



Dr. Athanassios N. Samaras

"The Effect of News Events upon Nation Images: The Case Study of the Image of the USA in the Greek Press"

This presentation focuses on the journalistically mediated nation image and the effects than news events have upon the construction of nation image. The theoretical framework is based on the agenda setting and framing. Central is the role of priming according to which media emphasis on particular issues not only confers status (or increased salience), but also activates in people's memories previous acquired information about these issues. The power of the news media is related with their capacity to make particular topics (agenda setting) or aspect of the topics (framing) more accessible to the audience (Iyengar, 1991). Previous research has documented such effects at the level of international relations (Soroka 2003) and of the nation images ((Brewer, Graf και Willnat 2003, Kiouisis και Wu 2008))

The "War on Terrorism" master-narrative construct the nation image of the USA within a conflictual frame structure. Usually the central object of a mediated conflict is no isolated matter but linked in many ways to other matters. The process of instrumental actualization (Keplinger, 1992) affects nation image making when an instrumental matter which is objectively linked with the central conflict object - or subjectively perceived to be so linked- is put in the public spotlight. This event strengthens the disputed nation while enhancing the transference of the image attributes from the event to the image of the nation.

In this content analysis the depiction of the USA in the articles of four Greek newspapers is examined. The instrumental actualization of different news topics for the nation image of the USA is examined. Under examination is (a) the agenda of news items comprising the mediated image of the USA in the Greek press (b) the instrumental actualization of the topic, i.e. if it contributes positively or negatively to the nation image of the USA (c) the evaluation load, how intense this contribution is and (d) the blame game process for every event or policy attributes to the USA which is perceived as having negative consequences.

The content analysis results are related with strategies for managing the mediated nation image. The instrumental actualization approach suggests the management of the mediated nation images through the management of the media agenda and the long-range displacement of negatively by positively actualized events. Alternative, key-issues should be "reframed" in order to contribute positively to the nation image.

Moreover the results of the research are related with a central question: to what extend the negative nation image of the USA that has been formulated as a result of the Iraq engagement and the Bush presidency will totally undermine "Brand USA" or, alternatively, if the latter has enough symbolic power in order to restore the nation image of the USA (Anholt και Hildreth 2004, Martin 2007). Moreover, the results are related with the extend that the recent election of Obama in the Presidency of the USA may result to the disengagements of the nation image of the USA of negative image attributes.

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1993-2007 [Television Political Advertising in Greece 1993-2007] (2008, Kastaniotis Publications), 15 journal articles and book chapters and has delivered over 50 research presentations at conferences. His articles have been published in Greek, English and French while his work has also been translated to Russian and Turkish. He is part of the editorial board of the Journal of e-Government and the Journal of Political Marketing. He has taught at the Cyprus University of Technology, the Navy War School and the Hellenic National Defence School. Currently Dr. Samaras is teaching at the University of Piraeus. He has conducted political campaigns in Greece and Cyprus and worked as strategic communication consultant in various corporations.