The role of internet in political communication: case study of the European Parliament elections 2009

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The research focuses on the role of internet in electoral campaign for the EP elections 2009. It includes:

- the use of internet in marketing purposes;
- the communication between citizens and political actors;
- the interdependency of internet and other mass media;
- and the advertising modes through Internet.

The theoretical framework is based on the connection of 5 nodal points: democracy, citizenship, public sphere, ICTs and political communication. The concept of citizenship has been changing over time, especially in the context of transnational ‘state’ or globalized media. Cammaerts and Van Audenhove (2005) suggest questioning of a link between a nation state and citizenship and give a new perspective of citizenship as a notion that goes beyond the nation state. Pateman refers to it as a ‘more flexible form of citizenship’ (Pateman, 1998, p.56).

In the context of globalization and new ICTs, Castells (1997, 2008) redefined the notion of a public sphere, which is now constructed around global communication networks. Foot (2005) proposes the new concept of ‘electoral websphere’ that gives more opportunities to run a political campaign than a classic one.

Lusoli points out a reconnection of citizens by this new media and the reestablishment of a ‘voter-candidate link’ (Lusoli, 2005). Under the influence of Web 2.0, many politicians have created their blogs and social network sites’ profiles.
The PhD project is based on the case study of the European parliament elections in 2009 and has 2 parts:

1. the analysis of the European Parliament online political campaign for widening participation on its official website, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube

2. the analysis of Facebook and YouTube material and blogs, posted by parties/candidates taken into consideration (4 countries, 3 political groups from the EP and one pan-European party).

The methods of qualitative and quantitative content analysis have been used, incorporated in Critical Discourse Analysis and Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis. Included are the analysis and critical valorization of texts and audio-visual material published online, concerning political marketing and the analysis of electoral documents and marketing products of electoral competitors in Europe.

For a broader perspective, the comparative method is used, in order to compare campaigns of different political actors and different countries inside the EU.

References


