

GPSG NEWSLETTER 05 – OCTOBER 2005

Dear Colleagues

Welcome to the fifth newsletter of the Greek Politics Specialist Group. This issue contains the usual amount of news about the Group and our future activities, along with two great articles: an analysis of the state of e-Government in Greece; as well as a Network B article-review of the recent International Conference on Political Marketing.

Please note **two important deadlines**:

- (a) we are approaching the deadline for the submission of abstracts to the 2006 Annual PSA Conference at Reading. Please send your paper proposals as soon as possible either to Andrew Liaropoulos or myself.
- (b) abstracts for the 2006 International Conference on Political Marketing should be submitted to the conference convenors by November 1st (see: www.conference.rsunit.com)

Keep sending your material, news and comments to rgerodimos@bournemouth.ac.uk and zisouli@otenet.gr

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1. Latest News:

Membership; Athens Meeting; GPSG @ Reading; Fukuoka 2006

- As of October 16th our **membership** stands at **116**. A full list of members is available [upon request](#). Thank you to all those who responded to our call for research interests and affiliations and a special thanks to Tassos Chardas for undertaking this significant task. Membership to the GPSG is free – if you would like to become a member or to nominate someone who is interested please contact our Secretary Andrew Liaropoulos (aliaropoulos@hotmail.com).
- The GPSG's **summer Committee meeting** took place on July 28th in Athens, and was well-attended. The Committee discussed several important issues relating both to the substance of our activities, as well as the management of the Group itself. The minutes and action points that were produced are available.
- Our Call for Papers (CFP) for the **56th Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association** (PSA) at the University of Reading is approaching its deadline, so we would urge those of you who wish to join us to submit a 200-word titled abstract and your full contact details as soon as possible to either Andrew (A.LIAROPOULOS.360383@swansea.ac.uk) or myself.
- Finally, I am delighted to confirm that our panel and paper proposals for the 20th World Congress of the International Political Science Association (IPSA) (**Fukuoka 2006**) have been approved by the conference referees. We are now in the process of seeking sponsors to support this effort. Your input and ideas on that are most welcome; please email Maria (zisouli@otenet.gr).

2. Analysis:

e-Government in Greece

by Nikolaos Markoulakis

The state in modern times is considered to be gradually involved with two main challenges: localization of everything non-mobile and non-productive and globalization of everything mobile and lucrative. The financial and legitimating challenges and competition in the concept of the continuing technological progress –the so called New Information and Communication Technologies (NICTs) - created the need for a "new public management". In this need, e-Government was shaped.

However, as it has been suggested by Burn and Robins (2003: 26) in their excellent study 'Moving towards e-Government: a case study of organizational

change processes', "e-Government is not just about putting forms and services online. It provides the opportunity to rethink how the government provides services and how it links them in a way that is tailored to the users' needs". E-Government, therefore, is the future establishment of a new flexible and continuing changeable government-to-businesses and government-to-citizens interrelationship (see Davison, Wagner & Louis, 2005, 'From government to e-government: a transition model', *Information Technology & People*, 18, (3), 2005 pp. 280-299).

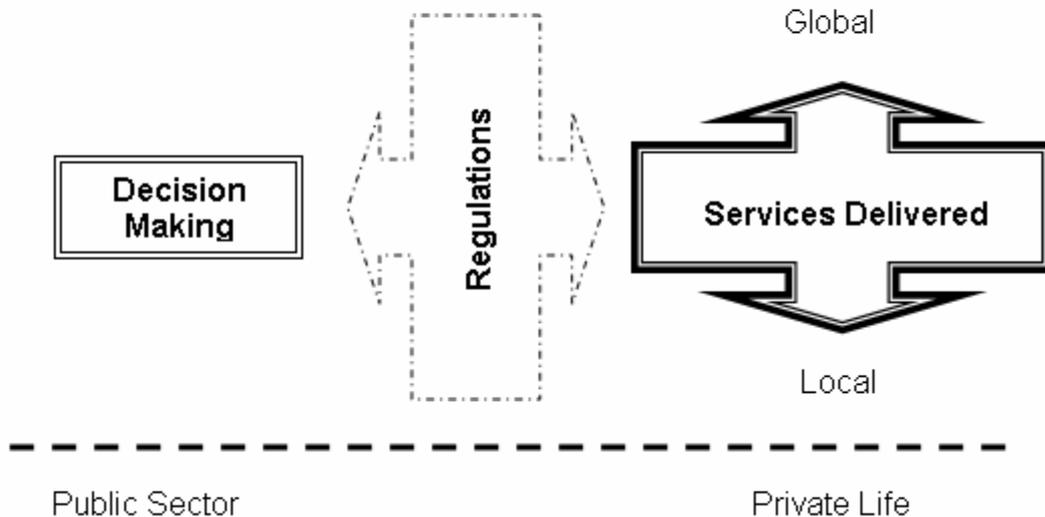
In Europe, e-Government is considered to be one of the main goals for the future. Hence, a project was launched under the title: '*e-Europe 2005 action plan: An information society for all*'. Likewise, in early September 2005 a Communication call for synchronized actions that can provide a broader accessibility to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has been announced. Main issues in the EU agenda on ICT are based on three contact elements in between government and business relations, such as attaining information, downloading forms, and returning filled-in forms. Throughout Europe, however, companies intend not to use the returning filled-in forms electronically. According to the Tech Europe (22/2/2005), only a percentage of 21% of individuals is frequently accessing information via e-Government's establishments in the European Union, whilst the 10% is downloading official forms, and even less is returning filled-in forms. The numbers of e-Government users in Denmark, Finland and Sweden as well as the United Kingdom are more than the remainder of the EU member states.

In Greece, e-Government is at an early stage of establishment. If we consider and agree that e-Government has five basic infrastructure elements, in Greece only two are actually functional. In particular, e-Government requires a Portal on utility issues, or in other words an enterprise information portal (EIP), a wide range Network namely that can cover effectively Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), metropolitan area networks (MANs) or local area networks, an e-Identification infrastructure (e-II)– known as Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) – an e-Procurement infrastructure (e-PI), which is basically a system for purchase and sale of supplies and services throughout the world wide web as well as numerous other info and networking systems such as the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP). Finally, Knowledge Management (KM) infrastructure is the organization, formation, distribution and steering of knowledge within organizations and institutions.

From the above mentioned basic functional elements of e-Government, it can be argued that Greece has a minor success in getting a functional Portal known as Citizen Service Center (KEP) (www.kep.gov.gr that is the official site of KEP provides access to public service information and to a number of standard administrative procedures). The rise of Citizen Service Centers, according to the White Paper entitled '*Greece in the Information Society: Strategy & Actions*', has perfectly coincided with the deployment of the network forms part of the *Ariadni* programme that digitizes around 800 clerical procedures and can be submitted via the Centers. By the use of e-kep platform, an IP network can be accomplished that files users' requests and creates an e-directory that secures the use of 'certified digital signature'. The significance of this system is centered

on its feature enabling real time on-line transactions between Citizens and public administration.

e-Government Towards Services Delivery:



The second element that is needed for a functional e-Government system is the existence of a Network. In Greece the National Public Administration Network (SYZEFXIS) is in use. The Greek public sector network SYZEFXIS provides sophisticated telecommunication and information services to over 1,000 public organizations and institutions by the use of four VPNs. It is harmonized with the development of MANs in roughly 50 municipalities across the country. Unfortunately, even though the Network seems to work well and be implemented, the e-II, e-PI and KM are not properly developed and deployed yet. This creates a problem for the whole system and for the future functioning of Greek e-Government.

The need for a fully functioning e-Government system in Greece is well known by both the former and the current Government. Under the pressing challenge of the national deficit, the Greek Deputy Finance Minister, Mr. Adam Rengouzas, has stated that the government's "aim [is] to attain e-government as soon as possible." (Xinhua News Agency 21/6/2005).

Additionally, during the 3rd E-Government Forum entitled as 'Government of the Future', Mr. Alogoskoufis, Minister of Finance, stated that

"unfortunately, because of the lack of consistent planning during the first three years of the 3rd Community Support Framework's implementation, [i]n Greece the concepts of an Information Society and e-government were considered as a jumbled sum of IT projects in the public sector, which by some magical manner were expected to ensure an improvement in the state's productivity, simply transforming 'wooden' stamps into electronic ones".

He also pledged that:

“...the government, via the Information Technology Committee, will unveil a new ‘digital strategy’ for the country during the next planning period, 2007-2013 [...] The new digital strategy will place the citizen, whether she or he is a businessperson, student, employee etc, at the centre of the Society of Information program” (Financial Times Information 29/5/2005).

Another key factor, however, which may best explain why e-Government has been unfruitful in Greece is the very limited access of the citizens in the World Wide Web. Only 17% of Greece’s population has the necessary internet access and digital literacy (only 7.2% with e-learning support and training), with 24% of Greeks using computers, 1% of households with broadband connection and 21% of enterprises with broadband connection. E-commerce, including usage of the Internet by individuals for purchasing and ordering goods or services as well as enterprises having purchased and received orders via Internet, has shown a 5.2% increase. As far as the interaction between individuals or enterprises and public authorities is concerned, information sharing and administrative interrelationship is less than 10% (Eurostat 2003-2004). This data is not very promising and therefore cannot guarantee a successful implementation of e-Government.

Having said that, the Citizen Service Centre Internet portal has gradually developed by receiving over 9 million visitors each month, and there has been an increase in the numbers of users occurring in 2003 - mainly young users, such as students - accessing government websites for consultation; a rate that is almost doubling in Greece every year.

Mr. Alogoskoufis has stated that:

“Greece, despite the fact that it has lost valuable time over the past decade in terms of exploiting information technology and e-government [according to Eurostat (2004) the government spent 1.2% of EU-25 GDP], it can now find its pace. In order to achieve this it must exploit every possible tool within the framework of a digital strategy being prepared by the government”.

Yet, as is usually the case, the governing party and the major opposition party appear to be blaming each other for the lack of the aforementioned infrastructure and more importantly for the deficiencies in policy- and decision-making in regards to e-Government development and functionality (Financial Times Information 29/5/2005).

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3. Thematic Network Article:

“Political Marketing: A New Promising Field for Scholars Interested in Greece

by Dr. Prodromos Yannas

The **2nd International Conference on Political Marketing (ICPM)** was held in Kastoria, **31 March – 2 April 2005**. The previous ICPM conference whose aim was to introduce the field of political marketing in Greece was also held in Kastoria in June 2003. Both conferences were organized by the Department of Public Relations and Communication of the Department of Public Relations & Communication and the Macedonian Research Centre of the Technological Educational Institution (TEI) of Western Macedonia.

These two conferences form part of activities undertaken by the TEI of Western Macedonia in order to contribute to the burgeoning field of political marketing and to encourage scholars interested in Greece to engage the political marketing literature in the Greek context. The research output of the first ICPM Conference appeared in a special issue (vol. 4, no.1, 2005) of the leading journal in the field, the *Journal of Political Marketing*. The same journal has committed to publish selected papers of the 2nd ICPM Conference in a double-issue scheduled to appear in 2007.

Developments in the field of political marketing have thus far been shaped mainly by the contributions of Anglo-American scholars who have been trained in the field of marketing and have taken upon the task to transpose, adjust and apply ideas, concepts and methods developed in the field of marketing to the political arena. The main research area has been **analysis of electoral contests**, directing attention to the needs of the customer (citizen-voter) and demonstrating the relevance of market research (surveys, focus groups, interviews, content analysis) in campaign strategy, message development, political advertising, etc.

Besides electoral contests where emphasis is placed on campaigns of candidates and political parties, other research foci include the development and implementation of campaigns by governments, lobbyists, interest groups, non-governmental organizations and civil society groups and movements. The theme of the 2nd ICPM Conference was **Political Marketing and Democracy**. The aim was to broaden scholarly participation by encouraging besides marketing experts, researchers working in the disciplines of communication studies and political science to engage in a dialogue with their colleagues in marketing.

The conference brought together **over 60 scholars** affiliated with universities in the USA, Europe, and Oceania. The conference featured a **keynote address** and papers were grouped and presented in 7 different sessions. **Professor Bruce Newman** of DePaul University (USA) and editor of the *Journal of Political*

Marketing delivered the keynote address where he traced the evolution of the field from its beginnings to the present. The United States does occupy a major part in the history of the field as a locus of attention and Professor Newman shared with the audience his reflections on the campaign strategies of contenders G. W. Bush and J. Kerry in the most recent 2004 U.S. Presidential election.

The **sessions** that followed concentrated on sub-topics such as theory developments, campaign strategy, marketing research and polling, political consulting, politics and the internet, international aspects of political communication and political advertising. Of course, this brief report cannot be comprehensive and cover all the presentations. In what follows, an attempt is made to highlight some **key points** raised in each session, with particular attention given to applications concerning Greece.

The session devoted to **theoretical developments** in political marketing featured two papers that were reflective in nature. Both papers called for political marketing experts to substitute a wider, more societal perspective, an alternative for the restricted managerial perspective that is prevalent today. N. Stasinopoulos critiqued the dominant utilitarian conception of the voter-consumer in political marketing as promoting a certain version of democracy and suggested the republican conception of citizenship as a corrective for a more political and inclusive understanding of democracy. The paper of S. Henneberg pointed out the limitations of the dominant managerial orientation in political marketing and outlined a new research agenda that emphasizes a more holistic attempt of achieving knowledge of politics.

Campaign strategy occupies a central place in political marketing research. Two sessions were devoted to **campaign strategy**, offering a wide variety of empirical studies drawn from different geographical and socio-political contexts. The first session focused on campaigns by candidates in a number of geographical settings: Belgium (P. De Vries), Cyprus (A. Samaras), Greece (T. Ikonomu, I. Kotzaivazoglou, M. Papageorgiou), Serbia (M. Turajlic), and the United States (A. Tackett; E. Sherman, L. Schiffman, S. Thelen).

The second session concentrated on **electoral campaigns** by parties in Bulgaria (A. Christov and B. Koutevski), Greece (L. Rori, C. Panagopoulos), Poland (A. Plonski), Turkey (N. Karacasulu Goksel and G. Bayraktaroglou) and of European socialist parties in selected countries (P. Ioannidis). The paper of Ikonomu et al compared elected to non-elected candidates in Thessaloniki for the 2004 national elections. Elected candidates, in contrast to non-elected, adopted a market-oriented campaign strategy, targeted a few groups, and managed to get free media favourable publicity in the local press. Shifting to party-focused campaign strategy, Rori and Panagopoulos concentrated on the recent leadership change in PASOK and explored the impact the electoral campaign had on the party's organization and transformation.

From a political marketing perspective, it is instructive that public opinion polls drove the leadership change from Simitis to G. Papandreou and a lot of new initiatives were positively received from the public, except the broadening of

party ballots with neo-liberals and left of centre politicians who had deserted their traditional party bases and a proposal for increasing employment without paying social security fees. My reading of this important finding postulates that had the new leadership more time available to conduct surveys and focus groups among party members prior to the electoral period, these two issues wouldn't enter the public sphere in the first place and wouldn't, as a consequence, hinder the party's transformation.

Polling is an essential component of political marketing work, both for researchers and practitioners. A session was devoted to **polling and models of voting behaviour**. The papers were diverse in scope. Regarding voting behaviour, one paper (Cwalina and Falkowski) compared electoral results in Poland and the US in an attempt to derive a cross-cultural model of voting behaviour, whereas another paper (Z. Lakatos) argued for taking lifestyle patterns seriously as explanatory variables in models of electoral choice. Using survey research data, one paper compared mail to web-based surveys (Ben-Ur) and the one dealing with Greece and in particular Thessaloniki (Chadjipadelis) sought to derive new axis and dimensions of political competition by grouping candidates by the attitudes of voters toward the candidates.

Media use by candidates and parties, as well as **media coverage of electoral contests**, are important research foci in political marketing. First and foremost, **political advertising** is thought to be exerting a potent influence on voter's choice. According to the study of Uztuk and Kutlu, a candidate focus is very prevalent in advertisements for local elections in Turkey. In the case of the 2004 Greek national elections, the paper of T. Doulkeri, N. Panagiotou and C. Kenterelidou, focused on women candidates and found that female traits such as honesty and patience rather than gender issues (equality of access to political office, to jobs, to education, closing the gap of salary differentials, etc) dominated the political advertising of women running as candidates of the conservative New Democracy party. The agenda setting function of the media in election period was investigated in the paper of I. Konstantinidis and the media's coverage and framing of the 2004 European elections by the Greek press was the topic of a paper presented by I. Kostarella, S. Theodosiadou and G. Tsantopoulos.

Next to traditional media, **new media** like the internet and SMS (short message system) have entered into Greek political communication during electoral periods. Compared to other media, the internet is cheap and is unique in enabling a two-way communication between candidates and parties on the one hand and citizens on the other. In Greece, both candidates and parties haven't made use of the full potential that the internet provides. One paper (Bozinis and Evaghorou) offered a qualitative assessment of leftist political parties while another paper (Dimitriadis and Zisouli) outlined the online strategy of PASOK in the last five years. PASOK, under its new leadership, seems to have understood internet's potential by renewing its basic site and creating a new website (www.democracy.gr) intended to facilitate dialogue and exchange of views among users.

Turning to **candidates**, a paper on the 2004 elections (Yannas and Lappas) demonstrated that e-campaigning was concentrated in the Attica Prefecture, casting doubts on the internet's potential to equalize disparities between centre and periphery. There is still considerable distance to cover before candidates «discover» the internet and the time of integrating a political marketing perspective in e-campaigning by Greek candidates is far out of sight. The other new medium, SMS, was investigated by two papers (I. Mylona; D.Dimitrakopoulou) that derived data from questions addressed to members of the Greek Parliament during the first months of 2005. The two researchers, working independently, reached similar conclusions. SMS is used by almost half of the MPs, mostly those younger in age originating from electoral districts in Attica and Thessaloniki.

As the above discussion demonstrates, electoral contests generate a large portion of political marketing's research. The Greek case validates this trend. However, research can and should be **expanded to include off-election periods** in line with the contention for a permanent campaign as well as to focus on a multitude of actors. To encourage research in much less frequented directions, a session dealt with **international dimensions** of political marketing. Session panellists examined topics such as the use of political marketing by non-governmental organizations (C.Frangonikolopoulos with M. Pantazidou), the role of the internet in the public diplomacy strategy of the European Union (A. Michailidou) and the utilization of political marketing components like photo-images by the state in producing meaning related to war and violence (K. Gouliamos and A. Theocharous).

The last two scholars have assumed the responsibility to organize and host in Cyprus on **6-8 April 2006** the **next ICPM conference**. The theme of next year's conference is « **Political Culture and Political Marketing** ». All those interested in participating are advised to consult the **conference's website** (www.conference.rsunit.com) and must send an **abstract by November 1, 2005**.

Dr. Prodromos Yannas is Professor of Public Relations and Communication and Head of Department at the Technological Educational Institution (TEI) of Western Macedonia. Dr. Yannas is also Co-Ordinator of the GPSG's Thematic Network B on Political Communication and Civil Society. Email: yannas@kastoria.teiko.gr

4. Website, Feedback & Contact Details



The latest additions to our website include a comprehensive list of weblinks relating to Greek Government, Politics and Political Studies available here:

<http://www.psa.ac.uk/spgrp/greek/GreekPolLinks.htm>

Visit our website at <http://www.psa.ac.uk/spgrp/greek/GreekPol.htm>

As always, we welcome suggestions and comments regarding all aspects of the Group, including how to improve this newsletter. Please send your news and views at:

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