

Chapter 21

Political Marketing and New Media Election Campaigning: The Application of North Cyprus 2018 General Elections

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ABSTRACT

This study advances the findings that political party social media adaptation and social media attention have contributed to the election campaigning in North Cyprus. The 2018 general election success could be understood by looking deeply into the social media attention of political parties and electorates. While the sample that has been chosen for this study shows different patterns in their content of the social media shares, it is true to say that this study put an emphasis on the elements of political ads through social media account. The findings show that political parties in North Cyprus have communicated through social media, especially in horse-race periods compared with the other periods.

INTRODUCTION

In communication studies, election campaigning changes and evolution to modern election campaigning is demanding new researches. Growing literature on the related sub-topics of political communication, which various studies have been addresses in the literature often based on the democratization process of election campaigning. To improve the democratic election campaigning process and new election campaigning, political advertising, spin doctors, and political branding became a comprehensive trend in this growing volume of literature (Kinder & Sears, 1985, p. 682). Thus, the parallelism with western democratic systems, the tactics that is developed by political strategists and mediatisation methods started to be recognized among other countries. Related with the modern election campaigning modern media systems where the mediatisation of politics has produced connection with the developments in political communication (Strömback, 2008). There are consequences of the demonstration of new communication

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technology for democracy and the 2013 Turkish-Cypriot election has been the first “Twitter and Facebook General Election” (Ciftci, 2015). Growing political reflection on political parties’ actions during the election periods and other periods as well, social media have been proclaimed for the citizens’ reactions of prior unengaged citizens. The extreme media hype and e-democracy concerns started to be hot topics for digitalization of political communication (Chadwick, 2006). Nevertheless, during 2008 Obama US presidential campaign, the strong employment of social media eventually raised the profile of social media applications put forward the exposure and electoral success are thought over closely associated. The last week of the election period has vital importance (Harrop, 1987), this particular importance of election week spectacles that an enormous number of voters mind to mark their final choices.

On the other hand, some scholars and political scientists are not persuaded of the prolonged role of the media and social media in election periods. Conflicting research results and opposing views have confirmed diverse assumptions on mass media effects. The research on political campaigning and elections shows that media’s role in the mid-20th century was restricted (Berelson, et al., 1954; Lazarsfeld, et al., 1944), whilst selective use of information and interpersonal relations were quite high. The spread of television has changed the media atmosphere dramatically and media started to have a central role in campaigning.

The well-formed campaign strategies are necessary to be able to keep election turnout high since the election periods are usually seen the horse race. During the European Parliamentary referendum and election campaigns, rather than on possible negative consequences the overall news environment put more emphasis on potential advantages of common EU unifications (Schuck & de Vreese, 2009, p.47-50). One of the things that characterizes today’s political communication is election campaigning. To increase their voters’ rates, almost each organization and party feels the need for campaigning. The campaigning is also important to keep their voter for competing with their opponents. The general belief is that people who attend election campaign activities are most likely those who interested with politics. However, the direct personal campaign engagement not necessarily gives direction to the vote choice but affect turnout positively.

BACKGROUND

Third Ages of Political Communication

According to Blumer and Kavanagh (1999) political communication has three different ages, which includes various aspects and characteristics of both communication in general and political communication respectively. In the first age of political communication, political messages were substantive and political communication was subordinated by strong political institutions. Although there is high modernism and political system has regarded as prime sources, political communication runs contended more in contradiction of partisan grain. Thus it is true to say that in the first age of communication there is an ideologically colored communication.

On the other hand, in second age of communication, the reduction of the frequency of exposure to party propaganda has occurred. Significantly, TV became the central platform for political communication, which will be followed by the increasing numbers of the audiences to be exposed. Moreover, secondly age after first political communication the fundamental types of the professional model of modern campaigning developed with the non-partisan norms as fairness and impartiality became an

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