and funding, lack of knowledge, indifference, inexperience and/or incapability; but there was also another reason: many of these people, certain that they would not be elected, stood as candidates not in order to win a seat in parliament but in order to satisfy some other personal ambition after the campaign, such as for example appointment to some important government post. Such candidates, therefore, did not do their utmost to be elected.

## **(2) Frequency of mention per election period**

The total number of references to candidates per election period shows a significant overall increase (Table 3, diagram 1): from a total of 669 references before the elections of June 1989 to 1056 in 1993 and 987 in 2000.

This significant increase has to be attributed to a change in the structure of newspaper content. Because of the possibilities offered by the new technologies that appeared and were used in the 1990s, because of the competition between them, but most of all because of the threat represented by the introduction of private

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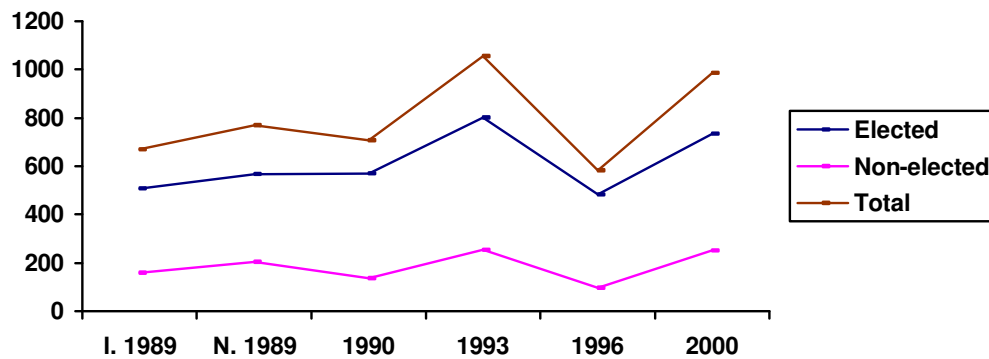
<sup>3</sup> Term initiated by Boorstin (1964, 1992) to describe meaningless events, which become significant only because they are totally in keeping with today's commercialised media logic.

commercialised television, the newspapers changed their form and content, increasing the number of their pages, the variety of their subject matter and the number of news items they reported, including political news. Thus, they enriched their content with current events and subjects of current interest, with more news and reportage, with more exhaustive analysis and commentary, and with supplements and inserts<sup>4</sup>.

*Total references per election period*

	June 1989	Nov. 1989	1990	1993	1996	2000
Elected candidates	509 (76.1%)	567 (73.6%)	569 (80.6%)	801 (75.9%)	484 (83.2%)	735 (74.5%)
Non-elected candidates	160 (23.9%)	203 (26.4%)	137 (19.4%)	255 (24.1%)	98 (16.8%)	252 (25.5%)
Total references	669 (100%)	770 (100%)	706 (100%)	1056 (100%)	582 (100%)	987 (100%)

*Table 3. Total frequency of reference to elected and non-elected candidates per election period.*



*Diagram 1. Graphic representation of total references to elected and non-elected candidates per election period.*

<sup>4</sup> No analysis was made in this present study of the content of newspaper supplements and inserts because of the impossibility of finding them.

This overall rise in frequency of mention is broken by two downturns, one in 1990 and one in 1996. The reasons for this phenomenon are not the same in both cases.

In the 1990 elections the decrease concerns solely the number of references to non-elected candidates, the number of references to elected candidates having in fact risen somewhat. There are two reasons for this:

(a) The election in question had been preceded within a very short space of time – 10 months – by two others. These previous elections had revealed the potential and the strengths of both the parties and the candidates: which candidates appealed to the voters and to what extent, and which did not. The press, therefore, paid more attention to the first category of candidates: those who had proven voter appeal.

(b) Those non-elected candidates whose performance in the two previous contests failed to earn them a seat realised that their chances of being elected this time were nil. They therefore focused on the more realistic goal of maintaining, or slightly increasing, their electoral support, which would allow them a “dignified” defeat, enable them to retain their influence within the party and entitled them to hope for a victory the next time.

In the case of the 1996 election, on the other hand, the fall in the number of references was both significant and general, although the number of references to non-elected candidates dropped more sharply. This phenomenon was due to the fact that during the period in question the two local newspapers included in the sample were not in circulation. As shown below, these two newspapers were the ones with the most references to candidates, and particularly to those not elected (Table 4). The candidates must evidently have been presented in other media, and chiefly in the other local newspapers, but this cannot be ascertained from the findings of this present research.

### **(3) Frequency of reference in Thessaloniki and Athenian newspapers**

The Thessaloniki newspapers had more references to candidates in that city’s electoral district than did those published in Athens. In fact, the two local newspapers totalled more references than all six Athens newspapers together (Table 4): 2767 references compared to 2003, or on average 17.7 references per candidate per Thessaloniki newspaper against just 4.3 per Athens newspaper, or 4.1 times more.

The difference in frequency of reference between local and Athenian newspapers is even greater in the case of the non-elected candidates: 2002 references against 1663 for elected candidate, or an average of 12.8 and 3.6 references per candidate per newspaper, compared to 765 references against just 340 references for non-elected candidates, or respectively 4.9 and 0.7.

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*Comparison of local and Athenian newspapers with regard to mentions of candidates*

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	Total		Per candidate (average)			
	Thessaloniki		Athens		Thessaloniki <sup>5</sup>	Athens <sup>6</sup>
	Total number	Percentage	Total number	Percentage		
Elected candidates	2002	54.6%	1663	45.4%	12.8	3.6
Non-elected candidates	765	69.2%	340	30.8%	4.9	0.7
Total and Average	2767	58%	2003	42%	17.7	4.3

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**Table 4.** Comparison of the number of references in the two Thessaloniki newspapers with the six Athenian ones, in total and per candidate.

There are three main reasons for these significant divergences:

(a) Thessaloniki newspapers are far more concerned with local matters than are those from Athens. Consequently they pay more attention to local candidates: their histories, views, positions, visions, activities, etc.

(b) The candidates themselves focused their efforts on the local media for two reasons: first of all, because advertising in them is significantly less costly, and

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<sup>5</sup> The divisor here is 2, because that is the number of Thessaloniki newspapers in the sample.

<sup>6</sup> The divisor here is 6, because that is the number of Athens newspapers surveyed.

secondly, because these media are more highly focused on the local electorate, whose votes the candidates are seeking.

(c) Finally, unlike the non-elected candidates, the elected candidates were usually nationally recognised figures, or had good connections with the media, for the reasons mentioned above. The press was therefore more ready to publish information about them, either because it was of general news interest or for other reasons (public relations, media connections).

#### (4) The size of references to candidates

	<i>Size of reference</i>			
	<b>Elected candidates</b>		<b>Non-elected candidates</b>	
	Total number	Percentage	Total number	Percentage
Double page	1	0.1%	-	0%
1 page	13	0.4%	-	0%
Three-quarter page	18	0.5%	2	0.2%
Half page	37	1%	6	0.5%
Quarter page	91	2.4%	8	0.7%
Eighth page	326	8.9%	61	5.6%
Sixteenth page	1511	41.2%	337	30.5%
Simple mention	1668	45.5%	691	62.5%

*Table 5. Findings with regard to the size of each reference to elected and non-elected candidates.*

As is evident from Table 5, the surface area of references to elected candidates is constantly greater than that of mentions of non-elected candidates. The sole exception is the variable “*simple mention*”, where such references are proportionally more for non-elected candidates.

Simple mentions make up 62.5% of the total number of references to non-elected candidates. In fact, fully 93% of the references to non-elected candidates (62.5% + 30.5%) are brief, occupying less than one-sixteenth of a page. 5.6% of all references to non-elected candidates are one-eighth page size, with extremely few being larger than this. It should be noted that almost all the larger references were advertising material submitted by the candidates themselves. The overwhelming majority of references to non-elected candidates, in other words, were ‘small items’.

The references to elected candidates, on the other hand, were on the whole clearly larger. Simple mentions of them accounted for just 45.5% of the whole, and references occupying less than one-sixteenth of a page for 86.7%. There were several references of half a page or more, and even one double page spread.

This type of promotion definitely assures the elected candidates a comparative advantage over the others. It gives them the opportunity to attract the attention of the reader-voter and to strengthen their recognition factor, and a better chance of recall in the polling booth.

With respect to references to the non-elected, by contrast, the reader-voter would more often than not be unable to ‘place’ the particular candidates through the mentions of them in the press, and even less able to learn about them, to form a specific opinion about them and to remember them on the day of the election.

#### **(5) Front page references**

The elected candidates appeared proportionally far more often on the front pages of the newspapers than those not elected: 117 references against 15, or a ratio of 7.8 to 1, more than double the 3.3-to-1 ratio recorded for frequency of mention.

This fact gives the elected candidates yet another comparative advantage, since a front page mention presumably gives a candidate far more chances of recognition, prestige and recall. There are also greater chances that the candidate will be “placed” even by people who do not read the newspaper, such as passers-by who scan the front pages of the newspapers displayed by newsagents, television viewers

who watch the morning reviews of headlines, the other members of households in which one person bought the newspaper to read, and so on.

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<i>Front page references</i>				
	<b>Elected candidates</b>		<b>Non-elected candidates</b>	
	Total number	Percentage	Total number	Percentage
Front page mention	117	3.2%	15	1.4%
Mention on other pages	3548	96.8%	1090	98.6%

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**Table 6.** Total number of front page or other mentions of elected and non-elected candidates.

#### **(6) Reasons for mention**

The findings relating to simple mentions of candidates are presented in Tables 7, 8 and 9. Table 7 displays the total findings, Table 8 separates them by place of publication of the newspapers, and Table 9 records the relevant findings per election.

##### **(a) The reasons for mention as a whole**

As shown in Table 7, most references to candidates are due to press releases (52.9%) and to news items, editorials or reportage either about them or involving their names (32.4%). A fair number of references are due to candidate advertising (10.8%), while the smallest proportion derives from personal interviews or articles by the candidate himself (3.9%).

This means that nearly two thirds of total references to candidates (63.7%) are due to press releases and advertising – references, in other words, that have the following two characteristics: (i) they are the result of the direct efforts of the candidates themselves to acquire publicity, and (ii) their content is controlled either absolutely (advertising) or to a significant degree (press releases) – that is, they present what the candidate himself wants to present.



	<i>Reason for mention</i>		
	<b>Elected candidates</b>	<b>Non-elected candidates</b>	<b>Total</b>
News, editorial or reportage	1377 (37.6%)	167 (15.1%)	1544 (32.4%)
Candidate interview or article	161 (4.4%)	24 (2.2%)	185 (3.9%)
Press release	1750 (47.7%)	775 (70.1%)	2525 (52.9%)
Advertisement	377 (10.3%)	139 (12.6%)	516 (10.8%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>3665 (100%)</b>	<b>1105 (100%)</b>	<b>4770 (100%)</b>

*Table 7. Findings relating to the reason for mentions of elected and non-elected candidates.*

According to the data shown in this Table, the reasons for mentions of elected candidates were: press releases (47.7%), news, editorial or reportage (37.6%), followed by advertising (10.3%) and interviews with or articles written by the candidate (4.4%). For non-elected candidates, the main reason for mention was also press releases, but in a far greater proportion, 70.1%; advertising came second with 12.6%, followed by news, editorial or reportage, with just 15.1%, and, finally, personal interviews and articles by the specific candidates, with 2.2%.

We see, then, that 82.7% of references to non-elected candidates were due to press releases and advertisements (70.1%+12.6%). Mention of them, in other words, was essentially limited to (i) absolutely controlled references (advertisements), which can present the candidates positively but neither have the credibility of a piece of reporting nor create in the mind of the reader such powerful associations of ideas with regard to the candidate's abilities; and to (ii) significantly controlled references (press releases), which more often than not are merely short, simple announcements about the candidate's activities.

Consequently, the majority of the mentions of non-elected candidates are not in the form of “important news”, nor do they occur in opinion pieces or reportage, which would strengthen their political profile and create an image of a successful candidate, worthy of the attention of the press and public opinion. These sorts of mentions, in other words, were unable to persuade the public of the abilities of the candidates presented and convince them to vote for them.

For elected candidates, on the other hand, the percentage of “highly controlled” mentions (press releases and advertisements) is only 58% (47.7%+10.3%). It was far more often news and reportage about their activities that brought them before the eye of the reader, or personal interviews and articles. This type of presentation, however, gave these candidates an opportunity to enjoy greater recognition and recall, and to display themselves as more capable and more active, and thus a more appropriate choice for the voter.

#### **(b) Reasons for mention in Thessaloniki and Athens newspapers**

The study recorded significant differences in the reasons for references to the candidates between the Thessaloniki and the Athens newspapers (Table 8). The mentions in the local newspapers were due primarily to press releases and secondarily to news items, editorials or reportage. By contrast, the references in the Athenian newspapers were due principally to news and editorial comment, particularly in the case of elected candidates, and only secondarily to press releases. The Athens newspapers also published more personal interviews and articles, especially with elected candidates.

Evidently the gatekeepers of the local newspapers felt that the activities of the candidates were of interest to the readers in their city, and so frequently published the candidates’ press releases. The same does not appear to be true of the corresponding gatekeepers of the Athens newspapers, who chose to report news items of interest to the whole country. Nor must one ignore the probability of personal relations between candidates and gatekeepers of local newspapers, which do not appear to exist to the same extent with the corresponding figures in the Athens media.

There is also an obvious difference in the number of advertisements. The candidates, elected and otherwise, preferred to advertise in the local rather than the Athens press, even though the Athenian newspapers were read by voters of the party

under whose colours the candidates were standing. Evidently, the reasons for this were either financial or concerned with better targeting of the electorate.

<i>Comparison of local and Athens newspapers relating to reasons for mention</i>				
	<b>Thessaloniki newspapers</b>		<b>Athens newspapers</b>	
	Elected candidates	Non-elected candidates	Elected candidates	Non-elected Candidates
News or editorial or reportage	479 (23.9%)	104 (13.6%)	898 (54.0%)	63 (18.5%)
Candidate interview or article	51 (2.6%)	16 (2.1%)	110 (6.6%)	8 (2.3%)
Press release	1133 (56.6%)	528 (69.0%)	617 (37.1%)	247 (72.6%)
Advertising	339 (16.9%)	117 (15.3%)	38 (2.3%)	22 (6.6%)
Total	2002 (100%)	765 (100%)	1663(100%)	340 (100%)

**Table 8.** Comparison of number of mentions in the two Thessaloniki newspapers with the six published in Athens, in total and per candidate.

### **(c) Reasons for mention per election period**

Table 9 shows the reasons for references to candidates per election period. In this Table two of the variables have been modified: the variables ‘*news, editorial or reportage*’ and ‘*press release*’ have been replaced by the variables ‘*political news*’ and ‘*non-political news*’, so as to show whether the reason for the specific reference was political or non-political.

The research reveals a significant change in the content of the newspapers over the period studied. First of all it shows a substantial increase in the number of political news items, with the exception of the 1996 pre-election period, when (as noted earlier) the two local newspapers in the sample were not being published. This increase is due to:

<i>Reason for reference to candidates per election period</i>								
	Political news		Candidate interview or article		Non-political news		Advertisement	
	Elected	Non-elected	Elected	Non-elected	Elected	Non-elected	Elected	Non-elected
June 1989	389 (12.7%)	120 (12.8%)	17 (10.6%)	3 (12.5%)	4 (6.2%)	2 (25%)	99 (26.3%)	35 (25.2%)
Nov. 1989	497 (16.2%)	176 (18.9%)	5 (3.1%)	2 (8.3%)	- (0%)	- (0%)	65 (17.3%)	25 (18%)
1990	457 (14.9%)	113 (12.1%)	54 (33.5%)	2 (8.3%)	4 (6.2%)	2 (25%)	54 (14.3%)	20 (14.2%)
1993	686 (22.4%)	223 (23.9%)	29 (18%)	2 (8.3%)	18 (27.6%)	- (0%)	68 (18%)	30 (21.6%)
1996	460 (15.1%)	96 (10.3%)	16 (10%)	- (0%)	8 (12.3%)	- (0%)	- (0%)	2 (1.5%)
2000	573 (18.7%)	206 (22%)	40 (24.8%)	15 (62.6%)	31 (47.7%)	4 (50%)	91 (24.1%)	27 (19.5%)
Total	3062 (100%)	934 (100%)	161 (100%)	24 (100%)	65 (100%)	8 (100%)	377 (100%)	139 (100%)

**Table 9.** *Tabulation of reasons for references to elected and non-elected candidates per election period.*

(i) the increase in the number of pages in the newspapers and the enrichment of their subject matter with more news, including political news,

(ii) the preservation of the informative and political character of the newspapers, which, although influenced by the subject matter of private television, remained clearly politicised, and

(iii) the efforts of the candidates themselves, who acted in a way that would assure them publicity.

Thus in every election campaign, more than 75% of the references to candidates, elected and non-elected, were related to political events, news or commentary.

Second, it shows a considerable increase in the number of non-political references to candidates. In the first three elections, those of June 1989, November 1989 and 1990, such mentions ranged from nil to minimal. In the 1993 campaign, this type of reference was somewhat more in evidence, while by 2000 this sort of mention represented 3.6% of the total number of references recorded in that period, a very substantial increase over the previous campaign period. The marked upturn in frequency of this particular form of mention is due to:

(i) The prevalence of infotainment observable in contemporary media. This trend began with the emergence as the supreme medium of private commercialised television, which appeared in 1989 and imposed its logic on the media world a few years after that.

Telecracy led to the creation of a public accustomed to being served information with a large measure of entertainment. In order to meet the new demands, the newspapers were forced to follow suit and turn to infotainment. Thus, the amount of non-political news about candidates began to increase significantly in 1993, and particularly in 2000. The decrease in the number of such items in the 1996 election period was due to the temporary suspension of publication of the two local newspapers considered here.

Certainly, press and television do not display the same degree of infotainment. The degree of infotainment in the press is far less than in television, and its discourse is much more politicised, serious and analytical. The “language” and “grammar” of the two media are different. Television is an audiovisual medium dominated by a combination of sound and image, movement and speech, while the press is a visual medium dominated by the written word.

Nonetheless, it is worth recording the specific trend to a change in the content of the newspapers and the addition of 'softer' or non-political news, as a result of the impact of the logic of the pre-eminent medium, that is, private commercialised television, on the other media.

(ii) The efforts of the candidates themselves to add to their image the dimension of the ordinary man, who has much in common with his voters or to approach the non-politicised voters, whose vote is based on non-rational criteria, such as place of origin, shared habits, religious faith, family situation, shared way of entertainment, and the like.

It is worth noting that the non-political news published in the press concerned overwhelmingly the elected candidates. News items of this type about the non-elected candidates were few and far between. This difference assured the elected candidates yet another comparative advantage, allowing them to project a more human and everyday dimension of their personality and to construct a powerful emotional link and a sense of intimacy with the electorate, as well as touching the so-called apolitical voters.

It should also be noted that, apart from the quantitative dimension of the non-political references described above, there is also a qualitative dimension. Over the period there is an observable qualitative change in the subject matter of the non-political references. In the three first pre-election periods (June 1989, November 1989, 1990) the non-political references to the candidates related mainly to their attendance at religious ceremonies and sports events, and especially those connected with basketball, which was then enjoying an upsurge of popularity. In the three following pre-election periods (1993, 1996 and particularly 2000), most of the non-political references had to do with the candidates' appearances at various social functions, such as receptions, openings, and so on.

The qualitative change in the content of non-political references reflects the influence on the press of the corresponding "social content" television programmes, and the shift in the interests of the newspapers' readership over the years.

Another point worth mentioning is the overall general increase in the number of advertisements. This trend is not obvious from the projection of the research findings in Table 9. The reason for this is that the large number of advertisements recorded in the period leading up to the elections of June 1989 was due to the fact that until the 1990 elections group advertisements containing potted biographies of the

candidates and placed by the parties were still a popular form of promotion<sup>7</sup>. Consequently, as shown by the relevant table, up until the 1990 elections the number of advertisements for the candidates can be considered as up to a point deceptive. What we are seeing here is in fact an upward trend in the number of advertisements in the newspapers, although these were no longer the principal means of communication. This increase is particularly evident in the 2000 elections.

### (7) References with photograph

20% of the references to candidates were accompanied by a photograph of the subject (Table 10). This percentage, however, was not the same for both elected and non-elected candidates: 23% of the references to elected candidates were accompanied by a photograph, compared to only 14% for non-elected candidates (Table 11).

<i>Total references with or without photograph</i>		
	Total references	Percentage
With photograph	971	20.3%
Without photograph	3799	79.7%
Total	4770	100%

**Table 10.** *Total references with or without photograph.*

Given that the non-elected candidates appeared in general much less frequently than the elected candidates, the number of image representations of the non-elected candidates was in total very small: just 2 on average per candidate against 10.5 per elected candidate. And given that the total number of advertisements for non-elected candidates was 139, that almost all of these were accompanied by a photograph of the candidate, and that the total number of photographs was just 155, it

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that in the recording of these research findings each mention of each candidate was counted as a separate reference, even when the context was essentially a party advertisement. Thus, if a party advertisement named, for example, eight candidates, this is recorded in the findings as eight separate advertisements.

is obvious that almost all the image representations of the non-elected candidates were due to advertisements placed by the subjects themselves.

<i>References with photograph</i>				
	<b>Elected candidates</b>		<b>Non-elected candidates</b>	
	Total references	Percentage	Total references	Percentage
With photograph	816	23.3%	155	14%
Without photograph	2849	77.7%	950	86%

**Table 11.** *References with photograph to elected and non-elected candidates.*

As Table 12 shows, this difference is particularly marked in the Athenian newspapers, which published only 26 photographs of the non-elected candidates compared to 129 in the Thessaloniki papers. That is, 83.2% of the photographs of non-elected candidates appeared in the local newspapers and only 16.8% in those published in Athens. The figures for elected candidates, by contrast, are more balanced, at 57.5% and 42.5% respectively.

<i>References with photographs</i>				
	<b>Elected candidates</b>		<b>Non-elected candidates</b>	
	Total references	Percentage	Total references	Percentage
Thessaloniki	469	57.5%	129	83.2%
Athens	347	42.5%	26	16.8%
Total	816	100%	155	100%

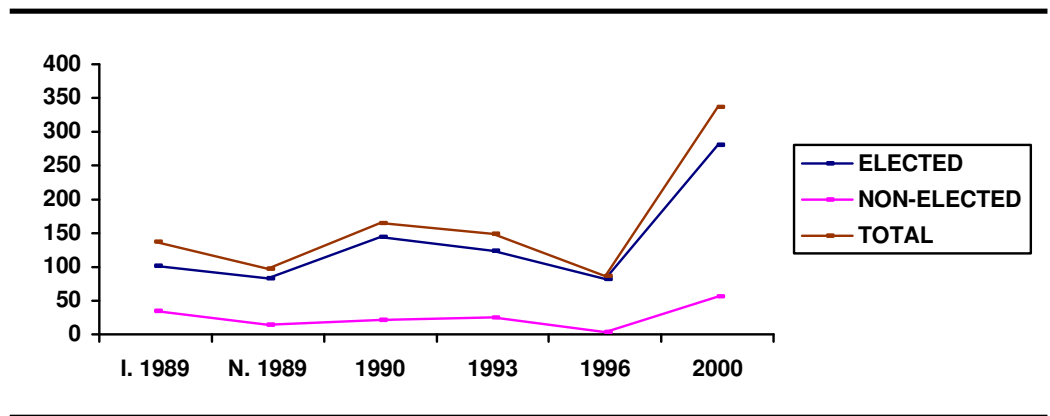
**Table 12.** *Comparative presentation of candidate references with photographs in the Thessaloniki and Athens newspapers.*



The significant difference in frequency of image representation between elected and non-elected candidates is due (a) to the fact that the elected candidates enjoyed clearly greater recognizability and that news concerning them was reported more extensively in the press, and (b) to the fact that the non-elected candidates inserted fewer advertisements (Tables 8 and 9).

<i>References with photograph per election period</i>						
	<b>June 1989</b>	<b>Nov. 1989</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>2000</b>
Elected candidates	102 (74.5%)	83 (85.6%)	144 (87.3%)	124 (83.2%)	82 (95.3%)	281 (83.4%)
Non-elected candidates	35 (25.5%)	14 (14.4%)	21 (12.7%)	25 (16.7%)	4 (4.7%)	56 (16.6%)
Total references	137 (100%)	97 (100%)	165 (100%)	149 (100%)	86 (100%)	337 (100%)

**Table 13.** *References to elected and non-elected candidates, with photograph, per election period.*



**Diagram 2.** *References with photograph per election period.*

This difference, however, further broadened the ‘recognizability gap’ between elected and non-elected candidates. The non-elected candidates were rarely presented with a photograph, the elected far more frequently, with the result that the latter’s recognition factor was enhanced, and usually also the public’s perception of their

ability to manage political affairs, and they had more likelihood of being recalled by voters at the polling station.

It is also worth noting that, as shown by Table 13 and Diagram 2, in the 2000 elections the total number of references to candidates, elected and non-elected, more than doubled in relation to the average of earlier election periods. This fact was due (a) to the adoption of new technologies, which permitted better quality printing at lower cost, (b) to the fact that a picture attracts the interest of the reader more than bare text, and is more easily retained in his memory, and, primarily, (c) to the pictorialisation of the news and other content of the newspapers on account of the influence of the predominant medium of television, where image is supreme and has accustomed the public to the consumption of images in preference to discourse.

#### (8) Location of appearance of candidates

	<i>Location of appearance of elected and non-elected candidates</i>			
	<b>Elected candidates</b>		<b>Non-elected candidates</b>	
	Total references	Percentage	Total references	Percentage
At home	1	0.1%	-	0%
In the office	56	6.9%	9	5.8%
In a public place	53	6.5%	4	2.6%
In Parliament	29	3.5%	2	1.3%
At a social event/ speech	169	20.7%	11	7.1%
At a symbolic point of the city	20	2.5%	4	2.6%
Indeterminate	488	59.8%	125	80.6%

**Table 14.** Findings relating to the location of appearance of elected and non-elected candidates.

In most instances the setting of the candidate's appearance is indeterminate (Table 14). This is particularly true of the non-elected candidates. Elected candidates were photographed in a variety of places: in the office, in some public place, in Parliament, at various political and social events or against the background of some symbolic feature of the city. No such variety of location was recorded for the photographs of the non-elected candidates.

Once again the elected candidates were presented in a more favourable manner than the non-elected candidates. The variety of location of appearance helped the elected candidates appear more active, more able, more experienced and closer to the ordinary citizen than was the case with the non-elected candidates.

#### **(9) Manner of appearance of candidates**

Interpretation of the findings relating to the manner of candidate appearance leads to similar observations (Table 15). The non-elected candidates usually appeared alone (90.4%). In the case of elected candidates, by contrast, the corresponding percentage is far lower (68.4%). Elected candidates often appeared pictured with ordinary citizens (10.7%) or with associates at work (7.7%). They also appeared with well-known social figures and opinion leaders, with other candidates from the same or another party, with members of their families, with the leader of their party or with politicians from other countries.

This variety in the manner of appearance of the elected candidates gave them an additional comparative advantage over the non-elected. They appeared as more active, able, experienced, co-operative, enjoying international prestige, and at the same time more human and ordinary, close to the proverbial man in the street. The elected candidates derived an additional significant comparative advantage from their appearance with the leader of their party. This was particularly valid in the earlier election campaigns (up to and including 1993), particularly for Andreas Papandreou and somewhat less in the case of Konstantinos Mitsotakis, for these party leaders inspired a veritable personality cult among a large proportion of their voters. A candidate's appearance with the party leader, therefore, associated him with that figure and considerably enhanced his recognition factor and his prestige.

<i>Manner of appearance of candidates, elected and non-elected<sup>8</sup></i>				
	Elected candidates		Non-elected candidates	
	Total references	Percentage	Total references	Percentage
Alone	558	68.4%	140	90.4%
With members of his family	6	0.7%	2	1.3%
Near the people	87	10.7%	1	0.6%
With politicians from other countries	6	0.7%	-	0%
With the leader of the party	12	1.5%	-	0%
With colleagues/ associates	63	7.7%	6	3.9%
With other candidates	41	5%	1	0.6%
With celebrities/ opinion leaders	43	5.3%	5	3.2%

*Table 15. Findings relating to the manner of appearance of candidates, elected and non-elected.*

#### **(10) The progressive change in the presentation of candidates**

Reference has already been made to the changes in the frequency and manner in which candidates were presented, as a result of changes in the structure and the content of the newspapers. Thus, the frequency of references increased, as did the number of advertisements, non-political news items, and most of all the number of photographs.

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that only one of the variables of the table was selected for each photograph, that which was believed to best render the principal message.



Representative photographs from advertisements for three different candidates from the New Democracy Party: Vasilis Papageorgopoulos, Konstantinos Karamanlis and Panayiotis Kokkoris. The first two date from the elections of 1989 (*Thessaloniki*, 15/10/1989, p. 16) and the third from the elections of 2000 (*Macedonia*, 7/4/2000 p. 7). Unlike the third, the first two are simple and fairly amateur in appearance. Note the pencil line drawn around the shoulders of the first candidate to prevent his white shirt from disappearing into the neutral white background.



Representative photographs of PASOK parliamentary candidate and cabinet minister Akis Tsochatzopoulos, from his advertising campaign in three separate election periods, 1989 (*Macedonia*, 28/10/1989, p. 30), 1993 (*Eleftherotypia*, 8/10/93, p. 4) and 2000 (*Macedonia* 7/4/2000, p. 1). The changes in photograph quality and in the manner of presenting the candidate are obvious.

**Table 16.** *Characteristic photographs of candidates showing the changes in their image presentation.*

One aspect of these changes that should be mentioned is that of the change in the quality of the photographs of the candidates, particularly those published in political advertisements. The simple black-and-white amateur photographs of the earlier years, with their serious or scowling faces, underwent a gradual metamorphosis that transformed them into small works of art, displaying total harmony of colour, shadow and background image. In these new-style, spiced-up photographs the candidates, impeccably dressed and groomed, appeared charming,

visionary, confident, assured, and at the same time human and approachable, worthy of being entrusted with the people's vote (Table 16).

This change was the result not only of the possibilities of modern technology, which made it possible to print better quality newspapers, but also of the will of the candidates to project the best possible image of themselves and of the involvement of consultants who contributed their particular expertise.

### **(11) The partisanship of Greek newspapers**

One final qualitative dimension recorded by the research was the intense partisanship of the newspapers, particularly those published in Athens. The newspapers made frequent and favourable mention of the candidates of the party they backed: ELEFTHEROS TYPOS and KATHIMERINI supported the candidates of the New Democracy Party, TA NEA and ELEFTHEROTYPIA supported PASOK, and AVGI and RIZOSPASTIS, respectively, the Coalition of the Left and the Greek Communist Party.

In these newspapers references to candidates of opposing parties were minimal and usually negative; very rarely were they neutral or positive. The candidates themselves concentrated their promotional efforts on the newspapers that supported their party, and avoided appearing in newspapers that supported a different one, evidently in order to focus on a target public from which it might expect votes.

The two local newspapers, THESSALONIKI and MAKEDONIA, on the other hand, were manifestly less partisan, and thus contained references to candidates of every party, and particularly the two largest ones.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

There are four conclusions that may be drawn from this research:

### **(1) There was a marked difference in the frequency and manner of candidate presentation in favour of elected candidates**

The research data revealed a clear superiority in the frequency and manner of presentation of elected over non-elected candidates. The elected candidates appeared on average 3.3 times more often than those who were not elected. The references to them were longer, they were more likely to appear on the front page and they were

more often accompanied by a photograph. There was also considerable variety in the reasons for mention and in the location and manner in which the candidate appeared.

This difference was due to the high degree of recognizability of the elected candidates on account of the fact that they were public figures, political or otherwise, to their better news management, to their better relations with the gatekeepers of the press, or to the more substantial capital that they invested in their campaigns.

**(2) There was a significant difference in the frequency and manner of candidate presentation between the Thessaloniki and the Athens newspapers**

The local Thessaloniki newspapers presented the candidates standing for election in that city more often than did the Athens press, particularly in the case of non-elected candidates. They also published far more photographs, press releases and candidate advertisements. The commonest reason for mention in the local newspapers was a press release. The Athenian newspapers were more likely to promote the elected candidates and the candidates of the party they supported. The most frequent reason for mention in the Athens newspapers was a news item, editorial or reportage. The non-elected candidates were virtually excluded from the Athenian newspapers.

There are several reasons for this: (a) the Thessaloniki newspapers focused more on local matters and figures, (b) the non-elected candidates were not usually nationally known figures or did not practise good news management or lacked the channels of access that would allow them to be promoted in the Athens press, (c) the Athenian newspapers were highly partisan and selectively presented the candidates of the party they supported and, finally, (d) the candidates themselves preferred the local press, for financial reasons and in order to better target the local electorate.

**(3) Over the research period there was a change in the frequency and manner of presentation of candidates**

Over the course of the period covered by the research there was an increase in the frequency of references to candidates, in advertisements placed, in non-political news items and in the number of references accompanied by a photograph of the candidate. There was also a change in the image representation of the candidates, especially in advertisements. The photographs in the more recent campaign periods were clearly more professional and the candidates pictured as more trustworthy, more human, even more charming, than had been the case in the past.

This change was due to the use of new processing and printing technologies, to the impact of television, to changes in the structure of the newspapers and to the enrichment of their subject matter. The press to a certain degree adopted the logic of infotainment and the pictorialisation of information. Another contributing factor lay in the endeavours of the candidates themselves, who realised the importance of positive promotion in the press and hired experts to secure the best possible results.

#### **(4) The difference in the frequency and manner of presentation affected the electability of the candidates**

This difference in the frequency and manner of presentation between elected and non-elected candidates gave the former a significant comparative advantage over the latter. It increased their recognizability factor, their prestige and their recall potential. It projected them as more able, more experienced, more effective, and at the same time more human and closer to the voters.

It may fairly be argued that frequent and favourable promotion had a significant effect on the election chances of the candidates. The mechanism is easy to explain. If voters are to form an opinion about an issue or a candidate, they must first know something about the subject, and presentation in the press gave elected candidates this recognizability factor. It created a framework, shaping the thinking and concerns of the voters in relation to the candidates. Candidates who lacked this exposure remained unknown to the general public and their chances of being elected were minimal.

It could be counter-argued that the space of a single month, which is the timeframe considered in this present research, is too small for press promotion to have any effect on the electorate. However, before the beginning of the official campaign period there were very few references to the non-elected candidates, while the elected candidates were considerably more frequently mentioned on account of their existing public recognition.

It could also be argued that since television is the sovereign medium of mass communication, the impact of the press is therefore limited. However, the press was clearly both more focused and more politicised than television. There was also an observable homogeneity of media messages, since the press copied the television to a considerable degree. Consequently both media essentially presented and promoted the same people.



Another contrary opinion that could be sustained is that the media, and particularly the press, are not all-powerful. Although this is frequently debatable, it is certain that the media, as we have said, do shape the thinking of the recipients of their messages, especially in cases where there is no interpersonal communication and personal opinion is non-existent.

Finally, it might be argued that elected candidates were often negatively presented in the press. But this negative presentation occurred in newspapers that supported opposing parties. Consequently, these newspapers did not affect the candidates' voters, since they did not read them.

All these points demonstrate the influence of the frequency and manner of presentation on the electability of candidates. Obviously the influence of the press on the candidates' success at the polls was neither uniform nor decisive. There are many other factors that must be taken into account that affect the election of a candidate, including his personality, his past record, the treatment he receives from the other media, the support he gets from his party, the rest of his election campaign, the unexpected events that crop up during the campaign, and much more besides. Then, too, there were candidates who were fairly well presented yet failed to be elected, and others who were little promoted but were elected. Publicity does not assure electoral success. The manner in which a message is presented is not identical with the manner in which it is received or the degree to which it is influential.

It is therefore not possible to talk of a clear determination of the degree of influence over the electorate. The methodology used does not permit such a thing, since it is limited to the way in which the message is projected. It cannot study the way in which the message is received, or the degree to which the recipients are influenced by it. This ought to be done for the period covered, but would require other methods, such as questionnaires or focus groups, which could record the effects of the difference in presentation on the readers of the newspapers with a "stimulus-reaction" model, keeping the remaining factors unchanged.

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News flow in the age of Globalization: the interrelation of local,  
national and global

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## 1. Introduction

Globalization is the word that many understand but few can define; it not only that is difficult to define, but in most cases, the multiplicity of valid definitions allows many interpretations, various focused definitions that leave a lot of space not only for misunderstanding but also ambiguity. This introduction will look into the more solid definitions of globalization, categorize the various schools of thought with the ultimate goal of this introduction it to show the path that links globalization with communications and media. A definition is imperative at this early point: this paper refers to mass media when it talks about “media” and to media communication when it talks about communication/s. Therefore the focus is on the role of the mass media and how they influence – if at all do so- the process of globalization.

To achieve such a goal it is important to go through the various definitions and see whether they include any element that proves the link between globalization, communication and media. What is globalization? A first, working hypothesis would be that globalization is the current state of the world; defined by the international, global, movement of capital, services and people; the outcome of less barriers between the society of nation-states; a prevailing inability to stay solely local through the over exposure of the network of media both local and international

For Shirato and Webb (2003) “globalization is a “name that is used to designate the power relations, practices, and technologies that characterize...what it means is less than precise” (1). They quote Matellart who define globalization as “one these tricky words, one of those instrumental notions that, under the effect of market logics and without citizens being aware from it , have been naturalized to the point of becoming indispensable for establishing communication between people of different cultures (2000) (1). Taking as a starting point the “hegemonic role of globalization in both organization and decoding the reality” they continue by attaching globalization to “process of modernization” and to the politics of naming, “naming the establishment of reality” ; in other words, globalization re-names various processes, creating new names for established practices in order to create a new understanding (2) In this process media play the important role as the they introduce, circulate and familiarize – through repetition- the “naming process”. An example of that can be the media responses after 9/11 tragedy Although is too early to get into the details of this example, it is important to clarify that the outcome of the tragic events shaped what we refer as 9/11 is a proof of the politics of naming; the war against terror, the need for a “global reaction” and the almost automatic co-relation between events as Afghanistan, Iraq and Islam and its approach to the “West” uses globalization as a pretext to rename issues and procedures in order to promote a certain discourse across platform.

Malcolm (2001) starts exploring the roots of globalization as a term by looking into its historical evolution. He states that there are so many controversies surrounding the term per se and therefore people “don’t know whether the old Marxist or functionalist theories can be adapted to explain globalization or whether we need to construct novel

arguments” (1). The first use of word global he continues can be traces in the 50s and the first thinker to offer a comprehensive definition was Giddens in 1990 and Robertson in 1992. Comparing the two definitions, Malcolm believes that the best approach is to examine where globalization as a process will lead, how the world would like at the end of those processes. Is globalization going to be a harmonizing force, or will it lead to a world where culture will look homogenized but will not be? Will territoriality cease to be the main concern, and therefore the importance of nation state will be less important than today? Incorporating the questions and knowledge stemming from the historical approach of the term Malcolm offers his definition of globalization:

*“A social process in which the constraints of geography on economic, political, social and cultural arrangement recede, in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly” (Malcolm, 2001:5)*

Going a step further he sees globalization as a highly Europeanized term, “a direct consequence of European culture across the Planet through settlement, colonization and cultural replication” and also “ a deterritorialization of social and especially of political arrangements that has proceeded most rapidly in the Western part of the continent – borders are becoming de-emphasized and varieties of supra and infra-nationalism are proliferating.” (6). I tend to disagree with the above due to the fact, that, if globalization is highly Europeanized why it did not succeed to unite Europe within a Federal apparatus? EU is an international, multi state organization that still faces problems with any attempt to transcend from an international organization of economic synergies and legal harmonization. Therefore, maybe globalization perceived in this part of the world but still remains effective through the American economic model of

capitalism; to put simply and bluntly, Mc Donald is closer to globalization than Vivendi or BBC and thus someone can claim that globalization started as a European concept but developed and spread to the world with an American dynamic.

Still in all the above, the link between globalization and communication and media is not even fully traceable. Marx believes that through globalization among other things "...the intellectual creations of individual nations become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature ( Marx:1977 quoted in Malcolm 2001:9) and Malcolm refers to Mc Luhan idea of the "Global Village" in which he says that "industrial media, transportation and money are being displaced by electronic media that can restore the collective culture of tribalism but on expansive global scale". From the above, one can draw the conclusion that the communication/media element can be traced in the cultural side of globalization; of course, from culture it transcends to politics and international relations, as culture is over and beyond artistic artifacts and expression, culture involves an inherited pattern of systematic approach to all social processes. Culture is not the basic element of this paper's argument but still no one can deny that culture in its broader terms is equally important for globalization per se, but also for communication.

In Rantanen's , *The Media and Globalization*,(2005) there are various definitions of globalization along with the attempt to connect the notion with the media. She opens the introduction of her book saying that media and globalization "go together like horse and carriage" (1) as Mc Luhan (1967) made the connection of his "media is the message" with the Global village Further on she states that more theorists "agree that "there is practically no globalization without media and communications, as many of the



definitions at least indirectly acknowledge...but, although this role is obvious in theories, is not necessarily visible. ...role of media and globalization remains vague and specified....as media studies missed the big picture of globalization”(4). . Malcolm seems to agree by saying that in the region of culture globalization can be traced in “social arrangements for the production, exchange and expression of symbols (signs) that represent facts, affects, meanings, beliefs, commitments, preferences, tastes and values.” (17) and leads to “universalization, the abstraction of values and standards to a very high level of generality that will permit extreme levels of cultural differentiation” ( 22)

Rantanen believes that all above theorists are extremely pessimistic about globalization although they accept that “it changes people lives”. Moreover, the “mediated elements generates the idea that globalization’s experience in not real but second hand experience that is filtered by the media. This mediation according to Rantanen need a new approach ( 11).

Rantanen believes that three fields are important for examination to highlight the –special – relationship between globalization and the media: Communication Studies, Media and cultural studies and globalization. It is inevitable all the above to be checked from the western perspective. US communication studies have in general preferred the term “international communication’ rather than global media and therefore again both the label of media and globalization is different.

As in the USA, British media studies have concentrated mainly on the role of the media as institutions in the process of globalization meaning the factors of technology, ownership patterns and news gathering and how all these interrelate with economy, communication and global. Moreover, she notes that for Boyd-Barrett ( 98:2) and Sparks

(98:122) “globalization is a flawed conceptual tool or the global public sphere should be replaced by the term imperialist, private sphere. The level of analysis again emphasizes communications structures rather than individual experience and repeats earlier conceptualizations about international relations. (3) and Sarvaes (2000:314) notes “ the whole process of communication as a cultural process” along with “heterogenizing consequences of globalization” (p)

This is a central point to clarify: globalization, whatever it may be, a process, a condition, a tool or a fact, it involves people, interpersonal interaction and social relationships. Running through from the basic – for example face-to-face communication- to more complex – media consumption or cultural exchange- the communication is the main, the basic element through which globalization is both understood and visualized through a communicative action: a transaction, an interpersonal exchange or at least a two points circuit of information. Still, this does not put the media into the central core of globalization, and it is imperative to show the connection of media and globalization.

### 1.2 Defining globalization

How the various schools of thought define globalization and which are these groups? Rantanen (2005) tries to describe the three groups of school of thought along with giving the major definitions.

Rantanen believes that the three phases have been embedded in almost every conceptualization of globalization either explicitly or implicitly. (5) and she quotes

Held et al (1999) who has distinguished the three broad different schools among globalization theorists:

- Hyperglobalizers, with leading figure in this group is Ohmae (1995) who predicts the end of the traditional nation-state)
- The skeptics with leading figure Hirst and Thompson (1996) claim that globalization is a myth and that is only heightened level of national economies
- and the transformationalists with leading figures Giddens 1990 and Castels (1996) who argue that globalization is “a central driving force behind the social, political, and economic changes that are reshaping modern societies and world order.

Moreover, Waters (1995) and Held (1999) divide globalization in different sectors/spheres: the political, economic and cultural and then define each sphere accordingly; but such classification, still, leaves media in limited/subordinated role especially within culture sphere. In all the above, both the different schools and Waters and Held, as Rantanen also notes, media are absent in clear relation or inter-connection. In other words, although global is existent only or mostly when communicated, still the media role need to be clearly put within the description of globalization.

Shirato and Webb (2003) quote Held and Mc Crew to include two other “schools of thought” for globalization:

- The Globalists – the believers, those who think globalization is real and
- The skeptics- those who think that globalization is “simply a continuation of trends that developed in the period of European Colonial expansion and interrupted from the two World Wars. (Shirato and Webb,7)

Busch distinguishes the schools to liberals – sharing almost the same views with globalists – and skeptics. Another working classification is those that talks for Marxists (including thinkers like Hardt, Negri who focus on the relationship between history, ideology and globalization) and Neomarxists (including thinkers like Mattelart, Castells, Baudrillard and Appadurai among others who focus to the extent to which technological developments have brought about a change in societies, cultures and individuals concerning their function and understanding) (8). The writers, examining the various definitions and aspects of globalization, among them “the informationalism”, time/space, they explore the notion of “global public sphere” (pp11, 20). A clarification at this point is that what the informational side of globalization is in question here, not globalization of politics or economics.

Checking the various definitions as presented by Rantanen might help. For Lull (2000:150) globalization is :... ”*is best considered a complex set of interacting and often countervailing human, material and symbolic flows that lead to diverse, heterogeneous cultural positionings and practices, which persistently and variously modify established sectors of social, political and cultural power*”... Symbolic flows that modify established sectors but how? How this modification occurs and which are the basic tools for the action of modification?

Giddens (1990) sees globalization materializing in three phases:

- a. The first phase discuss whether globalization ever existed
- b. The second phase shift the focus from if it indeed existed to the real consequences of globalization and

c. the third phase – which we enter now- looks into ways of dealing with the negative consequences of globalization. For him “*Globalization is the interaction of world wide social relations, which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa*” Again, the notion of change, modification prevails but still no clear sign on really how this becomes possible.

For Thompson (1995) “*Globalization refers to growing interconnectedness of different parts of the world, a process which gives rise to complex forms of interaction and interdependency*” And in reference to the globalization of communication, he mentions

“*Globalization is the process in which worldwide economic, political culture and social relations have become increasingly mediated across time and space...The development of the new media consist simply in the establishment of new networks for the transmission of information between individuals whose basic relationship remains intact. Rather, the development of media and communications creates new forms of action and interaction and new kinds of social relationships- forms that are different from the kind of face-to-face interaction which has prevailed for most of human history (1995).* The types of interaction face-to-face, mediated, mediated quasi interaction and especially the third, applies to media initiated social interaction. (9)

The key word in the above is the term “mediated” which allows to take a step further the exploration of the link between globalization and communications: Since it is a mediated process, through the “new networks for the transmission” that create new form of action and interaction, it means that globalization indeed is mainly communicated and basically is visible when communicated, when it uses existent social structures to transfer and

change them. A good example of that could be global exposure of risk: terrorism is a global risk that affects not only the occurring locality but almost all places through the domino, inter-related chain of events justified or unjustified. At this point any further explanation might seem irrelevant and therefore risk is used as an example that applies to many individuals and various countries.

Away from communication and close to vague definition Robertson (1992) sees “

*Globalization as a concept refers both to of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole.* In a more societal approach (1990) believes that *globalization refers to all those processes by which the people of the world are incorporated into a single world society, global society.* What defines a global society, what is the unifying factor of such society? Is there a prevailing culture in a “single world society”? The definition is not clear on that issue but allows us to understand that Robertson sees globalization as unifying process.

### 1.3 The role of Media as agents of the globalization

Media have a central role, especially in the “current drive for globalization of production, markets and trade as Siochru of ILO believes. For him the issue of ownership is very important as it transferred from national public ownership to global private ownership. The role of the media is this of an enabler of the globalization as they facilitate the whole process through the sophisticated telecommunication networking and, the creative industries – cinema, television, books etc- through consumerism and individualism, work as “an essential precondition and accompaniment to the opening of new markets”. In sense “*directly in their role as enablers of globalization, the social consequences of the*

*media and communication sector are primarily mediated through the sectors that they facilitate. For instance, the social consequences of facilitating the emergence of globalized financial transactions and manufacturing industries are ultimately a function of the globalization of these sectors, while the social consequences of the opening of markets for “lifestyle products”, such as fast food and cosmetics, are a result of the growth of these sectors.(1).*

Again the word mediated is the vital here; the media work as the available network, assisted linking apparatus to communicate both in time and space the elements of globalization, creating a new impact and, even unintentionally, in some cases the media itself are promoted from facilitators to true agents of change- and at this point change is not necessarily negative or positive “The second special characteristic of the globalization of the media and communication sector is as a *powerful agent* in the transformation of social, cultural and political structures. “ And therefore can influence “*the globalization of media that have the most impact of all, namely the evolving cumulative impact of the gradual commercialization of media and communications on critical social functions, such as the formation of individual and community identity, cultural and language diversity, the capacity to participate in the political process and the integrity of the public sphere, the availability of information and knowledge in the public domain, and the use of media for development, educational and human rights purposes.*”(2).

The answer to the negative trend of the powerful of the media is, according to Siochru, the tentative emergence of the influence of civil society and the rise of “people’s” media: *“Although civil society, in the form of NGOs, has long been recognized within the United Nations system, it was only at the Earth Summit in 1991 that it began to take on a more organized and collective role, moving on from individual consultations with ECOSOC and the specialized agencies. But it was because of NGO activity outside the United Nations system, at least formally, that the other players began to sit up and take notice. The success achieved in opposing the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) initiative and the street demonstrations against the WTO, G8 and others, converted civil society into a new category of actor on the global scene, the implications of which are still being played out. In media and communications, however, there has been little direct action, and only slightly more in formal intergovernmental structures. (9-10)*

Unable to agree with the above, I would say that the people’s media are often hijacked by the reality television facet – the commercialized version of “people’s media” for some – and the pseudo dilemmas of those who want to demonize communication that evolves both media and media professionals. Media are indeed facilitators of globalization, are indeed the Trojan horse for consumerism, but ANY mediated message, from hard news to big Brother, carry a “truth value”. As a “truth value” I mean the amount of information, the ability to learn something you did not know before. A good example of the true value can be Al Jazeera Arabic news Channel: The CNN of the arab world, put together in liberal Qatar by ex BBC trained media professionals, showed the altera parce of War on Iraq and War against terrorism. No matter that I mostly disagree with its angle of brutal coverage, and choice of sides, a fair observer has to admit that it offered a



balanced act in the western dominance of global coverage of global events. It created a point of reference that one could disagree with but could not stop considering caring its own “truth value”.

The next step is to understand how the media act as “facilitators of globalization”, in what way they communicate the mediated message. A special role is given to news agencies and their evolution that coincides with the special role attached to media overall. Barrett and Rantanen, in *The Globalization of News* ( 1998) enforce the case for media being the facilitators by focusing in the role of news agencies, the starting point in the nexus of news dispatch across the globe. A story is gathered by a news agency and then beamed to other national and international media. They believe that the role of news agencies has been recognized by UNESCO, and are in a sense the first global media organizations, among the first of the world’s transnational or multinational corporations. Accepting the status of news as “a process that lies the heart of modern capitalism and globalization, the co modification of news for pleasure, business and market formulation, they show that “news” as an entity became integral element of globalized capitalism.

*“the news agencies were among the world’s first organizations to operate, not only globally, but to operate globally in the production and distribution of ‘consciousness’, through the commodification of news, in ways had very significant implications for our understanding or appreciation of time and space” (5)*

The evolution of news agencies showed that they had to transform from an organization attached to the nation-state, to an organization that could be powerful enough to promote the image of this given nation-state in the world; “ mass media reporting of foreign affairs very often governs what kind of image of a country or a culture predominates”

(Kunczik, 2001:4). Since news agencies was part of the established process to be a nation ( Barrett and Rantanen, 8) and later created the two layer system – the global agencies pex Reuters and their national partners pex ANA (Athens News Agency) – it is obvious that such system was crucial for the process of globalization itself: To get informed one needs the wholesale of information from the periphery ( national and international media) to the center ( the global agencies at start and digital media later) and through the center to the whole network of media channels. Simplistic but obvious pattern of the ‘mediated’, or the route of information which spreads the message by perception: decoding by consumption the information from different space in small time frame is one of the most notable signs of globalization. Live TV, Internet and foreign correspondents from the war stage anywhere in the world is an obvious proof that the international expands to become global

Technology enhances the role of media as facilitator; Waisbord and Morris in *Media and Globalization* (2001) believe among other writers that “the coming of digital technologies and system that transcends geographical limitations, coupled with the unfettered worldwide expansion of media and telecommunications companies represent the latest assault against the state sovereignty (viii). Part of that sovereignty includes, among other things, the communication sovereignty, meaning the ability for a state to monopolize the inflow of ideas, cultural discourse. State loses the autonomy, and therefore for some globalization utilizing the media agents or facilitators manages to move the homogeneity from the national level to the cross-national; this becomes possible through the interlinking apparatus of homogenized fragments. The above, for optimist of media’s role, is the “opening of new possibilities and faster access to information” and for the

pessimists this is “a kind of information utopias as myth rather than real prospects ( Ferguson 1992 in Waisbord and Morris, xi)...the process by which media corporations gain power and untrammled market forces consolidate their hegemony...”. In both approaches, one fact remains: State or inter-state apparatus (like the EU) continues to set the framework of media systems through regulation and licensing and therefore the can control the overall performance of media as facilitators of globalization

*“Globalization has made it more difficult for all states to monopolize the information that citizens consume.....” (xvi )*

The future of nation state is not of main focus here; the main focus lies in the role of media in the process of globalization. Media systems are vital to disseminate information for both perceiving global and communicating national in the international level; Media can be called the Trojan horse of globalization and as the only effective vehicle for the national to be communicated. Globalization is not mainly a media process but mainly though the mediated message the global is perceived and visualized. Mediated in economy, culture, socio-structural, or simply as unit of information, what is clear is that without the media systems networks global becomes virtual, fantasy, non existent. Within the media systems we include all mass media that can be state or privately owned and cover both politics or financial issues.

Moreover, through the interrelation of global media with the national counterparts, the mediated is occurring from the global to the national level meaning that the message is packaged centrally, dispatched globally and the re-packaged nationally to feed the national audiences. The filters, procedures, and role of the media professionals during

that continuous process are both important but still unclear, meaning when and if, the media professionals are in a position to influence the raw material of their trade: footage, or text.

#### 1.4 The Greek Media case study

Greece is a European country, member of the EU and EBU. Its media market is developed but saturated. The dawn of 21<sup>st</sup> century witnessed the end of state monopoly in both Radio and Television (1989) the collapse of two from the three digital pay-tv platforms (2001-2002) and the introduction of the Internet. At the moment Greek media landscape offers all the services and option of an average western country with a balance between American and European/Greek content.

News industry follow the prevailing pattern of extensive news bulletins that focus in the national agenda giving limited space for the foreign news. Still, the last five years show the major media outlets to invest in foreign correspondents and footage from abroad. The crisis in Afghanistan, 9/11 terrorist attacks and the war on Iraq forced Greek media to dispatch journalists to the crisis area and main global centers – such as London, Paris and Berlin- to follow in a localized but also global outlook the major events.

The crisis in the former Yugoslavia was a testing time: Greek media due to geography and history had the opportunity to play a different role. From a small part of the peripheral apparatus of global media, Greek media could become a primary source for footage and coverage of the crisis. Whether they succeeded in that respect or not, is too early to say, but the fact that even at present time Greece doesn't have a 24/7 news channel proves the Greek market is developing but yet cannot be labeled as developed.

Being a media professional for the last 12 years and a London based foreign correspondent for the last 5 years, allows me to try to decode the flow of the same information though different “mediated” channels: the Greek with the Greek audience, the international with the Greek audience and the Global with Greek focus. Moreover, I will examine the concept of trilateral juxtaposition of a foreign correspondent functioning from a global center: coming from a different country, living and briefing from another country and at the same time developing an attachment with the country of residence.

The case of Greek television will allow to compare and contrast how the issues of size (of media market, country and media output), influence and evolution follow the pattern of global role of the media. Beyond that, the Greek market can give vital information into how\* :

- a. A peripheral national media apparatus perform when for any reason can play the role of global one and
- b. The journalists operating from a global centre to the periphery contribute into the filtering and distribution of a given unit of information

\* The basic tools for the above would be content analysis, personal interviews and comparative presentation of statistics.

### 1.5 Conclusion

Globalization is a process that involves the change of patterns in society; it entails the interaction of various actors within the framework of capitalism. Although many define globalization, there is not yet a commonly accepted, authoritative definition; many thinkers, like Robertson, Giddens, Rantanen, Malcolm, and even Marx approach the term through various angles.

The majority of thinkers agree to the fact that globalization carries along power structures changing existing realities for new ones; a European invention for some, a western for others, globalization remains the focal point of post modernism. The focus of my analysis is not globalization per se but how globalization is communicated and which is the role –

and the changes involved in their role- of media within that procedure. Incorporated to globalization and vital to its existence and perception are the media. Some like McLuhan, Malcolm and Rantanen and Marx show see the role of the media as the “facilitators” which are part of the “cultural side” of globalization. In other words, media and communication system are the apparatus that can, not only give life to what we call globalization, but also visualize the its effects.

Still, having established the special role of media, the question is to define the changes that media impose and equally the changes imposed to media; the new global landscape from news agencies to the totality of media seek to have some powerful center(s) and many multi-focal peripheral points of deeper distribution . Globalization affects nation-states but doesn't nullify their importance completely. Media outlets have a role to that too, as media professionals have also. The exact role is still to be found, explained and analyzed; but the fact remains that media are not only facilitators but also actor insofar as are operated by professionals who, indeed, have a role in micro and macro level social processes .

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