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Voting Consuming Behaviour, Political communication campaigns and Ideological Clarity - a parallel review of academic/empirical evidence

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Abstract. This paper combines the notions of consuming behaviour and ideological clarity in relation to the political Marketing and more specifically the production and consumption of political campaigns and examines the empirical evidence concerning the proposed topic, by focusing on some basic conceptual and methodological issues, as they are arising from previous research. Accordingly, earlier research has shown that visible political attitudes approximate electoral choice (i.e., actual votes), demonstrating that voters are able to give explanation concerning voting decisions. Other studies, though, have indicated that the attitudes of which we may not be aware, such as our implicit (e.g., subconscious) preferences, determine voting choice. Additionally, previous research was dealing with the campaigns effects and made attempts in measuring the impact of society and media upon electoral campaigns. In a similar manner, earlier studies, gave some directions in the notions of political marketing and voting decision making process. Accordingly, the paper highlights the gap that is presented in the sufficient interlink of those concepts. In the same manner, the paper reviews the methodological impact and the research paradigm of earlier work, in order to identify any possible research gap and limitations and to facilitate the ground for further research.

Keywords: Political Communication, Voting Behaviour, Pre Election Campaigns, Ideological clarity.

1 Introduction

This paper connects the ideas of political communication, voting behaviour and ideological clarity and attempts to identify their linking points and their relevance with the proposed study. Accordingly, after giving an insight view at the general concept and the essence of communication, the paper proceeds to a parallel analysis of the models and patterns of political communication, political campaigns (Cohen, 1963, McCombs & Shaw, 1972), voting/ electoral behaviour (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Katz 1987) and Ideological clarity(Lo, Proksch and Slapin 2014). In this manner, the paper attempts to outline the way in which the wider theoretical field evolved through the years, as well as to build the ground for further analysis and evaluation concerning the functional and academic interaction of those aspects, in relation to the scope of the proposed study.

2 The essence of Communication

The parallel consideration of production and consumption of political communication and in particular pre-election campaigns it may consist the most fundamental issue of the proposed study and it would be its basic differentiator from the existing research. Therefore, in order to examine the production and consumption of political communication and therefore to interlink the notions of voters' perceptions and campaigns Agenda-Setting, priming and Framing (Scheufele, 2000), it is considered as essential to take an insight theoretical assessment on the essence of communication and clarifying its basic functions, attributes and complexities as the appear in the relevant theoretical context. Thus, communication can be simply described as the act of transferring information from one position to another. Although this is a uncomplicated definition, when we consider about how we may communicate, the subject turns out to be a lot more complex and complicated.

The study of communication phenomena since the mid-1930s has provided the following trends: The identification of communication research with the study of mass media Krone (2007). The identification of methods of communication research with those of

wider Social theory. The view that the bulk the main volume of communication research was a branch of American social theory and that the main pursuit of social research was the exploration of the processes through which the messages were influential to members of the public. This fact is important for the scope of the study and is reflected in the following sections of the chapter, especially if we consider the notion of the "Americanization of Political Communication (Negrine and Papathanassopoulos, 1996). "Americanization indicates that both the electoral campaigns and therefore the research of the electoral behaviour, all over the cavilled word is mainly based and is influenced primarily by the electoral action in America, and in particular in the US. The term "Americanization" originally emerged in the early 19th century and referred to '…the real or purported influence of one or more forms of Americanism on some social entity, material object or cultural practice' (Van Elteren, 2006: 3). In the field of political communication, the term refers to the worldwide proliferation of American campaign techniques. It implies that the U.S. is leading trends in a direct way by exporting American style campaigning, through American consultants working abroad and through a global acceptance of the U.S. as the most vital role model of how to run campaigns (Scammell, 1998). For Swanson and Mancini (1994; 1996), the term is a good starting point for comparing campaign practices in different countries, and for Butler and Ranney (2005), it is a suitable description of campaign innovations that have emerged and are continuing to surface in many democracies around the world. However, the term has been challenged in academic writing. According to Swanson and Mancini (1994: 4) 'The appropriateness of the term is contested, nevertheless, by some who argue surface similarities obscure important national adaptation and variations'.

The Basic Components of the Communication Process

There are distinct categories of communication and more than one may occur at any period. Moreover, thorough the years we came across various conceptual models used to explain the human communication process. Communication comprises of 8 major components (Shannon and Weaver, 1949), which are the objects of study of Communication Theory, and therefore are all linked with the central scope of the proposed study, which overall is concerning the processes of sending and receiving information

and perceptions. These are interdependent and are considered as basic elements of any communication process. They include Source, Sender Channel, Receiver, Destination, Message, Feedback, and Context.

2.1 Models of communication

Models of communication refer to the conceptual models used to describe the human communication process. The origin of the word **'Model'** could be traced to the French word *modèle*; Italian *modello*, diminutive of *modo*, *form*, and Latin modus, *measure*, *standard*; Model refers to representation/replica of the original. A model is thus a schematic description of a system, theory, or phenomenon that accounts for its known or inferred properties and may be used for further study of its characteristics. Communication models seek to represent the structure and key elements of the communication process.

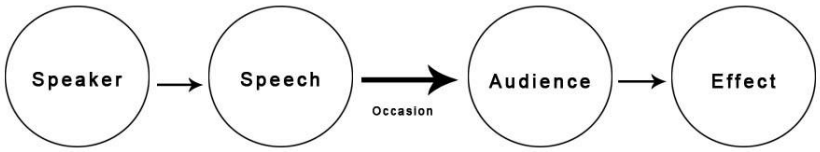
There are many models of communication developed by noted theorists of different disciplines. Since it would be impracticable to make a thorough reference to all those models, it has been considered and essential outline only a few of them in order to use them as the basis for the theoretical discussion upon political communication which is follows and is related to the scope of the proposed study. Among the theorists are: Lasswell (1948), Shannon and Weaver (1948), Gerbner (1956), are some of the renowned ones. Some important and well-known contributions are highlighted below Aristotle, a great philosopher was the first (300 B.C.) to develop a communication model called 'Aristotle's Model of Communication'. This model is more focused on public speaking than interpersonal communication. Aristotle Model is mainly focused on speaker and speech. It can be broadly divided into 5 primary elements: **Speaker, Speech, Occasion, Audience** and **Effect**.

The Aristotle's communication model (Figure 1.0) is a **speaker cantered model** as the speaker has the most important role in it and is the only one active. It is the speaker's

role to deliver a speech to the audience. The role of the **audience** is passive, **influenced** by the speech. This makes the communication process **one way**, from speaker to receiver.

The speaker must organize the speech beforehand, according to the **target audience** and situation (**occasion**). The speech must be prepared so that the audience be persuaded or influenced from the speech.

Figure 1.0



ARISTOTLE'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Aristotle has given 3 elements that must be present in a good communicator or public speaker. These elements are related to each other and they reinforce the other elements. Ethos is the characteristic which makes you credible in front of the audience. If there is no credibility, the audience will not believe in you and will not be persuaded by you.

Pathos. If what you say matters to them and they can connect with it, then they will be more interested and they will think you are more credible. Emotional bonds will make the audience captivated and they feel the speaker is one of their own people.

Logos is logic. People believe in you only if they understand what you are trying to say. People find logic in everything. If there is no logic behind the speaker's work or time, they do not want to get involved.

Nowadays, the Aristotelian model of communication is still broadly applied and acknowledged. In this model of communication, the sender sends the message to the

receiver in an attempt to influence them to respond accordingly. The message must be very impressive and convincing. Therefore, the sender must know and understand their audience well. In this model, the sender is an active participant and the receiver is passive. This concept is used in public speaking, seminars, and lectures.

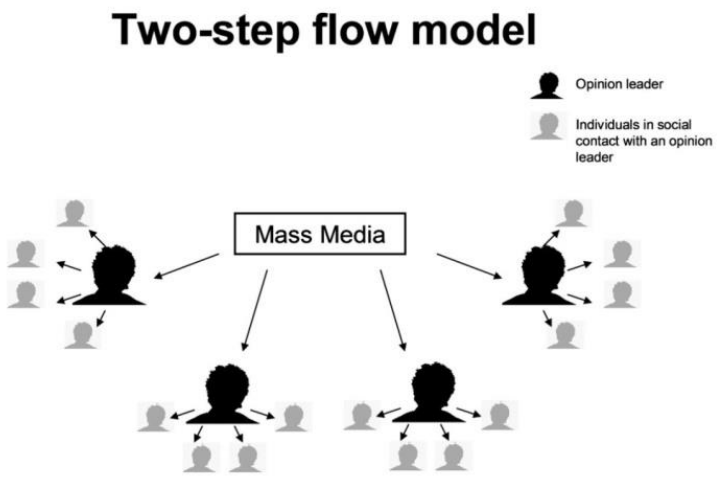
Lasswell (1948), a political scientist and communication theorist, was a member of the Chicago school of sociology. Lasswell's (1948) work 'The Structure and Function of Communication in Society', defined communication process as Who (says) What (to) Whom (in) What Channel (with) What Effect. The distinct model he propounded was known as Dance Model.

Shannon &Weaver (1949) and others, encouraged research on new models of communication from other scientific perspectives like Psychology and Sociology. Shannon and Weaver's information theory had a notable influence on the development of communication theories and models. These first studies on communication's models promoted more research on the subject. Shannon's model of communication marks, in important ways, the beginning of the modern field. It provided, for the first time, a general model of the communication process that could be treated as the common ground of such diverse disciplines as journalism, rhetoric, linguistics, and speech and hearing sciences.

Newcomb (1953) and Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), are the other major contributors. Other models, including a helical-spiral model developed by Dance (1967). The basic premise of the transactional model of communication is that individuals are simultaneously engaging in the sending and receiving of messages. Communication is viewed as a conduit in which information travels from one to another and the information is separate from the communication. The evolution of communication theories and models leap from 1970 to 2003. The aforementioned evolution has been toward theories of communication that emphasize the active and powerful influence of receivers as well as senders, meanings as well as messages, and interpretations as well as intentions. The sender and message are among these factors, as are others, such as the channel, situation, relationship between sender and receiver, and culture. (Shannon and Weaver, 1949; Schramm, 1954; Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955; Westley and MacLean, 1957)

The two-step flow of communication hypothesis (Figure 2) was first introduced by Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1944) in *The People's Choice*, a study focused on the process of decision-making during a Presidential election campaign. (Katz, Lazarsfeld, Pand Roper, E., 2017). These researchers expected to find empirical support for the direct influence of media messages on voting intentions, a fact that makes it directly relevant to the scope of the current study. They were surprised to discover, however, that informal, personal contacts were mentioned far more frequently than exposure to radio or newspaper as sources of influence on voting behaviour. Armed with this data, Katz and Lazarsfeld developed the two-step flow theory of mass communication.

Figure 2



3.0 Political Communication

A basic and very commonly applied type of communication, as this is conceptualized by models such as those we have outlined in the previous section, is Political Communication.

"…The study of political communication has come a long way. If we take Aristotle's Rhetoric and Politics written in 350 B.C. as a starting point, political messages have been noted, considered and analysed about for well over 2,000 years. So where are we

now, in the 21st century of the Christian era, and where should we be heading?...” (Graber, 2005)

The essence of politics is dialog and interaction. In this manner, political communication can be defined as the role of communication in the political process. It can take place in a variety of methods (formal or informal), in a variability of locations (public and private) and through a variety of medium (mediated or unmediated content). In other words, political communication involves the production and generation of messages by political actors, the transmission of political messages through direct and indirect channels, and the reception of political messages (Marland and Giasson, 2014). Political communication is a process that includes political institutions and actors, the news media and, importantly, citizens.

Political Communication is an interdisciplinary filed and in contrast to mainstream political sociology, which lays its grounds basically on the grand sociological tradition of theorist such as Marx, Weber, Simmel, etc, goes further the grounds of political science and is extended in the fields of sociology, anthropology, psychology, public relations, economics and even more, linguistics and journalism (Bennet & Lyengar, 2010)

Models of Political communication should consider the transformations of society and technology, as well as their behavioral impact. Therefore, as it will be seen in the following paragraphs, the theoretical outcome of the field involves a continuously evolved process. Every action of political communication shaped by parties, interest groups, or the media is communicated toward citizens, to inform them and to influence them. In this sense political communication can be defined as the interaction between these three groups that matter in political communication.

The approach in which theorists approached the area of political communication, indicates that the field is not something static but is something that evolves and develops according to the changing social trends and the continuously changing socio-economic and behavioral environment and the way that this is reflected on social structures (Bennett and Iyengar, 2010).More specifically, through the years, Scholars increasingly are sensing that reflective changes in both society and the media may lead to a new system of political communication that is qualitatively different from its predecessors (Norris, Curtice, Sanders, Scammell, & Semetko, 1999; Wyatt, 1998).

4.0 Voting /Electoral Behaviour

4.1 The Classic Voting Studies

The first indication of studding voting behaviour, based on the perception that citizens had limited capacity to reason and decide indecently about politics and thus they shaped their views though their participation in groups. Moreover, as we will see in the following sections between the early 1940s and the late 1960s, four basic theoretical schools of voter behaviour have been proposed on which almost all studies of electoral behaviour draw (Campbell et al. 1954; 1960; 1966)

Columbia Studies

The classic voting studies in sociology can also be outlined to earlier interdisciplinary influences. For example, Tarde's (1903) theories of diffusion, imitation, and interpersonal influence clearly formed the study of Lazarsfeld et al. These early political communication theorists endorsed the concept that average citizens had little capacity to reason or decide independently about politics

Moreover, the modern history of academic voting research started in 1940 at Columbia University, where a team of social scientists assembled by Paul Lazarsfeld pioneered the application of survey research to the study of electoral behaviour. Lazarsfeld and his colleagues surveyed 600 prospective voters in a single community (Erie County, Ohio) as many as seven times over the course of the 1940 presidential campaign, with a complex mixture of new and repeated questions in each successive interview, and with additional fresh cross-sections to serve as baselines for assessing the effects of repeated interviewing on the respondents in the main panel. The results of the 1940 Columbia study were published in The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944). A second panel study conducted by the Columbia team in Elmira, New York, in 1948 provided

the basis for an even more influential book, Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954).

As a result, they found themselves concluding (Berelson et al. 1954, 310-311) that the usual analogy between the voting "decision" and the carefully calculated decisions of consumers or businessmen or courts … may be quite incorrect. For many voters' political preferences may better be considered analogous to cultural tastes in music, literature, recreational activities, dress, ethics, speech, social behaviour. Both have their origin in ethnic, sectional, class, and family traditions. Finally Lazarsfeld and his colleagues turned more detailed attention to the role of political issues, stressing the frequency with which respondents ignored or misperceived their favorite candidates' issue stands 5 when these were in conflict with the respondents' own views.

The "Michigan Model"

The study of Lazarsfeld and Columbia researches proved the potential of election surveys as data for understanding campaigns and elections. The following significant, movement in election studies came out in the following decade at the University of Michigan. Sarcastically, the Michigan team, in the vein of their counterparts at Columbia, did not originally set out to study voting behaviour.

The Michigan data suggested that "many people know the existence of few if any of the key issues of policy," and that "major shifts of electoral strength reflect the changing association of parties and candidates with general societal goals rather than the detail of legislative or administrative action" (Campbell et al. 1960, 170, 546). As the authors summarized their own argument (Campbell et al. 1960, 543)/ Moreover, Michigan's most important differentiation from the school of Columbia and Lazarsfeld is that it gives more weight to individual psychology and the structure of people's political perceptions, and less to social inclusion and social characteristics of voters. According to Michigan, it is right to note that social characteristics affect political preference, but it is not enough to see the relationship between these two parameters, but to find the way that it forms and reproduces it.

The Michigan model thus introduces the notion of party identification as the basic element of the constitution of the cohesion of the social integration relationship - a political

preference. Party membership is the firm attachment of the voter to a political party, a commitment that includes acceptance of the party's ideology and values, political program, history of the charge, the persons (candidates, executives, leaders) who constitute it. Depending on the intensity of this identification, we can separate the voters into "absolutely identifiable" and "less identifiable / circumscribed").

4.2 The Macro-Sociological Model and the contemporary view

In contrast to the Columbia and Michigan studies, the macro-sociological approach emphases its clarifications on processes at the level of the entire society. In Germany this approach was initially forwarded by Lepsius (1966) who was primarily occupied with “social-moral milieus”, a key characteristic of German society in the Imperial and Weimar periods. Internationally Lepsius (1966) had little impact, while even within the German literature his approach was soon displaced by a competing macro-sociological model that argued from the outset with abstract categories, was tailored to explain a larger area (Western Europe) and was easily portable to other contexts.

Lipset and Rokkan (1967) getting the association between social structures and the party system is highly internally consistent and constitutes a powerful analytical frame, in that prior findings on voting behavior are easily integrated into a cleavage theory. An apparent lack in their model, though, is the failure to reflect the individual level and the role of communication. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) are not concerned on why individual voters usually behave empirically as elites expect them to.

Social Choice Theory

Another school of thought derived from social choice theory (Arrow, 1951; Cyert & March, 1963; Olson, 1971; Simon, 1955) helped develop a signalling approach to political communication (Lupia & McCubbins, 1998; Popkin, 1991). Olson’s The Logic of Collective Action has more recently been challenged as new technologies have

changed both the costs and the processes of political organization (Lupia & McCubbins, 1998).

Arrow (1950; 1951) shaped the modern field of social choice theory, the study of how society should make group decisions based on individuals' preferences. There had been scattered contributions to this field before Arrow (1950;1951), going back (at least) to Borda (1781). But earlier writers all focused on elections and voting, more specifically on the properties of voting rules. Arrow's approach, by contrast, encompassed not only all possible voting rules (with some qualifications, discussed below) but also the issue of aggregating individuals' preferences or welfares, more generally. Arrow's first social choice paper was "A Difficulty in the Concept of Social Welfare" (Arrow 1950), which he then expanded into the celebrated monograph Social Choice and Individual Values (Arrow, 1951; Cyert & March, 1963, 1972; Simon, 1955).

Spatial Models, Retrospective Voting, and Rational Choice

The growing interest in "issue voting" that was part of the broader wave of revisionism in the voting research of the late 1960s and 1970s also drew upon a quite distinct source of intellectual ferment—the emerging "rational choice" paradigm, which applied the hypothesis of utility maximization developed in economics to political decision-making. Rational choice theory likewise played a vital role in the incorporation of the empirical insights of Stokes (1963), Key (1966), Kramer (1971), and others regarding the electoral significance of "perceptions and appraisals of policy and performance" (Key 1966, 150) into the mainstream of voting research under the rubric 17 of "retrospective voting" (Fiorina 1981).

4.3 Ideological Clarity and Consumption of Campaigns

Another research issue that might be essential to review for assisting the scope of the specific study is that of ideological clarity and the way in which influences the consumption of electoral campaigns.

According to Lo, Proksch and Slapin (2014) "…Parties in advanced democracies use ideological declarations in anticipating voting rivalry, nevertheless some parties are

able to communicate their spot more obviously than others…" According to their study, Parties may present voters with an obvious message, or they may suggest a program that holds a diversity of perspectives, maybe muddying its ideological content. This doubt may arise in a party's program for a variety of motives. Contradictory ideological opinions might occur within the party leadership, who must then determine how best to accommodate differing opinions in the party program. Alternatively, the party may attempt to attract a wide array of voters by pitching different and possibly incompatible messages to different electoral audiences. Finally, new parties may need to study which messages reverberate best with their voters, and they may attempt different pitches before settling on a message that works. In spite of the principal cause, parties face choices over how to stand for their programs to the public when multiple viewpoints exist. Much recent work has used election campaign documents written by parties at the start of an election campaign state a core platform to approximately calculate party positions. However, a small number of studies clearly acknowledge that parties must combine an assortment of strategy proposals into a particular manuscript.

Moreover, Lo, Proksch and Slapin (2014) hypothesize that changes in ideological clarity may adjust how position shifts affect party vote split. In particular, parties are likely to find unclear positions more gainful as they moderate their ideological stance; they can reach out to a larger segment of the electorate at the centre of the political space. Equally, they conclude that parties moving to the extremes may win more votes as they stake out clearer positions. At the boundaries/poles, there are less additional voters for parties to pick up through broadening their ideological appeal. Rather, the relatively few extreme voters may view ideological uncertainty as a sign of weakness, or insufficient commitment to their cause.

5.0 Suggestions and Recommendations

As we have seen through the various sections of the paper, previous research occurred and has shape a considerable level of understanding, the specific research ground; however, it remains unfortunate that our research questions have been more often dictated

by data rather than theoretical expectations. A clearer understanding of campaign effects, not only needs more coherent data, it also demands a theoretical acknowledgment that campaign dynamics mirror an interaction linking voters and candidates. Be aware of this association and taking into consideration the concern, capacity, and incentive of the related actors in a political campaign must assist us in developing broader theoretical expectations about when, why, how, and for whom campaigns matter (Hillygus, 2010).

Moreover, the review of previous research work, led us on the conclusion that the specific research question and the specific research focus that is attempted by the current paper remains unanswered, since its various components might be examined individually, but the mutual spot that is linking these ideas, is misplaced. In this manner, our further research attempts to fill the noticed research gap, by obtaining a more transparent illustration regarding the decision-making process of both candidates and voters in a political campaign and to evaluate the factors influencing the balance between the production and consumption of political communication.

Accordingly, our projected research aims to further knowledge in the areas discussed above in order to connect the concepts and the theoretical background of voting behaviour and political propositions, with the notions and the theoretical context of political marketing and consuming behaviour and thus to examine voter under the prospect of the potential customer of the so-called political market as this is shaped in the specific context of Cyprus and far away from the so called “Americanization” which dominates the evolution and the study of the wider discipline.

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