

Political Campaigning and Communication

Series Editor

Darren G. Lilleker, Bournemouth University, Bournemouth, UK

The series explores themes relating to how political organisations promote themselves and how citizens interpret and respond to their tactics. Politics is here defined broadly as any activities designed to have an impact on public policy. The scope of the series thus covers election campaigns, as well as pressure group campaigns, lobbying, and campaigns instigated by social and citizen movements.

Research included in the series might focus on the latest strategies and tactics within political marketing and campaigning, covering topics such as the strategic use of legacy, digital and social media, the use of big data and analytics for targeting citizens, and the use of manipulative tactics and disinformation.

Furthermore, as campaigns are an important interface between the institutions of power and citizens, they present opportunities to examine their impact in engaging, involving and mobilizing citizens. Areas of focus might include attitudes and voting behavior, political polarization and the campaign environment, public discourse around campaigns, and the psychologies underpinning civil society and protest movements.

Works may take a narrow or broad perspective. Single-nation case studies of one specific campaign and comparative cross-national or temporal studies are equally welcome. The series also welcomes themed edited collections which explore a central set of research questions.

For an informal discussion for a book in the series, please contact the series editor Darren Lilleker (dlilleker@bournemouth.ac.uk), or Ambra Finotello (ambra.finotello@palgrave.com).

This book series is indexed by Scopus.

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In memory of Ilias Nikolakopoulos

FOREWORD

What makes a publication stand out? Certainly, the quality of its content is a crucial component. Another key element is the ability of the content to remain relevant over time. Alongside these two characteristics, which this publication undoubtedly possesses, is the value of its contributors which enhances even more the significance of this book. A group of exceptional political scientists who share both well-known and unknown aspects of the elections that occurred during the first fifty years of the Third Hellenic Republic.

It was only natural for Eteron—Institute for Research and Social Change to associate with such a publication. Therefore, when we were invited to undertake the translation of the book *“Half a Century of Elections: Discussing the Electoral Contests of the Metapolitefsi”*, our response was an immediate and unequivocal “yes!”. The book captures a series of lively discussions, providing a wealth of scientific insights and in-depth analyses, as well as the spontaneous reflections of several distinguished scholars due to its conversational nature. Scholars who have been an integral part of Greece’s academic life and who introduced many political scientists of my generation to the field, while instilling in us the passion for science and politics.

For this reason, I must thank the Director of AboutPeople, co-editor of the publication, and valued collaborator, Petros Ioannidis, for including us in this exciting journey. My appreciation also goes to co-editor Elias Tsaoussakis, as well as to each and every participant who contributed to

this collective work. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to the translator of this edition, Zoi Athanasopoulou—Eteron Institute’s translator—who worked meticulously and diligently to ensure the seamless transfer of these dialogues from Greek to English, which was a demanding task, as accurately capturing the essence of oral conversations in written text requires special care.

I hope that this publication will not only serve as a reference point for scholars and practitioners but also as an invitation for readers and people passionate about Greek politics and modern history to engage more deeply with the electoral processes that shaped Greek society.

March 2025

Christos Papagiannis
Director of ETERON
Institute for Research and Social
Change
Athens, Greece

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume is dedicated to the memory of Ilias Nikolakopoulos. Without his significant and invaluable contribution, we would not have embarked on this journey of studying and documenting the electoral contests that were held in Greece from 1974 to the present day. His loss was a real tragedy. We are greatly indebted to him, not just because of his unwavering support of this project and for laying the scientific foundations for its development, but also because he was, above all, our teacher and mentor.

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to news 24/7 for embracing this effort, especially Dimitris Maris, Manos Chorianopoulos, and all their associates and colleagues who helped this project materialise. We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to Polis Publications and Nikos Gionis who saw the merit in this book and published it first in Greek and for generously offering the copyrights for the book to be translated and published in English by Springer. On this note, we are also grateful to ETERON, Institute for Research and Social Change for supporting the English version of the book project.

We wish to thank the editorial team at Palgrave Macmillan (Springer), Ambra Finotello and Geetha Chockalingam for their constant assistance in the preparation of this manuscript. A big thank you to Professor Darren Lilleker, who warmly supported the publication of this book to his series “Political Campaigning and Communication”.

A heartfelt thank you to Anastasia Veneti for her insight, guidance, and encouragement throughout this journey.

Last but not least, our deepest gratitude goes to the people we interviewed during this project, since it is thanks to our discussions that we were able to put this book together.

Petros Ioannidis
Elias Tsaoussakis

PRAISE FOR *HALF CENTURY OF ELECTIONS* IN GREECE

“This book is a valuable work for political scientists and historians, as well as for citizens—especially younger ones—who now have in their hands a comprehensive record of Greece’s electoral history over the past 50 years.

It serves as a pathway to understanding the political and social context of this era, not only by analyzing election results and party percentages but, more importantly, by focusing on the broader environment of each electoral contest. It sheds light on both winners and losers, while enriching their portrayal through the diverse perspectives of scholars, analysts, and journalists.

After all, our political history cannot be viewed through a single lens—an achievement of the Third Hellenic Republic, the longest period of stability and progress, which consolidated democracy, secured Greece’s integration into Europe, and paved the way for the country’s development.

None of this was a given half a century ago, just as the five decades that followed were not without turbulence. Yet, these decades have demonstrated both the resilience of our democracy and its ongoing need for our vigilance against its adversaries.

This is one of the key lessons of this book, which I keep in my office as a constant source of reflection.”

—Kyriakos Mitsotakis, *Prime Minister of Greece* (2019–)

“This edited volume is a work that sheds light on the electoral contests of post-independence Greece and highlights their political, social and historical implications.

Of all the elections of the post-independence period, I will always remember the excitement of 1981. It was a moment of great change that altered the fate of the Greeks. Coming out of the shadow of dictatorship, the concept of democracy was not just an electoral process; it was an ongoing, participatory process, deeply engraved in our consciences.

Today, democracy is being tested—in Greece, in Europe, and all over the world. Huge inequalities, the concentration of wealth and power, the rise of authoritarian leaders and demagogues are undermining our democratic values. The real antidote is not disillusionment but deepening democracy and participation.

The post-independence period has brought important progressive reforms. However, chronic problems that we have not overcome have led us to crises and national crises. That is why our slogan back in 2009—“change or sink”—remains more relevant than ever.

This book is a reminder that change is possible. The past teaches us that when there is will, we can create a better future.

Congratulations to the editors Petros Ioannidis and Elias Tsaoussakis and of course to all the contributors to this project. I hope their work will inspire a new dialogue on democracy, politics and the need for continuous reform.”

—George Papandreou, *former Prime Minister of Greece*
(2009–2011)

“This book gives us a timely reflection on the elections of the Metapolitefsi, the turning points of Greek politics. The chapters explore the emergence, consolidation and shifts of parties and their electoral base. In looking back, the discussions offer a freshness of critical re-assessment—from the advantage of time and the longer view of history. As such, they are an insightful and stimulating reflection that will be welcomed by all those ready to better understand fifty years of Greece’s political trajectory. The events portrayed are given new life and remind us of the dramas, while also informing us of the substantive changes that were evolving.

The discussions bring together experts, young and old, to offer an invaluable historical record. Fittingly, the book is dedicated to the memory of Ilias Nikolakopoulos, whose work introduced serious electoral analysis into Greek political life. It is a worthy tribute.”

—Kevin Featherstone, *Emeritus Professor, Professorial Research Fellow, Hellenic Observatory, London School of Economics and Political Science*

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Ilias Nikolakopoulos (1947–2022) was an Athens-born political scientist and electoral analyst. He was an Emeritus Professor in the field of social theory and sociology, specialising in political science and electoral sociology. After graduating from Varvakeio high school, he studied mathematics in Athens (UoA) and Lausanne (1965–1969). Afterwards, he pursued postgraduate studies in Paris (Diplôme d'Études Approfondies in Probability Theory, Paris VI). In 1984, he was awarded a doctorate from the Law department of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), thanks to his dissertation on “Political parties and Parliamentary Elections in Greece 1946–1964”. He also served as president of the Contemporary Social History Archives (ASKI), and was vice-president of the Hellenic Cultural Foundation from 2016 to 2020.

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