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[THE EVOLUTION OF THE MEDIA – IMPACTS ON POLITICAL PROMOTION]

In this particular article we will try to focus how the changing and evolution of media could have an effect on the changing of political promotion. Also, we will try to research how the evolution of media does effect on the behavior of media consumers as potential voters and how the political marketing should change if would like to maximize its success on elections or on any other political matter. As a matter of fact everything is changing today very fast that sometimes it is hard to follow all these changes, but, yet if political leaders and parties would like to be successful and to win the election they need to adopt as much as they can. Time will tell and give the answers, but already we are facing the great changes from traditional to digital media and these changes and the evolution already are changing the ways of promotion not only for politics but also on any other field.

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The Evolution of the Media: Impacts on Political Promotion

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Abstract:

In this particular article we will try to focus how the changing and evolution of media could have an effect on the changing of political promotion. Also, we will try to research how the evolution of media does effect on the behavior of media consumers as potential voters and how the political marketing should change if would like to maximize its success on elections or on any other political matter. As a matter of fact, everything is changing today so fast that sometimes it is hard to follow all these changes, yet if political leaders and parties would like to be successful and to win the elections, they need to adopt as much as they can. Time will tell and give the answers, but already we are facing the great changes from traditional to digital media and these changes and the evolution already are changing the ways of promotion not only for politics but also on any other field.

Key words: *media, media consumers, potential voters, politics, promotion.*

Introduction

We are living in an age where we are facing the constant evolution of the media on a daily basis. We will try to focus as much as we can and analyze the situation in the media at this particular moment in time and to answer some frequently asked questions: Is

the television program in general dropping in quality? have already some YouTube channels become more popular then the leading TV channels? Also, since we are facing political issues as well, we will try to answer how this evolution of media could affect potential voters and the promotion of political issues (by political leaders, parties, ideas, views, ideology).

Before we start the research concerning the evolution of media, we have to warn the readers of this particular article that ,although that we are writing and dealing here with some brand new models and forms of media, they are not *entirely* novel, as 'every new medium incorporates elements of previous media (physical and/or functional)'.[1] However, we yet have to consider that national television and radio broadcasters, and some relevant newspapers as well, are still the 'official' and most important sources of information about the conduct of politicians and their methods of governance.[2] Voters are often uncertain as to which candidate to support, so they usually relay on comments and information that come from better informed sources or so called 'official' media which could be labeled as a national television or radio, or well-established printed newspapers. So, this moment could give central position to some media during the lection process so that they could have bigger influence on potential voters. [3]

From traditional TV consumers to YouTube addicts

We are already facing the situation that younger people do not follow TV programs, especially not as frequently as the older generations. Some younger people even do not have regular television sets, or even do not follow the television program at all. This is indeed important since these people will become potential voters in the near

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[1] Sam Lehman-Wilzig and Nava Cohen-Avigdor, 'The natural life cycle of new media evolution: Inter-media struggle for survival in the internet age', published by Sage Publications

[2] Gerber, Alan S., Dean Karlan, and Daniel Bergan. 2009. "Does the Media Matter? A Field Experiment Measuring the Effect of Newspapers on Voting Behavior and Political Opinions." American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 1(2): 35-52.

[3] Chun-Fang Chiang & Brian Knight, 2011. "Media Bias and Influence: Evidence from Newspaper Endorsements," Working Paper Number: 14445

future, having in mind that their behavior is rather different when compared to their parents' or grandparents'.

Since the birth of YouTube many things have changed. YouTube channels give the ability to upload any video file that one wants and to present it to a wider audience. In the very beginning it was 'just for fun', and the first videos gained the score of around a million views (and in that time it was really amazing), but later, as the popularity of YouTube began to increase, everything has become more and more 'serious', more socially relevant. Today we already have videos that have over ten billion views, so it seems that everything is going to change. The main question here is: will regular television be at a loss, especially if we have in mind that the some of the major and the most relevant television stations have lost their standard audience?

One of the major websites condoning annual research focusing on the following of various TV channels is found at the address [www.stateofthemedia.org]. They conduct research every year, and already in 2009 they have noticed that something greater is happening with traditional TV and its audience[4]:

'After a year of declining revenues in 2009, followed by a year of declining ratings in 2010, cable outlets found some relief in the extraordinary news year of 2011. It was a relief, however, that could not answer the looming long-range audience challenges. Still, viewership for the sector over all was up slightly for the year, and analysts projected revenues at all three major cable news operations to rise even more, into high single digits. And all that was heading into the 2012 election year, a cycle that tends to invigorate the channels, whose muscles are tuned to capitalize on political fever.'[5]

However [www.stateofthemedia.org] has done one more research concerning the younger audience, and they have come to some relevant conclusions:

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[4] For further info and research please visit: www.stateofthemedia.org
[5] For further info and research please visit: www.stateofthemedia.org

'Even if subscriptions are not entirely dropped, a close look at consumer behavior for television raises other concerns. The June 2011 Nielson study found that older viewers spent more time than other younger ones watching traditional television. Among 65+-year-olds, the average time spent over the course of the week studied was 49 hours, about twice the amount of time spent in front of a television by 12-to-17-year olds. The 25-to-34-year olds spent more time than other age groups watching video on the internet (57 minutes in a week). And 12-to-17-year olds spent the most time consuming video on their mobile phones, about 20 minutes during a week.3 The biggest threat to the current cable TV business model, according to industry analyst Derek Baine of SNL Kagan, may be those younger consumers who have never subscribed to a multichannel service and probably never will.4 Indeed, overall, more people are watching online video. ComScore calculates that 100 million Americans watch online video on a typical day, up 43% from a year earlier.'6

So, as we can see and notice from this particular research there are some younger people that are not even following any TV channels and probably never will, though it is difficult to predict. Also, people from the age group of 25-34 years seem to spend more time than other age groups watching videos on the Internet (particularly at YouTube). This is very important for all forthcoming political elections that will come in the near future, since they have to progress and change their ways and plans of promotion. One of the solutions could be that political leaders and their parties could focus on traditional TV station and classical advertisements when it comes to older people but also they have to make their adverts available on YouTube so that the age group from 18 to 34 could notice and watch their video advertisements. Since everything is changing so fast they need to have teams specializing in Internet promotions such as sharing and promoting of videos on various social networks such as Facebook and the like. Internet promotion has to be very fast, effective and very attractive, otherwise Internet consumers will fail to notice it. Every time the Internet promotion team is on the move, it

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[6] www.stateofthemedia.org

has to make something special and innovative, more attractive than before. If you are slow and not-so-innovative, most of your posts and 'sharings' will pass unnoticed. In addition, there is also a problem with comments as well, since uninventive and dull adverts, be it just picture posts or video posts, can face bad comments which could turn into a negative campaign for its owners.

Some of the traditional TV channels such as CNN are trying to adapt to the situation as much as they can. They decided to have more attractive web pages where people will spend more of their time commenting and chatting with other Internet consumers, or arguing concerning some political, economic, social or other themes that are in the focus. Website [www.stateofthemedia.org] has also done one research concerning this field of promotion and the gathering of potential audience. As you will notice for the upcoming text the growing of Internet consumers does not mean the growing of the people that will start to watch and follow the traditional TV program:

'CNN has for the past several years attempted to provide more original content on the web as a way of getting users to spend more time on the site. That is one reason, according to CNN Worldwide president Jim Walton, that CNN no longer uses AP stories on cnn.com.21 But the original content is not all produced by CNN staff. A good portion comes from less costly user-generated content through CNN's iReport product. After going through several rounds of iterations, executives say iReport has about 900,000 contributors around the world.22 Within the first 36 hours after the earthquake and tsunami hit Japan, the network received more than 700 iReports, some of which were woven into coverage.23 While the iReport content is free and valuable to CNN, the costs of curation do require some investment by the network. Still, it costs much less than full-time reporting staff, and according to a CNN memo, was one of the reasons for 50 layoffs announced at the network in November, many of which fell among videographers and producers whose work was made redundant'[7]

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[7] For further info and research please visit: www.stateofthemedia.org

So, it is more than evident that the situation is constantly changing when it comes to traditional media and tradition TV programs and channels, since they posses the need to adapt to a new 'game', dictated by the arrival of new media standards. More and more media consumers are focusing on Internet channels and web pages that provide the users with the ability to upload their video contents. The main problem still remains about potential control. It was much easier to control the main media in the past, compared with the situation today. Nowadays, everything has become more complicated since Internet video channels like YouTube are hard to be controlled; the same goes for various social networks as *Facebook* or *Twitter*. The innovation and the fastness will surely play a bigger role in the nearest future when it comes to Internet promotion.

Since it will be hard to control this sort of media ,perhaps some political ideas and views which are closer to a younger audience could gain much more popularity; the political leaders and parties in possession of those ideas concerning the solving the problems of the young could gather much more voters comparing to some traditionally oriented political parties which are not yet adapting their styles and ways of promotion. Indeed, it is already happening that some politicians with attractive and alternative ideas are winning their regional elections (as was the recent case in Italy), since their ideas and views are closer to younger people that really want to hear something new and refreshing, comparing to ancient and traditional political offerings that are coming from so called 'traditional' politicians.

The Lehman-Wilzig & Cohen-Avigdor paradigm: The natural life-cycle of the new media

Lehman-Wilzig & Cohen-Avigdor have done research concerning the natural life-cycle of the new media. Before we present their model of media development, we have to say that this model is relevant to the modern age, and second, that the model is spatially universal.

This particular model contains several parts/phases:

0 (The birth): in the very beginning the innovator(s) are not always able to foreseen its ultimate, real use. A brand new medium is drawn on existing technology/medium.

1 (Market penetration): The new medium enters the market, developing new uses and attracting users. If it is successful in passing 16 percent, it could move to the next stage; if not, the new medium will fade away.

2 (Growth): 16-50 percent of the market. Developers and user learn to exploit, apply and expand the unique capabilities of new medium.

3. (Maturation): The new medium (or adapting old medium) finds its place in the dynamic communications environment. It takes from 50-90 percent of the market. At this stage we could witness the maximum use application of the medium's capabilities.

4. (Defensive Resistance): at this particular stage we could notice the competition and battle between new and old medium. So, the new medium forces the former to seek new directions in order to preserve their traditional audiences. 90-50 percent market (decline) for the traditional medium.

5. Adaptation, convergence or obsolescence: This stage constitutes the outcome of the previous stage. There are three broad possibilities.

Adaptation: the first and probably foremost tactic is to find a new audience, or to focus more sharply on the sub-audiences within the medium's traditional audience.

Convergence: when little else seems to work, *'if you can't beat 'em, join 'em'*. For example, by the late 1990s, it was thought that telephony would be gobbled up by the internet (or more precisely, by computers), but today, internet surfing is migrating onto the mobile phone. Again, in offering to its traditional audience a parallel medium (e.g. e-newspaper, internet surfing), the transformed medium can quickly reach the stage of maturation (stage 3) without too many birth or growing pains.

Obsolescence: many popular and successful media have disappeared over time – in modern times: telegraph, typewriter, hi-fi phonograph, videotext; earlier in history: papyrus, drums, torches, scroll, parchment manuscript (codex), semaphore. They were all limited

technologically and narrow functionally; their analogue nature did not enable 'communication' with other media.[8]

E-Democracy

E-democracy (actually a combination of the words *electronic* and *democracy*) is 'the use of information and communications technologies and strategies by "democratic sectors" within the political processes of local communities, states/regions, nations and on the global stage.'[9]

Democratic actors and sectors in this context include, in order of importance, citizens/voters, political organizations, the media, elected officials, and governments. [10]

E-democracy, like democracy in its ideal form, is a *direct democracy*. In practical form it has been an instantiation of more limited forms of democracy.

Within this particular article we would like also to explore how so called electronic democracy could help to make democracy closer to citizens and voters. Also, there is a question could electronic democracy help to make public politics more effective and to increase the participation of citizens in public policy.

When we speak about E-democracy we could observe it in two different ways. Sometimes E-democracy means using of technologies and communication only in political and governance processes. On the other hand, electronic democracy could also involve any other political issue that appears on Internet. Ann Macintosh, in 2004, used the term to mean a technological adjunct to a republic, stating: 'E-democracy is concerned with the use of information and communication technologies to engage citizens, support the democratic decision-making processes and strengthen representative

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[8] Sam Lehman-Wilzig and Nava Cohen-Avigdor, 'The natural life cycle of new media evolution: Inter-media struggle for survival in the internet age', published by Sage Publications
[9] Clift,Steven. "E-Democracy, E-Governance and Public Net-Work" www.publicus.net September 2003.
[10] Clift, S. (2004). E-Democracy Resource Links from Steven Clift - E-Government, E-Politics, E-Voting Links and more. Retrieved July 10, 2009, from Publicus.Ne-t Public Strategies for the Online World: Publicus.net

democracy.'[11] But, all in all, we could agree that almost every kind of discussion from chatting to placing comments could help strengthen of representative democracy in one way or another and make in more participative. Perhaps in the future people could even place their votes in electronic form, but there are many issues that should be solved before we start to use Internet as the possible tool for voting (but, yet we are quite sure that it will happen in the near future).

As a matter of fact, there has already been a significant growth in E-democracy in the last couple of years.[12] Especially if we observe so called *social networks*, we can notice that people are indeed very active with their ideas, political views and/or initiatives. People are placing their comments; they are founding groups with political initiatives, they are also creating and designing promo posters with political messages. And, on the other hand, we are quite sure that the politicians and their marketing teams already are following and monitoring citizens and voters behavior on various social net workings.

There is a great number of practical issues that are surrounding Internet democracy such as: freedom of speech, spreading of information, promotion of human rights, promotion of political or social views and ideas and so on. Also, when we observe Internet and various social networks we notice that there is a lack of centralized control, as it turned out to be very difficult to control large networks. Moreover, the sharing of culture could also help the sharing of democratic ideas and views and could help to increase the participation process and move democracy on another level of development and evolution. If we just take a look and observe what has just recently happened in some Arab states during the so called *Arab spring* we could realize how the impact of the Internet could affect citizens in such a manner that it can even result in a revolution.

Conclusion

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11 Macintoch, Ann (2006)

12 Center for Digital Government "Digital States Survey open-access online resource 2008http://www.centerdigitalgov.com/survey/61

It is indeed hard to answer the question will traditional television simply vanish and despair and that, in the future, instead of television, we will have only YouTube or similar channels, but everything is going towards similar substantial changes; traditional media should adapt to these changes. Probably traditional national radio and TV stations will survive, since they are not depending on private ways of financial support; national channels are also important since they are official broadcasters, but, on the other hand, many private TV and radio stations will become history. The same fate will befall many a printed newspaper and magazine around globe-wide. When television appeared and became more popular, when there were more and more users that consumed TV program by the day, almost everyone was thinking that the radio will simply vanish and disappear under the reign of the television, yet it did not happen. Today, the radio is still a vital form of media, with its own devices and with its own audience. Perhaps something similar will happen with the television. Of course, the Internet will take and will have its own audience, a modern age audience, yet we think that television will survive in one way or another. So, we can change the question and ask ourselves: how much influence will television programs and channels have in the future? Or, more likely, we could make a question: who will be more influential on media consumers: traditional television or the Internet?

Yet, as we have already mentioned, these sorts of changes and the evolution of media could also help democracy and civil society to develop in a most positive of ways. The Internet, and various sorts of social networks, could help democracy get to a higher level of social participation. The only problem that will remain is that we need to, in one way or another, somehow unite all these particular ideas and make one or several instead. We do strongly believe that the use of the Internet and the rising number of Internet consumes and users will help democracy and civil society to prove themselves and grow into something greater, something that could be used in the development of society.

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www.stateofthemedia.org