LAUGHING AT POLITICS: EFFECTS OF TELEVISION SATIRE ON POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN GREECE

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Georgetown University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication, Culture and Technology

By

Katerina-Eva Matsa, MSc.

Washington, DC
April 29, 2010
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Thesis Advisor: Diana Owen, PhD

ABSTRACT

Satire is an integral element of the Greek social and political life. Many scholars have argued that satirical shows on TV have the power to influence or even form viewers’ perceptions of political issues. This thesis explores the effects of televised satirical shows on Greek politics. Particularly, its purpose is a) to explore the effects of TV satire in Greek politics, and b) identify the possible effects on viewers’ political opinions and political engagement. This research employs literature on political engagement, public opinion, Uses & Gratifications and cultivation theory in order to inform its analysis. Moreover, this thesis conducted an online survey, a content analysis, and interviews with the satirical shows’ presenters in order to look into questions of whether people get informed about politics via satire and whether satire influences their patterns of political engagement. This paper shows that while satirical shows are sources of political information, they also act as an alternative or even substitute to politics. This research reveals the relationship between televised satire and its viewers, illustrating the main reasons some Greeks resort to satire.

Keywords: Satire, Political Engagement, Greece, Public Opinion, Television, Politics, Al Tsantiri News, RadioArvyla, Ellinofreneia.
Acknowledgements

I would like thank all those who helped me. Without them, I could not have completed this project.

First, I thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Diana Owen, for her continuous guidance and support. She has a solution for every problem.

To Dr. Kimberly Meltzer, thank you for your feedback and supervision.

Thank you to all the CCT Faculty and Staff for helping me complete my studies.

Thank you to my amazing friends (Josh, David, Alex, Dimitra, Eleni, Rosalin, Eric, Alice, Chaim; and my roommates Rhysie, Brittany and Jessica) without whom this thesis would have never been feasible. Especially, thank you to Nelly for transcribing my interviews and listening to me every time I needed to; and, to Andrew, thank you for proofreading all my thesis work and supporting all my choices.

Last but not least, I want to thank my family, to whom this paper is dedicated. To my parents, Ilias and Rene Matsas and my grandfather Benakis Matsas, thank you for being there for me my whole life and raising me to pursue my dreams.
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## Abbreviations

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>PASOK</td>
<td>Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima (Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>Nea Dimokratia (New Democracy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KKE</td>
<td>Kommounistikò Komma Ellados (Communist Party of Greece)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYRIZA</td>
<td>Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras (Coalition of Radical Left)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAOS</td>
<td>Laikos Orthodoxos Synargeramos (Popular Orthodox Alarm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of the Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U&amp;G</td>
<td>Uses and Gratifications Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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Chapter 1. Introduction

Satire is an integral element of the Greek culture, pervading Greek social and political life. Since ancient times, satire and comedy have flourished at Greek theaters, with the most prominent illustration being Aristophanes’ plays. Satire remains ever-present in the culture of the Greek modern state; theatrical plays, cinematographic comedies, satirical caricatures in magazines and newspapers, and more recently the appearance of televised satirical shows are some of the manifestations of satire in public. All these genres of satire satisfy the need for pleasure, education and awareness in a comprehensive and accessible way, allowing people to digest daily occurrences in spite of the abundance of information that is being offered.

Of all the above genres, the most contemporary and influential seems to be comedic satirical shows on television, and its influence appears closely related to the special characteristics of the medium (i.e. the TV). Recent literature has shown that comedy shows hold a special relationship with their audience and that they have significant impact on viewers’ political perceptions, political engagement and knowledge about public affairs (Baumgartner & Morris: 2006; Cao & Brewer: 2008; Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism: 2008).

This thesis will explore the effects of televised satirical shows on politics in the Greek context and particularly the impact on viewers’ perceptions of political issues. After reading a fair amount of literature regarding TV satire and its influence on American politics, I realized that there is no substantial research on the same issue in the Greek context. Indeed, I believe the effects of satirical shows on Greek politics and public opinion have been overlooked, especially regarding the formation of public opinion and the use of these shows by viewers as an important means of becoming informed about contemporary politics.

The broad research question I intend to explore is: ‘What is the role of TV satire in Greek politics?’ Hence, the purpose of this project is a) to explore the effects of TV satire in
Greek politics and, b) identify the possible effects on viewers’ political opinions and political engagement.

Satirical shows have generated intense debate in the Greek media, with the existence of a great divide of opinions in what constitutes satire and its limits. A recent example of this is the decision of the Greek National Council for Radio and Television\(^1\) to impose a fine on one of the shows for using inappropriate language on air (Imerisia: January 25, 2010). As a result, SYRIZA commented respectively: ‘It seems that in the land where once Aristophanes’ satirical comedy shined by using sarcastic language and implacable criticism, humor is still victimized’ (ibid).

Moreover, there is significant public debate about the motives of the presenters, as well as the effects of these shows – positive or negative - on viewers. Interestingly, newspapers on the one hand defend the shows’ intentions. As one newspaper put it, ‘A satirical program cannot solve our social problems but it can contribute to sensitizing the public to them. In this capacity, Lazopoulos\(^2\) really shines’ (Tziantzi, 2010). On the other hand, the press can be highly judgmental about the political discourse chosen in these shows, not for example, that ‘Al Tsantiri broke viewership records in consecutive seasons, an incident that Lakis Lazopoulos exploited in order to conduct a direct ideological manipulation of his audience’ (Diamantakou, 2010).

My thesis's goal is to provide significant insight into the role of satire in Greek politics, especially considering that there is no extensive literature or research on this topic.

\(^1\) More information about the Greek National Council for Radio and Television, here: [http://www.esr.gr/arxeion-xml/pages/esr/esrSite/main?section=1a6156445e291e7983571826e98263e5&categ=f1e4bb6d5e351e7983571826e98263e5&lang=13d2f9c34f714615bb4dcb81fadb1220](http://www.esr.gr/arxeion-xml/pages/esr/esrSite/main?section=1a6156445e291e7983571826e98263e5&categ=f1e4bb6d5e351e7983571826e98263e5&lang=13d2f9c34f714615bb4dcb81fadb1220)

\(^2\) Lakis Lazopoulos is the presenter of ‘Al Tsantiri News’ the most successful satirical show currently. He has a long presence in satire, since he is an actor and he used to perform in satirical plays at the theater. For example, he was one of the main actors to criticize the Greek Prime-Minister, Andrea Papandreou’s affair with a younger air attendant, back in the 1980s. [http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=nuoeAAAAIBAJ&sjid=L84EAAAAIBAJ&pg=4483,6110746&dq=lazopoulos&hl=en](http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=nuoeAAAAIBAJ&sjid=L84EAAAAIBAJ&pg=4483,6110746&dq=lazopoulos&hl=en).
presently in existence. It will explore an area which has had little or no academic attention until now, despite being widely discussed publicly.

In order to conduct my research, I will be using literature produced in the American context. There is substantial literature on TV American comedy shows (e.g., *Satire TV: Politics and Comedy in the Post-Network Era*, by Gray, Jones & Thompson, 2009), research about the audience composition of these shows (e.g., ‘The News About Comedy: Young Audiences, the Daily Show, and Evolving Notions of Journalism’ by Feldman), as well as research on proposed typologies about entertainment television and the political content of these shows (e.g., ‘The Political Content of Late Night Comedy’ by Niven et al., and ‘A Typology for the Study of Entertainment Television and Politics’ by Holbert).

I will employ particular theories and methodologies in order to explore the Greek case, including Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory and the cultivation theory. Moreover, I will discuss theories of political participation and public opinion. I also conducted interviews and a survey to illustrate my research.

This thesis is framed by two variables; watching political satire and political participation.

In addition, my research will test two major hypotheses:

**H1:** TV satire shows significantly influence and form the public's preferences and political opinions and therefore their political activities.
This hypothesis is based on the argument that there is a reciprocal relationship between satirical shows’ viewership and political engagement and party identity.

H2: The Greek viewers do not get their news from watching satirical TV shows but rather from traditional news outlets.

The second hypothesis derives mainly from the American research and particularly the ‘Journalism, Satire or Just Laughs? The Daily Show with Jon Stewart’, a project conducted by the Pew Research Center’s Project for Excellence in Journalism (2008), which showed that the youth resorts to the Daily Show in order to be informed about political matters.

In order to answer my research question and confirm my hypotheses, I chose to study three satirical shows, ‘Al Tsantiri News’, ‘RadioArvyla’ and ‘Ellinofreneia’ (in Greek). The ‘Al Tsantiri News,’ presented by Lakis Lazopoulos, runs weekly and lasts approximately two hours. ‘RadioArvyla’ is daily, lasts 50 minutes and its anchors are Antonis Kanakis and Giannis Servetas. ‘Ellinofreneia’ is also daily and lasts 10 mins. The first two shows are live on air, while Ellinofreneia is a wrap-up of videos accompanied by text (thus there are no presenters).

My thesis offers more than a simple narrative of the political satire in Greece but primarily aims to provide pilot research of tangible data that will demonstrate its effects.

Chapter 2: Satire or Comedy? A Definition Problem renders an introductory discussion about the definitions of satire/comedy and places it in the context of recent media history (during the period after the end of the 1974 Dictatorship). Also, it discusses the goals of satire and how satire evolved to its modern manifestations.

Chapter 3: The Broadcasting Sector and the Regulatory Framework provides an analysis of the Greek media’s current state of play in terms of regulations and institutional constraints. I will show that the de-regulation of the broadcasting sector played a vital role in the emergence of televised satirical shows and offered the necessary freedom to criticize
public affairs. Moreover, Chapter 3 discusses the interdependence of the Greek media industry and the political powers and how this has affected the evolution of satirical shows.

Chapter 4: Literature Review presents a sample of the respective literature in regards to a) the role of comedy shows in the American context, b) the political participation and public opinion, and c) the sources of political information.

Chapter 5: Theoretical Framework outlines the necessary theories of U&G and cultivation theory, which provide significant insight into why viewers watch certain shows. In this way, the approaches of these theories contribute to this paper’s analysis by helping to explain the reasons Greek viewers choose to watch satirical shows.

Chapter 6: Methodology provides the steps that were implemented in order to test the hypotheses mentioned earlier. The methodological approaches adopted included:

a) a content analysis of the two major shows i.e. Al Tsantiri News and RadioArvyla;

b) interviews with the shows’ presenters and Ierotheos Papadopoulos, Head of the European Commission’s Representation in Greece;

c) an online survey.

Chapter 7: Findings – Discussion presents this thesis’ findings.

First, by conducting a content analysis, I provide a typology of the dominant issues in the satire shows: whether there is a focus on political, lifestyle, social, etc., issues. Moreover, by developing a coding system and with the assistance of fellow colleagues I am able to present a thorough analysis of the shows’ content. This kind of analysis helps me conclude whether there is a thematic pattern which converges with the agendas of traditional media and political parties.

Second the interviews conducted with the shows’ presenters facilitated my understanding of their motives and goals. Moreover, the interviews with the Head of EC’s
Representation in Greece provides conclusions about the relationship of TV satire and official politics; therefore, I highlight the impact of the shows on official political life.

Third, I conducted an online survey through SurveyMonkey that looks into the effects of satire on the audience's political views and perceptions. The goal is twofold: to test whether the viewers receive political information about political events from satire and to identify any possible trend between viewership and political engagement. Furthermore, the survey helps to study the identity of the show's audience (in terms of demographics, age, party identification, etc.) and whether the presenter's beliefs about their audience is valid.

Finally, Chapter 8: Conclusion returns to the original questions and hypotheses regarding the influence of TV satire on politics. I consider a variety of potential futures of satirical shows, particularly in being utilized by political campaigns, which has begun to be apparent as some political figures choose to appear on these shows. I also highlight this study's constraints and ultimate contribution.
Chapter 2. Satire or Comedy? A Definition Problem

The word satire has taken on many forms in modern-day culture. Originally used as a tool to mock or deride the natural failings of human nature, satire is currently used interchangeably with comedy, parody or even humor to describe and lampoon events that make us laugh. When it comes to satire on television, The Daily Show is often described by many as a comedy or satirical television show. (see Satire TV: Politics and Comedy in the Post-Network Era by Gray, Jones & Thompson, 2009).

In Greece, the word satire relates more to commenting and criticizing, while the word comedy refers to a broader genre. Indeed, ‘satire’ is used more commonly in daily Greek discourse, while comedy used mainly to describe a movie or theatrical play. In this paper, the words ‘satire’ and ‘satirical’ will be used when referring to television shows in Greece.

To properly discuss the effects of satirical television in Greek culture and to justify my decision to use the term satire, it is imperative to compare the historical evolution of satire and comedy in Greece and to discuss the distinctions between them in contemporary Greek culture. To do this, I will focus primarily on Aristophanes’ comedy due to its influence on and continued prevalence in modern-day Greek society.

2.1 Definition and the words’ derivation

The word comedy [=κωµωδία (in Greek)] derives from the ancient Greek word komos [=κόµος] and odi [=οδή]. The word komos refers to a group of dancers celebrating and drinking in a form of a symposium, while odi means song or lyrical poem (Rusten, 2006: 41, 56). According to the Ancient Greek dictionary, Aristophanes acknowledged that the word comedy was rooted in the tribe of Dorians, who allegedly invented comedy. This claim is supported by evidence found in the areas of Megara and Sicily that traces samples of comedy to these locations, long before Aristophanes’ works (Stamatakos, 1999: 563).
There are two tensions in the field of linguists and scholars in terms of derivation of the word ‘satire.’ The first school of thought claims that the word comes from the Greek word Satyros (=Σάτυρος). Satyros was the follower and companion of Bacchus (in Latin) or Dionysus (in Greek) and was half goat and half man. Later the word Satyros acquired a metaphorical meaning and it referred to the person who is lustful and prurient (ibid: 885).

Other scholars support a different approach. They argue that satire derives from the Latin word satura (adj. satur) which means variety and saturated; as a result, the term satura lex was created, which means the law that is comprised of many clauses, different from each other (Iliou, 1955?: 887).

### 2.2 Definitions and History

Aristophanes is the most common representative of ancient comedy whose plays are still taught in contemporary Greece. Interestingly, Aristophanes’ plays merge the two concepts described in the linguistic roots of the word ‘satire’ and create a new version of the comedy genre, which is that of satirical drama and comedy. However, it is very difficult to prove whether Aristophanes realized such a distinction. As Stavrou mentions in Aristophanes’ introduction:

Aristophanes’ comedies, even though they reveal elements of what are commonly called farce or comedy through characters’ and ethics’ misunderstandings, they are something totally different; above all his comedies are satire. A satire that is often soft, but most of the time it is rough, sharp and implacable to characters and situations; whose goal and hope is to strike the evil and bring improvement and salvation. (1989: 8).

Nevertheless, comedy (beyond Aristophanes’ comedies) as a genre does not necessarily include satire. As Silk mentions, ‘[…] it is clearly false to suppose (as often implied) that
political satire, or indeed satire as such, was a determinative requirement of the genre’ (2000: 10).

Thus, it can be understood that comedy sometimes uses satire, but satire is not an essential part of comedy. At times, satire might dominate the whole play, but it is not required. As previously mentioned, the Latin root of the word satire means variety (which gave the idea of the variety show) especially if one looks at the content of today’s Greek satirical shows where the shows’ presenters also include musical numbers, interviews and interaction with live audience. According to Schutz’s definition:

Satire is a form of comedy, ranging from drama through poetry to prose narrative. It must be amusing or humorous, but satire is essentially an attack on someone or some social institution. It may ridicule, parody, or caricature its target, but the purpose of satire with its negative approach is positive change (1977: 50).

There are many aspects to satire in general, but three key elements are most important for the purposes of this analysis: 1) the idea of variety, which is directly drawn by the root of the word satire; 2) satire’s nature, which is to attack someone or a social institution; and 3) satire’s lack of a structured script, especially when compared to a comedy, which typically uses a script for the entire duration of the play. These three elements guide my use of the word ‘satire’ in this thesis.

Current hosts of satirical television programs in Greece also recognize the differences between satire and comedy. When asked how he defines satire and comedy, Antonis Kanakis replied:

I think it is not the same thing. I think that satire has elements of comedy, but comedy doesn’t necessarily have satirical elements. They are different. In addition, satire is not the same thing for everyone; people conceptualize it in different ways. In my opinion satire has branches that have important differences from one another. Parody
is one thing, political satire is another, mimicry is another that is more related to
parody. There is also the type of satire that emphasizes the critical element and
through which I criticize what I am dealing with and I probably suggest something
else. Also, there is the type of satire where I don’t want to criticize or suggest
something but it is just something that catches my attention and I emphasize. … It is
like a caricature, which for example when somebody makes a portrait of me, he will
make my nose bigger than it is in reality or emphasize my ears. He will find those
characteristics of mine and he will exaggerate them. This is what satire does. It
overstates everything. Everything needs to be presented bigger than it is otherwise it
can’t be realized and understood (March 22, 2010).

2.3 Satire’s goals

Hokenson gives a very concise description of comedy’s goals:

Concerning norms, then, both Greek philosophers prescribe that comedy should not
deal with actual social roles or contemporary social issues in any explicit way
(whereas tragedy may deal with history). Comedy’s terrain is moral, ultimately
ethical, in the mise en jeu of character types, but explicitly not social, that is, it does
not depict social roles in any wider sense. Comedy may consist entirely of moral
inferiors at whom we laugh, and to Aristotle it is the superior (morally average) man
who laughs best, pleasurably mocking deficiency. He does not say whether such
laughter is useful, healthful, corrective, and so on, only that it gives pleasure (2006:
28).

As explained, comedy deals primarily with ethics and morality as its key concepts and
not with contemporary social issues. Taking Hokenson’s description of comedy’s goals and
applying it to contemporary television programs, it is noticed that these programs do not fit
the stated requisites for comedy, and therefore must be satirical in nature. These programs
focus mainly on social norms, stereotypes and roles; all of these are part of the daily media and political agenda, as well as the lifestyle and pop agenda.

RadioArvyla’s presenters claim that:

Satire uses exaggeration; exaggeration is its primary tool. Satire is very useful in society and especially to young people. There is an authority system that tries to conceal all of its unfairness, ridiculousness and lies with a mantle of demureness; then satire enters, uses all these instances, uncovers them from this mantle and reveals all this ridiculousness to the eyes of the young people. This is the usefulness of the whole thing. (March 22, 2010).

These shows criticize the established system of social norms through the medium of satire, which is the tool to expose falsities and to reveal the believed truth. Unlike comedy which builds upon its story with established protagonists, satire can become fragmented since it uses commentary to build its plotline.

2.4 Satire Today

Satire on television evolved from the evolution of theatrical plays in modern Greece. These plays were called ‘Epitheorisi,’ and they were considered political satire:

Inspired by satirical comedies, comic idylls and foreign variety shows, Epitheorisi consists of a series of comic sketches performed by a set of actors in different combinations. The actors play stock characters, but there is a development in their relationships, which gives the show its episodic structure. Each sketch culminates in a song and dance, with witty Greek lyrics sung to Western-style tunes and orchestrations complete with bright lights, live music, sparkles, spectacle, and glamour (Leontis, 2009: 177).

In this sense, one can identify the elements described earlier regarding variety and fragmentation, even in a theatrical play; therefore, Epitheorisi would easily be classified as
satirical in nature and would not be considered a comedy. ‘Epitheorisi’ focuses mainly on political issues and criticizes the current personalities in a very populist manner.

As theater critic Kostas Georgousopoulos states, ‘Epitheorisi started to lose its glamour after the birth of private TV which covers the news with rapid rhythm. Television nowadays creates issues from the daily events’ (Loverdou, 1997).

Satirical shows on Greek privately owned networks TV began appearing during the 1990s. It is worth briefly mentioning the popular show Lakis Lazopoulos’ ‘Deka Mikroi Mitsoi’ which was broadcasted from 1992 until 1997 and was highly satirical. Lakis Lazopoulos criticized society and politics by using one of 15 different fictional characters. (Leontis, 2009: 171-2).

Satire on television brought in high ratings to the networks that adopted these shows. Table 1 shows the viewership in Mega and Antenna from 1991 through 1996. Satirical shows had a high viewership from 1991 until 1996 due to Lazopoulos’ show on Mega channel.

Table 1: Viewership of Antenna and Mega combined in % of total viewership

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<tr>
<td>Comedies</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>24.7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Satire</strong></td>
<td><strong>33.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>35.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>36.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>37.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>23.9</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Drama</td>
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<td>30.3</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>24.7</td>
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<td>Daily Drama</td>
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<td>39.1</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>32.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>29.4</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>25.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tele-Games</td>
<td>39.2</td>
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<td>28.8</td>
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<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Lakis Lazopoulos is also the anchor of Al Tsantiri News, on which I have chosen to focus for this thesis. ‘Deka Mikroi Mitsoi’ means in English ‘Ten Little Jimmies.’
4 Source: Entertainment and Media Strategies in Papathanasopoulos, 2000b: 171
As Papathanasopoulos notes:

After the significant success of ‘Deka Mirkroi Mitsoi’, satire experienced a dramatic fall, which was attributed to the great difficulty that Greek productions had in creating shows of a respective level, but also to renew their content successfully […] also it needs to be noticed that satirical shows in the beginning (1991-1993) were also very competitive to the most Greek and foreign programs, even to sports games broadcasted in TV (2000b: 73).

Furthermore, the channels’ (Mega and Antenna) distribution of satire as a percentage of the total program productions is one of the lowest. From 9.3% in 1991-2, it decreased to 2.9% in 1996-7, while comedy series and TV-Games rank very high as the priorities of the channels (see below, Table 2).

Table 2: The Evolution of Programming Genres Distribution in Antenna and Mega (combined) in % of the total of Greek TV production5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comedies</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satire</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Drama</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Drama</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tele-Games</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs’ total in minutes</td>
<td>57,738</td>
<td>69,708</td>
<td>78,744</td>
<td>81,196</td>
<td>71,352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Source: Entertainment and Media Strategies in Papathanasopoulos, 2000: 172
Chapter 3. The Broadcasting Sector and the Regulatory Framework

3.1 The Rise of Private TV in Greece

Although, there is no literature in regards to the types of shows private TV favored, the appearance of satirical shows is closely related to the emergence of private TV; private TV and satirical shows appeared simultaneously. The conditions that govern the relationship between the private channels and the political powers raises questions on whether satirical shows can actually perform and criticize politics in a state of freedom or whether the content of the shows is guided by the interests of the respective channel. Therefore, it is essential to unfold the birth of private TV in Greece and the nature of its relationship to politics.

Television was initially presented to Greece in 1960 under the auspices of the 26th annual Thessaloniki International Fair\(^6\); however, its full operation began in 1966. The following year saw broadcasts fully controlled by the Dictatorship. Until 1989, Greek television had only two channels, which were both managed by the State (Mavrogenis, 2008: 49).

The privatization of the telecommunication sector came as a result of wide reform and transformation of the European market towards the creation of a European single market. During the 1980s, there was extensive acceptance in Europe of neo-liberal economic ideas, which support the view that the private sector is more likely to promote economic growth (Young, 2005: 97). In other words ‘neo-liberal ideas thus advocate that governments should interfere less in economies and concentrate on policies such as the privatization of state-owned industries and the removal of regulations, particularly those governing economic competition’ (ibid). This shift towards the liberalization of the European economy is

attributed to the wave of deregulation that took place in the United States in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Hancher and Moran, 1989: 133). As Majone states, ‘American regulatory philosophy and practice has been particularly influential in three distinct periods: during the formative years of the Community; in the 1970s, the period of development of social regulation; and in the early 1980s, the era of ‘deregulation’.‘ (1991: 81).

Under European pressure the Greek broadcasting sector was gradually de-regulated, opening the opportunities for private TV channels to compete with public channels. Until 1990 there were two state television channels and four state radio stations; currently there are 130 regional and local television channels and 11 national channels.\textsuperscript{7}

De-regulation of the broadcasting sector in Greece was a process dominated by political interests and heavily associated with partisan goals, while it raised a number of political questions. Papathanassopoulos notes:

Broadcasting has a symbiotic relationship with the political controversies of the country – both radio and television were born and established under the dictatorships of modern Greece’s troubled history. Radio was formed in the late 1930s under the Metaxas dictatorship and television in the mid-1960s under the Colonels (1967-74). Consequently, both radio and television were regarded as arms of the state (1997: 352).

It would be quite naive to believe that this kind of relationship of ‘interest’ would cease to exist because of private television’s birth. Moreover, the unclear legal framework that regulates the relationship among the parties, the state and television stations reinforces this interdependence. The major problems are traced to two areas: a) the state of play in regards to

\textsuperscript{7} This information is provided by the Ministry of Press and specifically the Secretariat General of Information: http://www.minpress.gr/minpress/en/index/mme_gr/list_tvlocal.htm. However, I need to say that because of the questionable state of play of the broadcasting sector in terms of which station is licensed to operate, the above numbers can be different.
the television and radio stations’ licences and b) the parties’ finances and budget in relation to
the allocation of funds for advertising.

The media’s regulatory framework as well as their interdependence with the State has
created a ‘fuzzy’ environment. Private TV and radio stations’ license applications are not
adjudicated, and they continue for years in legal limbo (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002:
191). Furthermore, the State often intervenes in cases when media organizations face
financial problems in order to cover the organizations’ production costs (Papathanassopoulos,
1999: 382). As a result, there are a lot of doubts about this give and take relationship between
the State and the stations. Regarding this issue, Ierotheos Papadopoulos, stated:

The Greek TV stations are currently under a state of being semi-legal. They have
temporary licences and the State has never provided them with permanent ones,
because there is a ‘deal’ between the stations and the State, which is sustained all
these years. I remember all Ministers to promise to take care of this issue and never
did. On top of that, a media organization is not absolute and self-subsistent; when the
same person owns big businesses in construction, energy etc. how can one be
convinced that there is no conflict of interest? In Greece, the concept of ‘conflict of
interest’ does not exist. For example, a person we all know was the Foreign Affairs
Ministry’s Press Officer and the same night presented the news broadcasting of a
private channel. In many places in the world, we witness an interdependence of the
two powers; here there is the absolute interdependence of the press power with the
executive. Unfortunately, many times some media play an extortive role. Also, State’s
commercials are allocated in a non-transparent manner, which is not based on merit
(December 17, 2009).
This interdependence is also highlighted by the satirical shows’ presenters, who develop their thoughts towards the idea of corruption and power games between politics and media. Voularinos (writer of Ellinofreneia) notices that:

Private TV stations do business with the State through their companies (for example construction). The media owners are not media people but businessmen, who undertake other projects which are way more profitable than their channel per se. They use their channels in order to book other agreements. As a result, the profile of private TV channels is a government/state friendly one, which might only change in case the project planned won’t end to an agreement (March 15, 2010).

Each shows’ anchors argued that they enjoy absolute freedom on what they say and how they perform their show. However, every anchor also acknowledged that they enjoy this freedom because their shows are profitable and bring money to channels. It is difficult to support whether this interdependence applies specifically to satirical shows because there is no evidence; nevertheless it is important that the anchors disclose the existence of this problem in private television. There are also some possible implications regarding the viewers. Many of them, especially those who are critical towards satirical shows, criticize presenters as being part of the same system that they satirize, since they are getting paid from the private channels that produce the show. These critical viewers often ask if it is possible for a person employed by a channel to talk against that channel or against the political powers that this channel has relationships with.

This relation was also confirmed by the presenters of the shows too. When the presenters were asked whether they believe that the rise of private TV provided the necessary freedom for satirical shows to emerge, they agreed that private TV embraced satire.

Antonis Kanakis, presenter of RadioArvyla noted:
I believe that private TV contributed to the development of satire. Among the many bad things private TV has, one of the good things is satire. However, the intentions were not innocent; private stations had a commercial interest because satirical shows were very well received by the viewers. Private TV would promote anything that has a profit. In a way we forced the private TV to provide us the necessary freedom; whereas a state-owned TV would not care about ratings and profit but rather about the content (March 22, 2010).

On the other hand, Ellinofreneia’s writer thinks that the evolution of satire alongside the development of private TV is circumstantial.

Under no circumstances was freedom developed because of private TV, maybe only televised satire, but still I have my doubts. We cannot know whether private TV contributed to that direction; we cannot know if state TV continued to exist, certain conditions might had forced the State TV to adopt satire. If I were conjecture, I say that private TV has accommodated satirical shows; however it has not provided freedom to information. It always depends though to which channel one belongs. In our case, SKAI has provided us with all the freedom we want in order to produce this show (March 15, 2010).

Interestingly, he also notes that the sudden explosion in satirical shows after the de-regulation of the broadcasting sector is more closely linked to competition rather than to the actual content and lack of freedom i.e. every private channel desires its own satirical show in order to compete with the other private channels (ibid).

### 3.2 Parties Finances in Relation to the Media

An additional implication of the interdependence described earlier is the political parties’ finances and how they allocate their budgets to advertising, particularly during electoral campaigns.
Earlier, I sketched the framework that forms or even manipulates the current broadcasting environment. The regulations of the real media environment are unclear, as is the media’s relationship to the parties and the State. In addition, it is unknown how each political party allocates its budget, from where the parties’ finances come and how this money is used. All this information is necessary in order to place satirical shows in this context, mainly because the respective shows are part of private TV. Moreover, the issue of parties’ finances became a heated topic on the political and media agenda in the last two years for two reasons. Firstly, the ‘Siemens scandal’ which concerned money given to the two main parties, PASOK and ND from Siemens in order to deliver favors and secondly the ongoing discussion in the parliament about changing the law about parties’ financial disclosure. These two issues were picked up from the satirical shows and heavily dominated their program for some time.

Even though there is a regulatory framework in regards to parties’ finances set forth in the Greek constitution, political parties misinform the public by publishing their finances at their own discretion. Parties are entitled to two kinds of public financing, by the State, which according to the Constitution is: a) regular and b) electoral (Mavrias: 2002: 398). Regular financing corresponds to annual contributions to the parties and electoral financing is offered when general elections or Elections for the European Parliament are taking place (ibid: 399). There are a number of restrictions on who can also give individual contributions, as well as the annual total amount permitted; therefore the following bodies are not permitted to finance the parties, Members of the Parliament or candidates (ibid: 403):

- Institutions of Local Governments and Authorities
- Any kind of Public Entity (for example: Communities, hospitals, public schools etc)

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8 More information about the Siemens Scandal please refer to this article of Fox News: http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,528630,00.html
Public Businesses and Organizations

Any kind of Businesses in which the State is a stake-holder

Media i.e. TV, Radio and Print Press

Businesses that participated in any Call for Tenders conducted by the State in the last five years.

Parties are obliged to keep records of the contributions, give receipts and publish their electoral expenses and an annual balance sheet (ibid). However, there is a disconnect between the law and what happens in reality⁹.

According to Aris Ravanos, a journalist in VIMA, parties accept a lot of donations which are never recorded because of the restrictions mentioned above, as well as the fact that the maximum contribution amount is 15,000 Euros (2009); as a result, parties conceal the real data of ‘where the money comes from’, in order to collect larger amounts. There is also the case of parties like KKE whose leader openly states that party will never publish their financial records, even if forced by the authorities and the law, especially those records concerning donors’ identity and contributors, citing ideological reasons (Tsatsis, 2009).

### 3.3 Viewership

The decisive role in the budget of the commercial time allocation and is the viewership for each show. In addition, viewership defines whether a show will continue to broadcast in the future. The problem that arises is that a single company, AGB Nielsen Media Research (Greece), conducts the viewership measurement system in Greece. AGB installs meters in random households and measure the time the members of the households watch.

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⁹ During the investigation about the Siemens scandal, Theodoros Tsoukatos (Former Deputy and Member of PASOK) suggested in his testimony that ‘PASOK kept two sets of accounting books, it accepted contributions above the legal limit and it was common practice in other parties as well.’. Retrieved from the WWW on the 15th of March 2010: [http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_politics_2_02/07/2009_108573](http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_politics_2_02/07/2009_108573)
TV\textsuperscript{10}. AGB Hellas was introduced in the Greek Television in 1988, with a sample of 150 households only in Athens. They later increased to 700 covering all the urban cities in Greece of over 10,000 habitants (Papathanasopulos, 2000b: 62).

However, this method is not reliable and AGB has persistently denied making public the meters and the method by which the households are selected (ibid: 61). The practices adopted by the specific company came under scrutiny in late 1996 and early 1997, when it became a major issue under discussion in the parliament and produced numerous newspaper headlines. The Parliament formed a committee, which led an investigation in order to reveal the deficiencies of the measurement procedure, focusing mainly on problems of the sample’s demographics and educational background (Halvatzakis, 1997). MP Tilemachos Hytiris, Greece’s former Minister of Press, also stated that AGB’s monopolistic status creates alienation from the TV programming, directs the commercials to specific channels and puts pressure on the journalists because they have to follow up on the ratings\textsuperscript{11}.

Although one would expect steps in the direction of improvement, there is still a lot of dissatisfaction on behalf of certain channels which claim that AGB is not credible. Particularly, Dimitris Kontominas, owner of ALPHA channel, suggested during the TV Audience Research Monitoring Committee’s regular session, that AGB is not reliable and is biased towards his channel’s newscast ratings (To Vima, 2008).

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10} AGB Nielsen Media Research: http://www.agbnielson.com/whereweare/dynPage.asp?lang=english&id=315&country=Greece
\item \textsuperscript{11} MP Tilemachos Hytiris stated the above on SKAI RADIO, vis-à-vis the discussion on media during the parliamentary committee’s (on institutions and transparency) regular session. 17/11/2009. Retrieved from the WWW on the 24\textsuperscript{th} of December 2009: http://www.skai.gr/player/radio/?muid=106663
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Chapter 4. Literature Review

4.1 Satire in the American Context

Literature on the American case has proved to be very useful in conducting this thesis, especially because there are no studies produced about these matters in the Greek context. To conceptualize and design this research, it was necessary not only to review the respective American literature but also to borrow and implement methods that have been already used to successfully study political satire. Television satire programs, such as The Daily Show and The Colbert Report, have been an indispensable part of the American TV programming since its inception.

Baym describes The Daily Show as:

The epitome of discursively integrated media, a seamless blending of comedy, entertainment talk, news, and public affairs discussion. Its hybrid nature is evident from its opening moments. The show begins each night with a full-screen graphic of the date, an American flag, and the globe, accompanied by music track serious in tone and resembling that, which is usually associated with a network newscast (2005: 262).

Past research studies and literature have explored various aspects regarding these programs, with a heavy emphasis placed on the influence of these shows on the youth audience (see for example Baumgartner & Morris: 2006; Holbert, Lambe, Dudo, & Carlton: 2007). Studying The Daily Show, the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism\(^\text{12}\) pinpointed the influence of the show on viewers’ knowledge of subjects covered on the program, as well as its effectiveness gaining viewership for news and political

information purposes (2008). These studies generate a core question: ‘Is there a relationship between political comedy (or satire) and politics?’

It has been very difficult to prove a direct relationship between satirical shows on TV and politics and even more to be able actually to measure the possible effectiveness. Keighron points out this problem in the UK case:

Comedy and television is part of a multimedia, multifaceted political debate. It is in fact absurd to look for cause-and-effect proof of a programme’s political worth. The fact that very occasionally, one can point to a programme having had a direct and measurable impact on the political and social world does not mean that all the other programmes have made a difference whatsoever. Clearly, making a political difference, let alone undermining political democracy, isn’t the reason why most comedian tell political jokes. But many of them are politically motivated people (1998: 139).

Taking for granted that presenters have an ideological or political motivation makes these shows highly political in nature; hence, the question that still holds is: ‘Is there an effect and if there is one what its nature is?’

Cao and Brewer conducted a research according to which ‘exposure to political comedy shows is positively related to political participation’ (2008: 92). They measured political participation by asking the following questions: ‘Have you ever contacted any elected official? Attended a campaign event. Joined an organization in support for a particular cause? Contributed money to a candidate running for public office?’ (ibid: 93). Exposure was measured by asking the respondents whether ‘they learn something about the presidential campaign or the candidate form comedy shows’ (ibid). Their results showed that exposure to American comedy shows ‘can be associated with certain forms of political participation’ and also be based on age and race (ibid).
This study demonstrates how the viewership of a comedy show can be positively related to the political participation of its viewers. In other words, comedy shows can function as main sources for political information and maintain viewers’ political interest.

On the contrary, Baumgartner and Morris conducted a research that confirms that watching The Daily Show can negatively influence evaluations of the presidential candidates (2006: 345). Moreover, they argue that exposure to The Daily Show will increase young viewers’ cynicism towards the electoral system and news media.

Baumgartner and Morris’ research showed that viewers’ perceptions and evaluations are influenced about politics but their research did not conclude to whether exposure to The Daily Show could increase or decrease political participation. Even though, they demonstrated that exposure to the show increases cynicism and mistrust, they didn’t correlate this finding to political participation.

There are though discrepancies among the comedy shows, specifically between The Daily Show and The Colbert Report. A study that is conducted by the same authors (Baumgartner and Morris) exhibited that although Colbert’s message is persuasive, young viewers seem to be confused and not able to understand politics (2008: 634).

An additional angle that research offers to the effects of comedy shows on viewers in Untied States is that of learning. Nowadays viewers turn to comedy shows in order to be informed about the electoral campaigns, candidates and politics in general. Feldman raises the issues that surround the perception of The Daily Show as news source. He writes:

As The Daily Show is taken more and more seriously as a news source, however, it problematizes for journalists the increasingly blurred distinction between news and entertainment and poses a challenge to the historical conventions used to enforce this distinction (2007: 411).
Feldman also argues that The Daily Show does not challenge the notion of news but exerts criticism to the media organizations and how these institutions disseminate information (ibid: 421). Hence, comedy shows can act as distributors of political information and can be perceived by the viewers as legitimate news sources, following journalistic patterns.

Journalism used to enjoy the monopoly of objective news distributors while journalists were/are entitled to forming an opinion. The news distribution climate altered with the advent of comedy shows. Lakis Lazopoulos views his show in equal terms to what the journalists are doing:

I don’t understand why in a country like ours a journalist is entitled to having an opinion over every single issue, while a man like me or anyone else that has finished a university and is educated does not have the right to tell his/her opinion on TV. What I mean to say is that TV should not be monopolized by the journalists’ opinions (April 15, 2010).

Research on American audience’s viewership habits has shown that they indeed perceive comedy shows as news sources. The Pew Research Center conducted a study in 2004 which explored audiences’ news and campaign information sources. The survey revealed:

Young people, by far the hardest to reach segment of the political news audience, are abandoning mainstream sources of election news and increasingly citing alternative outlets, including comedy shows such as the Daily Show and Saturday Night Live, as their source for election news [...] For Americans under 30, these comedy shows are now mentioned almost as frequently as newspapers and evening network news programs as regular sources for election news.

All the above research has shown that there is a relationship between satire and politics (whether this is positive or negative) and especially young audiences use those satirical programs as news sources. There is debate though among scholars how this relationship and
phenomenon should be approached. Holbert (2005: 443) provides a comprehensive conceptualization of entertainment television and develops a nine-part typology (see Figure 1 below). Vertically are the audience members’ expectations in relation to content, to be either ‘political, somewhat political, or the sociopolitical elements offered on the program serving a truly secondary function’ (ibid: 444). Horizontally the typology offers a scale of explicit political statements to messages that imply certain thought or perspectives of the sender (ibid).

**Figure 1: Holbert’s Typology for the Study of Entertainment TV and Politics (2005: 445)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explicit</th>
<th>Implicit</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Soft News</strong></td>
<td><strong>Satirical Situation Comedies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entertainment Television Events</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lifeworld Content</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ent. Talk Show Interviews w/ Politicians</strong></td>
<td><strong>Political Docudramas</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fictional Political Dramas</strong></td>
<td><strong>Traditional Satire</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Holbert discusses the characteristics of traditional satire (whose part is The Daily Show) and argues that the driving force of the programs is the presentation of political satire; however these shows do not provide straightforward statements about politics (ibid). This is an interesting take when studying Greek satirical shows because presenters do not endorse openly specific candidates or political parties. Greek satirical shows - with some variations - fall under the traditional satire, which according to Holbert ‘is driven by the presentation of
political and journalistic satire, but you will never see John Stewart explicitly endorsing a political candidate on the program or encounter him making explicit political statements concerning he stand on a given public policy issue’ (ibid). Presenters in Greek satirical shows will actually proceed and express an opinion about a law or a public policy issue by openly supporting it or not; most of the times they use harsh language to describe policies as unfair and anti-social.

4.2 Content of Comedy Shows

It is evident that comedy shows in United States provide political information. The questions that emerge are the following: What is the content of this information? How is it depicted? Moreover, in which way this information is disseminated?

According to the Pew Research Center (2008):

Structurally, The Daily Show combines elements of both traditional news shows and late night variety programs. Typically, the first segment consists of Stewart's monologue, which often uses video and audio clips. The second segment usually brings in correspondents who do skits, or staged interviews with Stewart. The third, and final, act of the show consists of a guest interview. Guests range from celebrities to historians and politicians.

The format of The Daily Show serves the idea of fake news, while simultaneously offers political information through the interviews. This information though is humorously depicted and most of the times is fake which may result in viewers’ having negative perceptions.

Niven, Lichter and Amudson discuss the way political figures information is depicted in television entertainment. Most of the time, this information is negative. They write: ‘Typical depictions of politicians include the bribe-taking, brothel-patronizing mayor of Springfield on the Simpsons and the incompetent buffoon running New York City on Spin City’ (2003: 120).
Research has shown that negative depictions influence the public’s perception of politicians and government institutions. Miller, Goldenberg and Erbring studied the relationship between critical media and citizens’ distrust of their government and institutions. They found that negativity produced by the media increases distrust. They write:

Media criticism furthermore appears to lead citizens to question whether their government is operating according to expectations, but it does not directly influence regime norms. News reporting that emphasized political conflict, and thus exerted a significant influence on distrust of government, only subsequently and indirectly contributed (1979: 80).

The principal tool through which comedy shows disseminate information and communicate their messages is humor. Comedy shows also use humor and jokes as a way to communicate their message, apart from being negative. Humor is a very effective way to address an issue, primarily because research has shown that humor is very persuasive and can be easily recalled. In his research, Lyttle conducted a study demonstrating humor’s effectiveness in persuasion. He concluded that ironic humor is very powerful and serves as a distraction (2001: 213). Further showing the benefits of comedic to memory recall, Berg and Lippman showed that participants found it easier to remember brand name products to generic product types when brand named products were depicted in a humorous manner and context (2001: 203).

Baum also demonstrated that humor-based talk shows are proved to be successful venues for political candidates and figures to appear because their likability is increased. He notices:

This discussion suggests that any E-talk show influence on the voting behavior of low-awareness individuals can be traced, at least in significant measure, to the effects of such shows on voter perceptions of the candidates’ personal qualities in general,
and their likeability in particular. This implies that we should anticipate fairly analogous effects on both likeability and voting behavior (2005: 217).

Another prominent feature used by comedy programs to make an impact with viewers is the use of different comedy features in their presentation. John Stewart uses different techniques to criticize and comment on political issues. Baym mentions that ‘John Stewart constantly shifts voices, not just between the silly and serious, but among a number of comedic, journalistic and critical stances’ (2007: 103). Also, Baym pinpoints the use of sarcasm in ‘The Daily Show’ as a direct form of critical questioning and necessary to establish important information (ibid).

4.3 Political Engagement through Laughing

The blending of politics, information and entertainment is now apparent, especially when terms such as infotainment, docutainment or politicotainment have become commonplace. There has been extensive literature on this subject, particularly on the effects of comedy and entertainment shows on politics and citizens’ willingness to be engaged in political life. As Dahlgren mentions, ‘the humor, not least the parodies of established forms of political communication that strip away artifice, highlight inconsistencies, and generally challenge the authority of official political discourse, offers pleasurable ports of entry to current political topics, as it contributes to the evolution of mediated political culture’ (2009: 139).

Another important perspective on the relationship of entertainment and politics is that of Prior who sees the two as competitive. In his discussion, Prior says:

In a high-choice environment, politics constantly competes with entertainment. Until recently, the impact of content preferences was limited because media users did not enjoy much choice between different content. Television quickly became the most
popular mass medium in history, but for decades, the networks’ scheduling ruled the situations in which viewers had to choose between entertainment and news. Largely unexposed to entertainment competition, news had its place in the early evening and again before the late-night shows. Today, as both entertainment and news are available around the clock on numerous cable channels and websites, people’s content preferences determine more of what those with cable or internet access watch, read, and hear (2005: 577).

This view though deterministically accepts the fact that entertainment is not able to offer political information or that viewers’ do not seek this kind of information to this genre. Research has shown that viewers consciously seek politics in entertainment shows, as well as feel that they are able to participate in politics through the viewing of these shows. Moreover, the content of these shows often becomes highly political. The Daily Show for example, has become one of the most popular venues for political personalities to appear pre-electorally and give interviews to Jon Stewart. Baym, referring to this issue, says:

Something remarkable is going on here. A late-night comedy show simultaneously has become a central node in the national, mediated political conversation’ Even though the The Daily Show’s interviews are a mixture of traditional entertainment (such as having as a guest movie stars), of highly political significance from the institutional and political establishment (including Senators Joe Lieberman, Ben Nelson, and Kay Bailey Hutchison) and of the field of media (such as Thomas Friedman and Paul Krugman) (2007: 94).

As Baym comments on this phenomenon, ‘The result is an unpredictable, eclectic mixture, one that spans from the familiar to the avant-garde, from the voices heard regularly in a corporatized televisual sphere to those rarely afforded the opportunity to speak, at least on commercial television’ (ibid: 97-8).
Beyond Baym’s point there has been research that underscores the potential relationship between comedy consumption and news consumption. Young and Tisinger argue that:

Late-night comedy viewing likely increases consumption of other news forms among young unengaged viewers. On the other hand, in the context of the more political-oriented comedy shows like ‘The Daily Show’ with Jon Stewart or perhaps ‘Real Time with Bill Maher,’ viewers of these shows are likely already informed about the issues of the day (2006: 116).

4.4 Political Engagement and Participation

The earlier section focused on comedy shows research conducted mainly in the United States. These studies demonstrated that there is a relationship (positive and negative) between viewing comedy shows and political engagement. Moreover, Americans and particularly young viewers turn to these shows in order to be informed about politics and electoral candidates. Before proceeding to the Greek case, it is necessary to explore what political participation and engagement traditionally mean and how historically people get informed about politics.

The main argument developed is that traditional means of political engagement are in decline; while alternative political venues (such as political satire) either are supplements to political participation or even have exclusively replaced the old forms.

Historically there has been a lot of discussion about citizens’ political participation, especially in elections. There is evidence that supports that citizens still participate and remain politically interested, but also that political engagement in traditional terms is in decline. This might sound contradictory, but I believe that civil participation is undergoing a transition. On the one hand, parties need to transform and adapt to the current challenges and
counter a common perception among young people that find them archaic; while on the other hand technology and the media have offered new routes to facilitate political engagement. Watching satirical shows is actually an alternative path to political engagement when other traditional means seem to fail.

The analysis focuses mainly on the European paradigm. Some of the changes that have taken place and have influenced participation include the decline of partisan identification and external efficacy, the increase of cynicism, which will be explored and demonstrated below. These factors can be influenced by education, income, age and social involvement (Hughes and Conway, 1998: 191-2 & 209-210). However, the increase of mistrust towards political institutions and media organizations is not exclusively a European phenomenon, as it will be analyzed. Pew Research Center conducted a research ‘News Audiences Increasingly Politicized’ in 2004, which demonstrated that Americans are becoming more cynical and distrustful. According to the survey:

The public is increasingly cynical toward the news media, as reflected in the slumping credibility ratings for many outlets. More generally, a majority of Americans (53%) agree with the statement ‘I often don't trust what news organizations are saying.

The main question posed is what consists of political participation and why people want to participate.

Different schools of thought have emerged to explain the reasons people choose to engage politically. Two perspective theories cite fundamental motivations for public engagement: a) the Madisonian view, which proposes that people engage to protect their interests and b) the Tocquevillian view, in which people engage to fulfill a sense of duty (Campbell, 2006: 13). The terms political participation and civic participation warrant clarification. Campbell provides this distinction between the two by essentially attributing the
Madisonian thought to political participation and the Tocquevillian perspective to civic participation;

therefore what I have thus far loosely referred to as public engagement motivated […] other authors have characterized as activity driven by expressive, Tocquevillian, or duty-driven motivations, I will refer to as civic participation […] Civic participation refers to public-spirited collective action that is not motivated by the desire to affect public policy (ibid: 16).

I do not see the necessity Campbell presents to make this distinction in definition. A homo politicus is a priori a civic person. It is very difficult to distinguish these two types of participation. A citizen often swings between the two when gets politically involved. Consequently, this thesis refers to political participation as an umbrella term, which encompasses all the duties, obligations, but also interests a citizen might pursue.

One famous school of thought, whose roots lie in the Madisonian argument, is Rational (Public) Choice Theory. Rational (Public) Choice Theory borrows concepts and ideas from economics to develop explanations about why people make certain choices. Author Anthony Downs represents this school with his book Economic Theory of Democracy. In it, he develops the idea that the rational voter weighs the costs of gathering information against the benefits of voting:

Corresponding to the infamous homo economicus which Veblen and others have excoriated, our homo politicus is the average man in the electorate, the rational citizen of our model democracy. Because we allow this political man to be uncertain about the future, he will not appear to be as much of a calculating-machine brained character as was the utitarians’ economic man. Nevertheless, he remains an abstraction from the real fullness of the human personality. We assume that he approaches every situation with one eye on gains to be had, the other eye on costs, a
delicate ability to balance them and a strong desire to follow wherever rationality leads him (1957: 7-8).

The idea of ‘information gathering’ has evolved through the years. My argument holds as following: today, the rational citizen seeks information from non-traditional sources, such as satire, to determine his/her political choices.

A second school of thought regarding the reason for political engagement or voting preference is put forth by the Michigan School. A key assumption of the Michigan School of Electoral Research is that once a voter becomes psychologically attached to a party, the voter then interprets politics in a partisan manner – partisanship (or in other words party identification). Partisanship becomes the criterion through which voters view the political world and decide their electoral choices:

Generally, this tie is a psychological identification, which can persist without legal recognition or evidence of formal membership and even without a consistent records party support. Most Americans have this sense of attachment with one party or the other. And for the individual who does, the strength and direction of party identification are facts of central importance in accounting for attitude and behavior (Campbell, 1980: 121).

Such an approach to explaining political behavior is also useful to see whether party identification influences the opinion one has on certain issues that are considered ideological. A person’s party identity (especially in cases where party identification is strong) might predict why people choose certain media, how politically active they are, and how critical towards institutions and the political system they may be.

Another interesting finding of the Michigan School was their claim that ‘as people’s sense of attachment to one of the parties increases, so does their involvement in political affairs’ (ibid: 143). Party identity is assumed to be essential for political involvement.
because parties are the vehicles through which people are motivated to act politically. Even though the Michigan School provides a very useful insight into party identification’s link to voting behavior and political engagement, assumptions that see parties as the only means for political engagement have become outdated. Today more than ever there is evidence of the decrease of interest in party politics, especially through two traditional political avenues; the low turnout in elections and the decrease in party membership.

The low turnout rate for elections is not just a common theme in American politics (even though during the last two American electoral cycles, turnout seems to increase). Over the past, few years there has been a noticeable declined in turnout in General Elections all around Europe. Partly citizens’ passivity and indifference towards governments and parties overall has been on the rise in the past half-century, as demonstrated in the following table (see Table 3).

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13 Source: Gallagher, Laver & Mair, 2006: 291
This trend is even more remarkable in the European Union’s elections, where the declining tendency of the electoral turnout is steep (see Figure 2). Particularly, in the Greek case turnout to both election types (National and European) has been in decline.

![Figure 2: Histogram – Evolution of the Turnout by Member State](www.europarl.europa.eu/election/epout/en/shz01en.htm#Histogram)

The second traditional way to participate politically has been party membership. The last thirty years in Western Europe has witnessed a decline in party membership and an increase in electoral volatility (Gallagher, Laver & Mair, 2006: 311). Historically, mass parties used to depend on members, and most importantly, members used to affect and inspire parties’ manifestos. A well-organized network existed in which members had significant roles and their opinions were taken into serious consideration. Particularly, several labor-oriented parties, which were affiliated with trade unions, had to take into account the unions’ positions on various political issues. This tight link between members and parties no longer

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15 Regarding electoral volatility, see Gallagher, Laver & Mair, 2006: 293-6
exists. For example, in Britain, the party membership has been in constant decline for the past fifty years (Katz & Mair, 1994: 113).

I am arguing that citizens nowadays are more aware of the party mechanisms and of the political game than in the past, especially because they have easier access to information. Citizens’ have turned away of the traditional parties and have found other ways to express their opinions. The low participation in elections does not necessarily mean individual indifference for politics, but it does indicate a clear dissatisfaction with the political system.

4.5 Public Opinion

The idea of political participation was explored and therefore linked to how viewership of comedy shows influence citizens’ engagement. As discussed earlier, viewership also influences the perceptions of the public opinion about candidates’ evaluations. When discussing about public opinion, what does that mean? Is it a compound term, which encompasses everyone’s perspectives? A working definition that Yeric and Todd came up for public opinion is:

Public is the collection of individuals who share a common concern, and an opinion is an expressed attitude. Therefore, when we discuss public opinion we mean the shared opinions of a collection of individuals on a common concern (1990: 5).

This definition fits very well with how this research views public opinion. It desires to explore the opinions of a group of individuals regarding their concerns about political satire on television.

Public opinion though has become one of the most banal terms used to holistically refer to the people and their ideology. We often hear scientists, scholars, politicians and journalists collectively use ‘public opinion’ to attribute all these emotional behaviors, often not responding to the facts. The individual who uses ‘public opinion’ may claim ideas that
are presented as accurate and credible because the majority’s dynamic is hidden in samples that are poorly drawn and passed off as representative.

The media and experts are another funnel through which public opinion is filtered, altered and influenced. Governments use experts and companies, specializing in public behavior, to conduct opinion polls on a regular basis. It has become essential that parties and governments know the public’s opinion on various subjects in order to maximize their power and votes. Moreover, the media use polls to show opposition by using repetition and visualization. Polls demonstrate to force government officials to discuss these subjects in that way citizens indirectly become setters of the policy agenda through the media agenda.

Academically, Public Opinion has been utilized and become an object of study. Price mentions that toward the close of the 19th Century, public opinion in political philosophy and theory came under the scope of psychology and sociology. These schools used the following empirical methods (1992: 15), ‘the line of inquiry routed the study of public opinion into new academic fields: collective behavior and social psychology, attitude and opinion research, propaganda analysis, political behavior, and mass communication research’ (ibid). Many people tend to forget, as Wilcox says, that ‘public opinion is a field characterized by diversity: diversity of concepts and theories, diversity of questions, and diversity of methods’ (1998: 2).

4.6 Media and Political Information

Another aspect that studies on comedy shows in the United Sates showed is the fact that these shows are used as sources for news information. In other words, people treat comedy shows as places where they can be politically informed and these shows can be considered part of the so called ‘new media’. So, how people get their information about politics?
The technological advancement vis-à-vis information processing and retrieval exaggerate the effects of public opinion on politics (Yeric & Todd, 1990: 239). Page, Shapiro and Dempsey maintain that Americans mainly depend on the mass media for information, forming opinions about politics based on that information distributed. ‘For whatever they do learn about politics, most people must rely heavily upon the cheapest and most accessible sources: newspapers, radio, and television, especially network TV news’ (1987: 24). This has changed with the advent of new media and the Internet. Citizens have found alternative ways to get informed or even become politically engaged. However, TV as a medium still maintains its hegemonic position as a main source of political news and information to the public at large.

Tewksbury argues that ‘America is in the midst of a migration of politically interested citizens from traditional new venues to cable, online, and other emerging channels (2006: 313-4)’. This statement provides a very useful insight; it outright mentions the ‘politically interested citizens’. It can be argued those citizens that engage and seek political information through new media platforms are a priori politically interested. Moreover, these citizens would likely be engaged no matter where they obtain information. The difference is that their choices are broader with new media platforms, regardless of their current motivations for political engagement.

However, an important issue is the content, accuracy and quality of the information provided by new media outlets. Hershey pinpoints that mainstream media’s role to fact-checking became even more compelling in the 2008 elections because of the vast variety of media, who operate on different levels of accuracy (2010: 138). This observation shows the different role media play in politics and citizens’ engagement. One may doubt the quality of information citizens get in regards to political issues. However, while there might be a higher number of people engaged, media’s actual role in politics might be overstated. The
introduction of entertainment to news may contribute to an inaccuracy of information. According to Owen, ‘the new media contributed to the heavy infusion of entertainment into the campaign media mix and an increased tabloidization of campaign news stories’ (1998: 211). Viewers might rely heavily on what information is presented, while at the same time devalue what they see because it is perceived as a joke.

Furthermore, Tewksbury notes that ‘the Internet helps people find the particular bits of news that interest them’ (2006: 313). This shows a characteristic of selectivity on behalf of citizens but also a fragmented offering of information rather a holistic and aggregated approach to the news. This use of the news and information is more evident now because it is transposed to the content of satire TV, especially as presenters tend to use the Internet as source of information rather t ‘raw’ political material.

Nevertheless, citizens tend to get informed, as well as become politically engaged, through these new media outlets. It is a trend that it needs to be further discussed and researched.

According to Pew Research Center in 2007 well-informed audiences comes from The Daily Show and the Colbert Report while the survey found out that:

More informed Americans enjoy keeping up with the news, believe they have a personal stake in what goes on in Washington, and are significantly more likely to be registered to vote than people who know less, the survey found.

In other words, Americans tend to get informed by comedy shows and those who watch are more informed than average. Moreover, these Americans are more likely to be engaged in traditional political activities such as voting. It will be interesting to see whether this is the case with the Greek satirical shows.
Chapter 5. Theoretical Framework

U&G and Cultivation theory can be the best theoretical way to explore the effectiveness of TV satirical shows on viewers’ opinions. Their complimentary character can be identified on their approach over selectivity and audience activity; on the one hand U&G considers that viewers are selective and active, whilst Cultivation theory considers viewing a ritual and non-selective process. I believe that these two theories offer a coherent approach to TV viewing (particularly viewing satirical shows) because there is an emphasis on the active audience and the individuals (U&G theory) but also an emphasis on the structures and views about broad societal questions which impose constraints on audience members (Cultivation theory). In other words, the two theories offer specific and general insights together in regards to viewing, which are not conflicting.

The reasons U&G and cultivation theories are chosen is twofold. Firstly, the area chosen to investigate is a mediated-communication problem i.e. Television is the medium through which the host of a satirical show interacts with viewers without a face-to-face interaction (even though there might be a live audience, most of the audience are people watching the shows on TV). Hence, U&G is essential in order to address TV satire’s effects both from the individuals’ (viewers’) aspect of content processing and from the media sources widespread effects (Miller, 2005: 248 & 269).

Secondly, U&G provides a more holistic approach in understanding the relationship between a show and its viewers. It explores ‘how and why members of media audiences use particular programming to satisfy a wide variety of needs’ (ibid: 256). It has an individualistic approach and a focus on viewers’ processing of the message. As Miller mentions a critique on U&G is its fragmented nature rather than a coherent proposal (ibid: 260). As a result, Cultivation theory complements the gaps that U&G has because it takes
into consideration the social construction of public perceptions providing a broader and overarching impact of TV on the way people perceive the world (ibid: 282).

The main constraint both theories have regarding their approaches is that they are both linear. Moreover, they consider that TV has an impact on viewers’ gratifications (U&G) and on society or our views on the world (Cultivation theory) which is a top-down process providing in any case a richer approach. Even though, Cultivation theory is far more systemic than U&G, it still approaches the TV effects as a one-way process.

An additional constraint both theories have is their deficit to recognize groups of viewers to which TV would have different effects because of the distinctive identity of the group. U&G looks into individuals and Cultivation theory into society. However, there are groups in society to which satirical shows for example would have totally different effects. To illustrate my point, Greek satirical shows have different effects on groups based on age, ideological affiliation and gender. The perceptions over reality and the gratifications obtained
by the members of these groups would be very different; however, the perceptions and gratification among the members of the same group would most probably be coherent.

5.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The initial research question and scope of this theory was: ‘How and why do members of media audiences use particular programming to satisfy a wide range of needs?’ (Miller, 2005: 256). A further research question developed was: ‘What is the process through which these gratifications relate to the behaviors and attitudes of audience members?’ (ibid: 258).

Ruggiero provides a historical overview of U&G’s theoretical development (2000). His article identifies three periods of U&G’s history including research produced in the 1950s-1960s (5), the 1970s (6) and the 1980s-1990s (7). During each period, he presents the new contributions to the theory, which is a process of building-up the theory. Initially, scholars on U&G identified a number of variables (such as race, education, class) in order to explain viewers’ gratification, achieving a research on the viewers’ diversification (5).

Later, there was a shift towards the distinction between gratifications sought and gratifications received, recognizing in that way two entities of the effects process (i.e. the medium and the viewers) (7). A typology offered in regards to gratification sought and obtained from the media was provided by McQuail (in Miller: 258) which considered four gratification categories: a) information b) personal identity c) integration and social interaction and d) entertainment. Palmgreen proceeded to developing this distinction between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained supporting that a researcher has to distinguish the media’s motives and intentions from what viewers actually get from the media or the reasons viewers watch certain programs (ibid: 257).

Finally, a latest development is a more structuralist approach where scholars pinpoint the role of technology, media organizations and programming structures and how these structures influence viewers’ choices and satisfaction (Ruggiero, 2000: 8). In general,
Ruggiero argues that U&G is still a valid theory, which can explain a lot of contemporary issues on viewership. A useful insight provided is the different notion of an active audience by U&G scholars outside the United States (ibid: 11). He particularly mentions Cooper, who argues that in ‘Japan media serve only to reinforce pre-existing attitudes and behaviors’ (ibid).

RQ: Do TV satire shows form viewers’ opinions and perspectives on issues or do they just reinforce their pre-existing opinions or even cultivate societal stereotypes?

Another significant part of U&G theory is the idea of para-social interaction, which suggests that ‘an audience member is often caught up in the message and may even develop a relationship with media characters’ (Miller, 2005: 259).

A more case-specific article was chosen to supplement my discussion; ‘Primacy Effects of The Daily Show and National TV News Viewing: Young Viewers, Political Gratifications, and Internal Political Self-Efficacy’ (Holbert, Lambe, Dudo, & Carlton: 2007). Here, the authors notice and present a different aspect of viewers’ gratifications. The gratifications that viewers are willing to obtain are the same across the different TV genres; in other words viewers wish to obtain political gratifications from satirical shows which they used to obtain from traditional news media (ibid: 20-22). As the authors mention ‘political gratifications measures have never been used for entertainment-based political media like The Daily Show’ and therefore ‘their study seeks to assess whether the consumption of The Daily Show influences the political gratifications associated with national television news viewing, and vice versa’ (ibid: 25).

Para-social interaction can explain today’s viewing of satirical shows. Even though people have a variety of different media from which to obtain political gratifications, they still refer to political satire shows on TV. Viewers can use social media, political blogs, online news outlets (such as Facebook groups, Twitter) in order to be informed, address their
identity, integrate or be entertained. However, satirical shows are very popular, particularly among young audiences. Para-social interaction can provide a sufficient explanation for this ‘loyalty’ towards these shows.

The second aspect of U&G that is applicable to satirical shows is the idea of an active audience developed by Swanson (1992), which suggests that ‘individuals have their own reasons for accessing the media’ (in Miller, 2005: 256). This explains why viewers choose to watch satirical shows when they have a variety of other options. I contend that viewers intentionally and consciously select this genre in order to obtain the political gratifications they want.

Furthermore, most of research regarding para-social interaction has been conducted about series, news, reality shows and TV games/quizzes (see for example: Nabi, Stitt, Halford & Finnerty: 2006; Levy: 1979). For this reason, there is a literature gap in regards to satirical shows and their study through the lens of U&G theory that should be addressed.

My intention is to explore the reasons Greek viewers choose to watch satirical shows through my survey; on the one hand analyze the results for the individual responses and on the other hand group responses according to gender, political ideology and age.

5.2 Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory concentrates on television as a specific medium and studies the impacts on the very way we view the world (Miller, 2005: 281). Moreover, Cultivation theorists have developed three assumptions, which guide research: a) the nature of TV, which considers TV as a pervasive, accessible and coherent medium (282), b) the nature of viewing which considers TV viewing a ritual and non-selective process (ibid) and c) the cultivation effect which considers that TV can create and maintain beliefs about the world (283).

Appel’s article ‘Fictional Narratives Cultivate Just-World Beliefs’ provides a very innovative conceptualization of cultivation theory on fictional programming (2008). Appel’s
main argument is that ‘Starting from cultivation theory, we posit that watching fictional narratives on television goes along with an increased belief in a just world (BJW), whereas general television use and watching infotainment nonfiction are related to the belief in a mean world.’ (ibid: 62). Appel’s following hypothesis is very interesting:

**H3:** The amount of watching tabloid news on television (infotainment) is positively related to the belief in a mean and scary world, even if the general amount of television viewing is controlled. (ibid: 68).

This is also linked to my discussion particularly when exploring dissatisfaction and distrust towards institutions. The content of the satirical shows (as it was coded in my content analysis) revealed that satirical shows are inherently anti-systemic and critical, which cultivate the beliefs that the Greek political world is corrupted.

Cultivation theory provides valid judgments over the above issue. Although TV satire has a thematical fluctuation, a common theme/imagery can be identified which potentially shape viewers’ conception of reality. Signorelli points out that ‘Commercial constraints necessitate that common themes cut across all programs. These, in turn, cultivate common worldviews and stereotypes’ (2003: 37). In the Greek case such a theme is an anti-systemic ideology or anti-governmental perception of reality. Greek satirical shows cultivate the perception that politics and institutions are corrupted and therefore not to be trusted. The increasing mistrust over politics created cynicism. Cappella talks about the media’s replication of violence and mistrust towards public affairs and how this increases cynicism. He supports:

‘In sum, old media are in the replication business. The stories and themes that are replicated are ones of violence and mistrust in entertainment, and strategy, artifice, scandal, conflict, mistrust, and self-interest in news and public affairs. The consistency and homogeneity of this content is a media effect of profound
importance, especially if media stories are the stories that people reiterate in the interactions with one another’ (2002: 240).

The most applicable aspect of cultivation theory that fits the context of TV satire is the cultivation effect. Cultivation effects come to fill in the gap pinpointed by scholars on U&G theory; i.e. the pre-existing beliefs about the world. In other words, ideology, family patterns or even habits can play a vital role on viewership and abandon the idea of selectivity. Moreover, the argument of ‘a long-term and cumulative impact of television on our views about reality’ (pg. 283) can limit the effectiveness of a specific genre such as satirical shows and incorporate them in TV as a whole.

Cohen and Weimann discuss cultivation theory in regards to TV viewing by Israeli youth and its effects on fear and interpersonal trust among them (2000). The authors take into their consideration aspects of Cultivation theory, which in the past were overlooked.

Firstly, they pinpoint that researchers have tended to neglect to study viewers who are immune from the adverse effects cultivation theory suggests (ibid: 100).

Another interesting insight they provide is the legal change of the broadcasting sector’s state of play i.e. the deregulation of the media environment during the 1990s in Israel (ibid: 103). This parameter can be very decisive on how cultivation theory is used in order to explain TV effects on viewers’ perceptions of the world. In a monopolistic media environment where the state and therefore the government controls the message and its frequency, one could assume that a specific, unified and consistent perception about society is cultivated. The landscape changes significantly when competition is allowed and multiple messages are introduced to the public. This dimension is very essential in understanding satirical shows effectiveness especially in Greece, where the deregulation of TV took place in the early 1990s too and which was discussed earlier; up until when there were only two public TV channels. In this sense another variable is introduced which is media ownership, in
addition to the previous discussed variables of TV genres or different media. In this case the
same genre (satire) is explored, in the same medium (TV) but in different stations. Expanding
a bit further this idea, a distinction between public and private-owned TV stations can be
pinpointed but also by whom the stations are owned in terms of their ideological positions.

Carlson’s article ‘Television Viewing: Cultivating Perceptions of Affluence and
Support for Capitalist Values’ (1993) undertakes the issue of TV viewing related to political
perceptions about the world, which is an issue also undertaken by satirical shows. Carlson
supports that ‘the influence of television viewing on the public's perception of the degree of
affluence in America and its support for values associated with capitalism. Overwhelming
evidence indicates that the world of television emphasizes American affluence and celebrates
values associated with capitalism.’ (243). It would be interesting to firstly explore whether
his argument is valid specifically to satirical shows; i.e. whether satirical shows influence and
celebrate values associated with any ideology. In the Greek context because of the culture of
welfare state and socialist orientation, TV satirical shows are naturally inclined to cultivate
anti-governmental perceptions and pro-social views about the world; something that I will
discuss in my analysis of Greek political system and the shows’ content.
Chapter 6. Methodology

This thesis combines a set of different methodologies in order to provide a complete research of the issues undertaken. The key concept that guided this thesis and encompassed all the notions that were necessary for me to proceed to its design was Lasswell’s famous maxim: ‘communication is defined by who says what to whom via what channel with what effect’ (Neuendorf, 2002: 34).

Having this concept under consideration, I identified three key players involved to my communication problem/situation. The first key players are the viewers who are defined as the people who watch or do not watch Greek satirical shows. I consider viewers also the ones who do not watch because they might still get influenced by the shows, they might participate in conversation but also provide feedback about the gratification they claim that they do not receive by the shows. Secondly, I regard as key players the shows which most of the times are represented by their anchors. Thirdly and maybe most importantly the medium is a major player, which is the TV. It is necessary to say that the TV also bears all the strengths and weaknesses inherited not only because of its nature but also as I described earlier because of all the administrative, legal and social constraints it has.

Finally, the ‘what’ part of Lasswell’s maxim is formed by all the players mentioned above. The shows’ content is a constellation of what the presenters’ and the producers’ desire to show, which is always influenced by the viewers’ desires and the medium’s dynamic.

In order to be able to test my hypotheses and delve into the relationships of satire and politics I undertook four different components as part of my methodology. Particularly, I followed Price’s suggestions on how to measure and observe public opinion. Moreover, I paid close attention to the critiques Wildenmann has proposed when conducting electoral research.
Price recommends three techniques through which indicators of public opinion can be drawn (1992: 83-44).

a) ‘Structured interviews, gathering self-reports by individuals, groups, or organizations (mainly used in representative sample surveys but also in experimental settings).

b) Content analysis of political platforms, organizational memoranda, private correspondence, or news and editorials.

c) In-depth interviews or relatively unstructured group discussions with public officials, organizational elites, activists, or focus groups.’

Moreover, Wildenmann offers the cautions and critiques I needed to be aware of, so as not to proceed to wrong judgments and conclusions. He undertakes the ideas of ‘reliability and validity’ of research and its results (1992: 112). The reliability of the research was protected by following the Protocol proposed by Georgetown’s Institutional Review Board. It is very difficult to accomplish the validity of the research, because the findings may always bear statistical errors; however, this research does not pursue to be representative or a generalization. More importantly, he underlines the potential problems that questions of ‘recall’ might have; ‘most of the times voters have forgotten what they have voted the last elections or they evaluate their preferences according to current situations’ (ibid: 118).

The first step I took in order to do my research was to design and distribute a survey to a Greek sample in order to explore the viewers’ reasons for watching (or not) these shows, relate it to their political knowledge, engagement and identity.

Secondly, I conducted interviews with the creators (at the same times presenters too) of the satirical shows that I have undertaken as my case studies. I was very much interested to get their point of view, reveal their goals and motivations; also, find out the structure of the show but also their opinions about the Greek political system.
Thirdly, I conducted a content analysis of two of the shows I have chosen to focus on, RadioAryla and Al Tsantiri News. Through, the content analysis I want to provide the reader, with the key themes that dominate the shows, which is their structure and what is the tone and character of the anchors.

6.1 The Survey

This survey employed a convenience sample of the Greek general public as a way to measure the public’s interest in politics, viewing habits, preferences and reasons for watching as well as identify the public’s electoral behavior and opinion towards the political system. For the construction of the survey, I need to say that I had the advice of my adviser Dr. Owen; the feedback from my second reader Dr. Meltzer and finally the significant help on Greek terminology and phraseology from Dr. Nikolakopoulos, Professor of Electoral Sociology in Athens University.

The survey was released online on March 18, 2010 and was closed after the period of three weeks on April 9, 2010. The survey was distributed through the social networking sites of a) Facebook.com by posting the survey on the fan pages and groups of the shows on the above sites, as well as sending to friends and acquaintances and b) Twitter.com by tagging the survey with the names of the shows’ hosts. Additionally, I anticipated a snowball sampling to distribute the survey link, as friends and family reposted the link to their own networking sites, forwarded to their own network of friends and a majority of them send it to their jobs’ listservs. Finally, I created a hard copy of the survey and distributed it to my mother’s workplace, where I received approximately 50 responses, aiming to diversify my sample.

16 My mother’s workplace is a private retail business, mainly purchasing clothes. She distributed the survey to two different venues of the business.
The survey was titled ‘Satire and Politics’ and it was created on Survey Monkey, which is an online platform for designing and distributing surveys. The total number of respondents numbered 552 the day the survey closed. After clicking to the survey’s link the respondents had to read and consent in order to take the survey in compliance with Georgetown University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) (please see Appendix for the consent form used).

The survey’s structure and organization was constructed by using a) typical questions used in polling and electoral research borrowed by Greek companies of political research b) questions drawn by the American literature on John Stewart and the Colbert Report\textsuperscript{17} c) questions that I developed in order to relate them to the theoretical framework I have proposed earlier in my thesis; such framework includes U&G and cultivation theories, as well as the ideas of political engagement and information.

The survey was divided in six sections and had the following structure:

1. ‘Warm up questions’: questions related to the respondents’ interest in politics and news. Particularly, the last question of this section was a filter question asking the respondent whether he/she watches satirical shows on TV. Depending on the answer YES or NO, the survey was designed this way that directed the respondent to different paths.

2. ‘Viewership’: this section was different for those who watch or not TV satirical shows. The questions concerned the reasons respondents watch these shows or the reasons they do not, their viewership frequency as well as their opinions about the shows.


3. ‘Political Knowledge’: This section was the same for both samples and it concerned questions regarding the respondents’ knowledge over political issues as well as from where they get their political information.

4. ‘Political Engagement and Greek System’: this section (also applicable to both samples) asked questions about electoral behavior, political participation, trust to the political system and party identification\(^{18}\).

5. Demographics: the last section set the variables for the survey such as age, sex and educational background.

The total number of questions was 22. They were presented in a humorous way and accompanied by a number of photos drawn by the shows or caricatures making jokes, in order to make the survey more pleasant to take.

There are certain questions in the survey that I would like to refer to because they have a significant reason for being included in terms of the theories framing them. In Section 2 ‘Viewership’, I added the following question: Why do you watch satirical shows? Scale the following answers from 1 (I strongly disagree) to 5 (I strongly agree). The respondents had the option to choose one or more of the preset offers, as well as provide their own reason for watching. The choices were:

- I have fun / I am entertained
- I get informed / I want to be updated
- I like the host
- I agree with the hosts’ opinions & views
- I learn sth here that I don’t in other places

\(^{18}\) The question on party identification-affiliation was drawn by the tradition of Michigan School. The Michigan School underlined the relationship between one’s attachment to a party and their electoral behavior. In order to reveal this relationship, interviewers use to the following question ‘Generally speaking, do you usually think yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?’ (Kamieniecki, 1985: 16).
They above options were selected because of the respective literature on U&G theory and particularly the argument on para-social interaction (I like the host), the idea of selective exposure and reinforcement effect (I agree with the hosts’ opinions & views) and finally the literature on humor, entertainment and information as presented in the literature review chapter (I have fun, I get informed).

In addition, in the same section I asked a question whether ‘Do you discuss or criticize with friends, colleagues or family instances that you have watched in satirical shows?’ which is related to the idea of anticipatory socialization; a person anticipates to interact with other people about the show. As Sheinkopf has supported ‘By providing youngsters with information regarding others’ political behavior, mass media exposure also may contribute to the development of long-range predispositions regarding such anticipated political activities as voting and campaign work (cited in Garramone & Atkin, 1973: 78-9). Prewitt and Nowlin provide a thorough description of anticipatory socialization in relation to politics:

A theory of anticipatory socialization suggests that men select as a reference group a group in which they do not currently hold membership, but to which they aspire. Men begin to prepare themselves for their future positions long before they actually fill those positions […] In addition to the role currently held, the anticipated or hoped-for role provides behavioral cues and perspectives […] This suggests a hypothesis about the politically ambitious. An incumbent who aspires to a higher office will anticipate holding that office by informing himself of its demands and adopting policy views consistent with incumbency in it (1969: 299-300).

Finally, the last question I would like to discuss is the following: ‘Do you feel that watching satirical shows is a political thing to do?’ The reason I asked this question is because I wanted to explore the argument formed by Hart about watching TV as a substitute
of political activity. Hart supports that television makes citizens ‘become busy, not involved’; as he says ‘this phrase may seem an oxymoron, but it seems apt as television makes watching and doing the same thing’ (1999: 158).

The survey’s sample was skewed to age and education, which is explained through the distribution choices of the survey and the fact that it was predominantly taken online. From the 552 respondents 74.5% were under 29 years old, clearly favoring a young sample. This is justifies though since the audience of satirical shows is predominately young. Baumgartner and Morris talk about the audience of The Daily Show, which is young between the ages of 18 and 24 and watches the show more than any other age group (2006: 344). The Table 4 below shows the ‘age’ range of those who participated in the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Survey’s Age Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, circumstantially the sample was approximately weighted in terms of sex, as you can notice in the Table 5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Survey’s Sex Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Furthermore, the majority of the survey’s respondents were well educated; the 82.4% stated that has received some form of higher education (meaning university, technical colleges or private institutions equivalent to university studies). Also, there was a significant percentage of 16.0% (in absolute numbers 88 respondents) that have finished high-school. Table 6 illustrates the three levels of education and how the respondents are distributed.

**Table 6: Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid basic education</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high school</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>university</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>82.1</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>99.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though, the sample was skewed towards those who have received some kind of higher education, the sample was weighted in terms of who is a student or not. As you can below on Table 7, 42.6% of the respondents were by that time (March 2010) students and 57.3% they were not. As a result, this data can help in drawing conclusions by using ‘being a student as a variable’.

**Table 7: Student**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid yes</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>99.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Satirical shows on Greek TV seem to be very popular especially if one considers the amount of blogs and articles that write about them. Satire is a big part of the Greek culture and even if one does not watch, still is aware of the personalities and issues that are being discussed in these shows.

My survey employed one very important filter question, which was: ‘Do you watch satirical shows on TV?’. The vast majority of the respondents (92%, n=508) chose the answer yes. In this case, all these people watch some kind of satirical show on TV. Only 8% of the sample (n=44) responded that they do not watch (see the table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>92.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>552</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Do you watch satirical shows?
6.2 The Interviews: The Shows’ View

Weisberg, Krosnick and Bowen on their book An Introduction to Survey Research, Polling and Data Analysis unfold all the information a researcher needs to know about polling, data analysis and social research. They point out that ‘face-to-face interviewing historically has been the most common method of survey data collection, and some commercial survey organization still make frequent use of this approach’ (1996: 103).

My intention was through the interviews to learn all about the ‘sender of the message’ i.e. the anchors and writers of the shows. I consider essential that I could be able to present the underlying motivations this shows have, what is the topic selection procedure and which are the impression and opinions of those who are the protagonists of satire on Greek TV.

As a result, I chose to contact the creators of the three main shows currently on Greek TV i.e. the presenters, Antonis Kanakis and Giannis Servetas of RadioArvyla, the presenter Lakis Lazopoulos of Al Tsantiri News and the writer of Ellinofreneia, Manos Voularinos.

The process I adopted was to contact them by email but also use personal contact people of mine who work in the industry, in order to assist me in approaching them. This process proved to be very successful and I managed to hold two face-to-face interviews with Antonis Kanakis, Giannis Servetas and Manos Voularinos. With Lakis Lazopoulos, I first emailed him my questions, and then he prepared them and got back to me, while I had the opportunity to make follow-up questions.

All the participants agreed to be quoted directly and use their sayings as part of this thesis. The interviews were conducted during March 2010; specifically with Antonis Kanakis and Giannis Servetas at their studio in Thessaloniki, Greece on March 22, 2010, while with Manos Voularinos at the SKAI channel’s studio in Athens on the 15th of March 2010.

It is worthy to note that the questions were designed alongside the survey’s questions in order to have parallel conclusions and to be related. They were phrased in a particular way
so as to be addressed to the creators of the shows, as well as I included questions that asked issues that I lacked of Greek literature such as the relationship of satire and the de-regulation of the broadcasting sector. The interviews’ questions can be found in the appendix.

Finally, I decided to conduct an interview with Ierotheos Papadopoulos, Head of the European Commission’s Representation in Greece. The reason, I decided to hold an interview with him is because of his deep knowledge of Greek politics and his institutional position; also his experience and constant interaction with Greek MPs and Ministers, as well as his daily follow up of the political news would be very helpful in commenting on the role of Greek satire in politics. Therefore, I met with him on the December 17, 2009 at the offices of the EC’s Representation in Athens.

6.3 Content Analysis

‘Content analysis is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text. These inferences are about the sender(s) of the message, the message itself, or the audience of the message’ (Weber, 1990: 9).

This thesis employed the method of content analysis, in order to offer the reader with a gist and flavor of what these shows are. It was not this thesis intention to provide a thorough quantitative analysis of the shows’ content but rather a qualitative presentation of the key themes that are discussed, the tone and style of the presenters, the use of video and the use of jokes and humor. It is essential to say though that all the appropriate steps for conducting a content analysis were taken which I will describe.

Firstly, the sample regards a nonrandom sampling, which falls under the category of convenience sampling. This method relies on the selection of readily available units (Neuendorf, 2002: 87). In this case, I chose from a ballot 5 broadcasts of ‘Al Tsantiri News’ that were aired the season 2009-2010. In total, the shows aired for the period September 2009 until April 6, 2010, when I conducted the content analysis, were 10 episodes.
The episodes were aired sporadically, when the presenter desired resuming the regular weekly broadcasting on March 2, 2010. In the case of RadioArvyla, 10 episodes were chosen from a ballot regarding the season 2008-9, because during then the show was predominantly political, while the season 2009-10 had a more popular-lifestyle profile (according to the own statement of the shows’ presenters disclosed during the interview on March 22, 2010). The show run daily for the whole season and was integrated to the regular program of the station Antenna.

The fact that the coding concerned an audiovisual message created numerous difficulties, starting from the definition of the unit i.e. ‘unit as an identifiable message or message component a) which serve as the basis for identifying the population and drawing a sample, b) on which variables are measured, or c) which serves as the basis for reporting analysis. Units can be words, characters, themes, time periods, interactions, or any other result of breaking up a communication into bits’ (Carney in Neuendorf, 2002: 71). As already mentioned an extensive content analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis, the unit had to serve the needs of the researcher; as a consequence I decided that the unit of analysis would be the periods interrupted by the commercial breaks (adopting the idea of a natural break).

The second issue that arose was the coders’ choice and right training. Three friends and colleagues assisted me with the coding process. They are all holders of Graduate degrees, specifically coder 1: MBA, coder 2: Political Science and coder 3: Architecture. I decided to have blind coding (ibid: 133); in other words, the coders were aware of the shows and general topic of my thesis but unaware of my hypotheses and research methods. The reason I chose to have four coders (including myself) was in order to provide to my analysis with higher intercoder reliability. Moreover, the coding sheets were exchanged during the coding process, so that all coders would follow different variables. In this way, I tried not to have a pattern because of a coder’s dependency and habits.
Moving now to the specifics of the coding, there were four coding sheets focusing on different variables and a coding protocol was designed for this project. Coding Sheet 1 followed the characters’ personality traits such as ‘lively, tense, aggressive, cold, egocentric, preaching, opinionated’. The coder could choose no more than three of these traits, and was instructed to choose the ones that dominated the unit of analysis. Coding Sheet 2 followed the presence of video, and judge the anchor’s presence compared to that of the videos. Coding Sheet 3 followed the type of humor that was used in the shows (disparaging, animal-human joke, childish, black humor, sex joke, religious joke) and the genre under which one would categorize the show (comedy, satire or parody). Finally Coding Sheet 4 followed the themes preferred in the shows i.e. government and administration, ministers and MPs, party leaders, education, environment, finance, health, international events and trends, media and entertainment, social issues, science and technology, work/industry/unions, leisure activities and sport, crime and justice. For a detailed view of the coding sheets and the codebook please refer to the Appendix. Coders had the ability to write down comments or additional remarks during the coding process.
Chapter 7. Findings – Discussion

7.1 The Greek Political and Party System

The evolution of politics in Greece is linked to the development of satire; indeed, most of the themes that modern Greek satire undertakes are drawn from the pathogeneses in the Greek political parties. Moreover, the deficiencies of the political system help explain the low institutional trust in Greek society. In order to present the results of the content analysis in its relevant context, it is essential first to discuss the Greek political and party system.

The character of satire and the underlying issues it addresses are linked to the politics of the two parties, but mainly by the ideologies that have emerged in Greek society. Even more, one can notice how the ideas that were manifested during the Dictatorship (military regime) are still present and define people’s ideologies, particularly in the cases of the shows’ presenters.

The Greek party system has experienced significant transformations and changes during the last 50 years. The development of Greek party politics is defined by two main periods: the first, from 1951 to 1981, characterized by poly-partyism; and the second, from 1981 to the present, characterized by two-partyism (Pappas, 2003: 91). The first period (particularly from 1951 to 1974) was defined by instability and fragmentation of the political powers. Democracy was not properly implemented (i.e. the left parties were illegal, there were accusations of elections’ fraud, etc.) and can be accurately described as ‘cachectic’ (Nikolakopoulos, 2001).

The formation of a stable party system began in 1974, marked by the fall of the military dictatorship, the transition to democracy and eventually the establishment of the Third Greek Republic. During this period, important changes took place generally in party politics. Firstly, the two major parties – PASOK and ND – emerged, which signified a
movement from fragmentation to concentration of political parties, and toward a stable two-party system (Pappas, 2003: 98). Secondly, KKE was recognized and was no longer outlawed, which opened the way for the left to assert itself politically. Lastly, even though the old cleavages (mainly the left-right cleavage) had not been eliminated, new issues arose and parties introduced new positions onto the political scene (Nikolakopoulos, 2005: 260; Lyrintzis, 2005: 242-3). In the first period of the modern Greek party system, from 1974 to 1981, PASOK was in opposition. This period was characterized mainly by PASOK’s anti-capitalist and anti-right discourse combined with intense populism, which translated to anti-NATO, anti-European and anti-Western rhetoric (Spourdalakis & Tassis, 2006: 498). More significantly, PASOK’s leader declared that were PASOK to gain power, it would refuse to enter the European Community, leave NATO and remove the US military bases. Another element of PASOK’s ideology at that time was the adoption of the radical positions of the old communist left (Lyrintzis, 2005: 244).

From 1981 to 1990, PASOK controlled the Greek parliament. During this time PASOK experienced gradual moderation, the abandonment of radical positions and the adoption of a more realistic approach (although populism and anti-right rhetoric continued to be basic features of its political discourse) (Moschonas, 2001: 13-4). It is interesting that there was a gap between PASOK’s discourse and policies. When PASOK gained power, Greece neither left NATO, nor removed the American bases; indeed, it accepted the Single European Act (Moschonas, 2001: 13).

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20 The adoption of radical left ideas can be explained though, by the fact that generally in political systems where socialist parties co-exist with communist parties, the former use left discourse in order to dominate at the left spectrum and attract the left voters. This was the case of PASOK, which was, in a way, threatened by the Communist Party (Moschonas, 2002: 60).

21 The Single European Act (SEA) concerns an institutional reform for the European Communities that took place between 1984 and 1986. SEA focused mainly on issues such as the enlargement and mainly introduced a commitment to complete by 1992 the single market project (Young, 2005: 100).
This irony in PASOK’s politics, i.e. the difference between what is said and what is done, has emerged multiple times in the satirical discourse; Lakis Lazopoulos very often pinpoints the ideological contradictions. For example, during his show on April 20, 2010 he said, ‘History plays games. Tomorrow on 21st of April a new dictatorship will be established in Greece; an economic dictatorship by the IMF. They will decide and will command. History does not forget. Your government will be the one, which signed this decision. This is the end of the golden years after 1974. Socialism has ended in this country.’

The third period in PASOK’s history is marked by the rise of Simitis to the party leadership and PASOK’s movement towards modernization. Simitis’ project of modernization included ‘a package of economic, social and political reforms’ synonymous with Europeanization (Featherstone, 2005: 225, 227, 231). Thus, the once socialist and very radical PASOK adopted neo-liberal economic measures and implemented a series of privatizations of state-owned companies.

The case of New Democracy’s evolution paints a different picture. The political right in Greece generally has been characterized by unity and continuity. New Democracy dominated the centre-right spectrum and proved to be a resilient party (Pappas, 2005: 93, 98). From 1974 to 1981, New Democracy was in power and Konstantinos Karamanlis followed liberal policies, primarily a mixed-economy strategy, described as ‘radical liberalism’ (Lyrintzis, 2005: 245). However, after the electoral defeat in 1981, New Democracy entered a period of confusion and deficiencies. New Democracy lacked efficient leadership, drew away from the center and suffered from internal conflicts (Pappas & Dinas, 2006: 478). In 2004, ND entered the political scene again after years of PASOK’s dominance, with Kostas Karamanlis (nephew of Konstantinos Karamanlis, founder of ND) as its leader.

Between 2004 and 2009 (when PASOK again obtained power) Greece entered a period of turbulence. During this five-year period, Greece had three national elections; the
government faced a series of devastating political scandals (including the ongoing ‘SIEMENS’ issue regarding bribery and money laundering from the Greek unit of Siemens to the two main parties of PASOK and ND\textsuperscript{22}. In addition, the revelation that the Greek Orthodox Church has offshore companies and real-estate tradeoffs with the State, the increasing violence of the police force which concluded to the death of a teenager, and the general corruption of the judicial system and the economic crisis, have caused a turmoil to Greek politics. These issues dominate the political satirists’ agenda and it is not a coincidence that the respective satirical shows re-appeared\textsuperscript{23} after 2004.

The development of modern Greek politics, especially the clash between left and right, is a consequence of the social conflicts that have taken place in Greece the last half of the century. After the end of the dictatorship, there was a very radical turn to the left because the military regime was closely associated with the Palace and the right-wing forces (Indeed, the Greek monarchy was abolished by referendum in 1974.) This turn to the left is reflected in Greece’s satirical shows, which boast a pro-left, anti-partisan, anti-systemic and critical discourse.

RadioArvyla’s presenters mentioned during our interview, regarding their opinion about the Greek media that ‘[t]he traditional news media play one of the most convenient and powerful roles in a generally bad system and participate in controlling and scaring the people.’

Ellinofreneia’s writer admitted that the ideological orientation of the show is, highly leftist and especially critical of the extreme-right and its party members. Moreover discussing the Greek system, he said:

\textsuperscript{22} Kathimerini (English Edition): Retrieved from the WWW on the 15\textsuperscript{th} of March 2010: \url{http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_politics_1_31/01/2008_92788} (in English).
\textsuperscript{23} As already mentioned the presenters had TV satirical shows during the 1990s; however, there was a break and reappeared in 2004.
When a system rots, it favors political and electoral nonparticipation; at the same time a rotten system favors political satire... at the same time TV has replaced the parliament to a great degree; this is not TV’s problem though, but rather the parliament’s deficit. TV is called to fill the parliament’s inexistence. All the political system has a problem (March 15, 2010)

Finally, Lakis Lazopoulos also revealed that he is driven by his personal ideological opinion:

My person political views definitely play a certain role, particularly in the fact that I do not belong to the extreme right and as a result, my beliefs are not formed in this context; however, the Greek TV and a good number of journalists have such an orientation, without even sometimes being aware of it. I do not secretly have racist sentiments, which I intend to pass in a covert way, neither have I secret ‘junta’ ideas which I project by accentuating Karatzaferis 24 or by raising supposedly objections (April 15, 2010).

7.2 The Content of ‘RadioArvyla’ and ‘Al Tsantiri News’

The content of these two shows is not only driven by the personal motivations of the presenters 25 but also by the agenda set by the media and the political powers in Greece. Both shows use excerpts of videos in order to support their sayings, comment on instances driven by life, and criticize politicians’ mistakes or gaffes.

The production process of these shows is quite similar. Lakis Lazopoulos’s topics are derived by the internet, the political agenda and his communication with his viewers:

I use the [internet and] the news broadcastings but mainly I communicate with the viewers because this interaction might reveal to me a reaction or thought which I haven’t detect[ed]. Due to the amount of work that I have, I tend not to go out so I

24 Karatzaferis is the leader of LAOS, which is perceived as an extreme-right party. It is a parliamentary party.
25 The presenters of the shows are at the same time the creators, writers and producers of the shows.
contact with my viewers through email. Of course, I have colleagues that keep me informed. The political agenda of the media plays a role because this is what is being discussed throughout the week. Of course, one is engaged about the agenda because this is what the viewers have seen all week. As a result, I keep track of the government’s agenda, what happens in the country and how the political climate is being formed (April 15, 2010).

RadioArvyla’s presenters also depend on their personal mood and viewer feedback.

Overall, our mood directs our show. Nevertheless, on a daily basis the process is the same. There is a group of people, who observe all the channels and the news broadcasting and then they bring us the first material. We view it, then we keep almost 10% and this is going to be the material for that day. Afterwards we transform it, we are creating videos about it, we are writing comments […] but usually in RadioArvyla everything comes to our mind during the show. It is what inspires us, what makes us enjoy ourselves (March 22, 2010).

In regards to the video presence in the shows, the content analysis revealed that the majority of the videos (in both RadioArvyla and Al Tsantiri News) are related to what the presenters say and the presenters have stronger presence over the videos.

In terms of the themes presented, there are differences between the two shows. RadioArvyla in the season 2008-2009 was highly political. Before presenting the themes for the sample coded, it is essential to say that this year’s show is highly different. Antonis Kanakis mentioned during our interview that although the political comments are still present in their shows:

RadioArvyla last year and RadioArvyla this year have big differences. Last year we were in a rather intense political phase. It is probably because of what was happening in Greece that made us be like that […] it was a highly political TV show. This year
the completely opposite happens. We hear politics and it is not just that we don’t want to deal with them…we are bored. Somebody could say ‘OK, include politics so that you can support your profile, so that you can make political comments.’ Last year we had enough and now we just want to have fun (March 22, 2010).

This statement shows the degree the RadioArvyla’s presenters react to politics and what is happening; based on the political conditions, they decide whether it is needed to pick up a political show.

RadioArvyla’s sample, which was coded, revealed that the presenters mainly focused on political figures that they were very locally interesting. The presenters are from the city of Thessaloniki (the second largest city in the north of Greece), so they tended to primarily comment on Panagiotis Psomiadis (Prefect of Thessaloniki), and also the Head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Thessaloniki, Anthimos. In other words, the show had at the one hand a political orientation but at the same time, it had a local focus. Specifically, the show undertook instances regarding the party leaders, the government and administration, as well as issues concerning by the media and entertainment industry.

Antonis Kanakis’ personality traits were scored as lively, humorous and egocentric, while for Giannis Servetas, humorous and accessible. The types of jokes employed by both were characterized as childish, including a prevalence of animal-human jokes. Finally, the majority of the coding showed that the program was indeed classified as part of the satire genre.

Regarding Al Tsantiri News, the themes that emerged in the 2009-2010 sample were different from RadioArvyla. The show predominantly discussed the economy and finance, which was expected, as the main political issue is Greece’s economic problems. Moreover, the shows coded in the beginning of the season 2009-2010 focused on the elections and the debate. Later in the season the show continued to criticize the party leaders, the Ministers and
MPs, focusing particularly on personalities (rather than institutions). Throughout the shows the anchor also presented moments concerning the entertainment and media industry too.

Lakis Lazopoulos’s personality traits scored as lively, tense, opinionated and preaching. The coders commented that the interaction with the live audience in the studio sometimes ruined the feeling of watching. The joke types were mainly attributed as disparaging, black humor and sex jokes. The coders criticized that he should refer to the sources of the jokes, i.e. openly state where he finds the jokes rather than receiving all the glory of inventing them. In addition, the coders found displeasing his tendency to discuss for at length and over analyze his jokes. Finally, Al Tsantiri was scored as part of the comedy and parody genre, rather than as satire.

Overall, both shows share a political identity and comment on social and political issues arisen in daily life. The personalities of the presenters are different, even when it concerns the same show (such as Antonis Kanakis and Giannis Servetas). However, this difference can also be explained by the different format the shows have: in RadioArvyla the presenters sit around a table, while in Al Tsantiri News the presenter stands up, resembling more a standup comedy format. This difference likely has a significant impact on the categorization of Al Tsantiri as a comedy, and RadioArvyla as satire.

7.2.1 Viewer’s Profile

This part will discuss the viewers’ distinct characteristics and whether this corresponds to what the presenters believe about their viewers.

Antonis Kanakis holds the following beliefs about his viewers:

I think it is a viewer regardless gender and age, intellectually young person with intentionally good sense of humor, without complexes…in general; with good intentions. For sure, it is not someone who supports the extreme right. Or maybe he is
but he likes to watch us and hate us. Mainly, he wants to hate us and to swear at us. He likes that. It is like a heavy metal guy who listens to Madonna (March 22, 2010).

Manos Voularinos describes his viewers as:

I believe that our viewers are highly educated and young. Ideologically, I believe that they are leaning towards the left or they can be central-right with a good sense of humor. In addition, traditionally in Greece men tend to watch satire more because men historically are more interested in politics. I also think that we have many students watching us, without though actually knowing that (March 15, 2010).

The respondents ideological positioning confirms the presenters’ beliefs. Predominantly, the viewers support left parties and feel closer to the central-left, which is explained as already said through the evolution of politics in Greece. The majority of the respondents feel closer to PASOK (23.40%), Syriza (27.08), the Green Party (8.32%) and the Communists (6.38%); while LAOS (3.48%) and ND (6.96%) do not score high in terms of party affiliation.

Figure 3: Party Affiliation of Survey’s Sample (%)
In addition, the electoral behavior of the respondents is very similar to their affiliation. Even though a great number of the respondents (18.32%) answered that they did not vote in the National Elections 2009, still the left parties are the ones that most of the sample chose (PASOK: 14.02%; Syriza: 27.66%; Communist: 5.61%; Green Party: 4.67%).

Figure 4: National Elections’ Voting of Survey’s Sample (%)

As I presented, the demographics of my sample, the majority has received higher (university) education and they are young between the age of 18 to 29.

7.3 Watching Satire as an Alternative to Politics

In the methodology part, I developed Hart’s argument about watching TV as a substitute of political activity. This is an important and valid point, especially in the Greek case. Driven by my survey’s results, my interviewees’ statements and the literature, it is evident that so-called ‘telepolitics’ has partially replaced the actual political process, has
increased the mistrust and disappointment towards the Greek political system, and has reduced the willingness of the citizens to be politically engaged in the traditional ways. People seem to turn to alternative roads of political participation such as the internet or by watching political satire.

As illustrated by Table 9, below, the desire for participation dropped dramatically already from 1985 to 1995 (from 24% to 5.5%), while the feeling of appeal has also dropped from 59.4% to 17.8%. On the other hand, disappointment begins to be measured in 1995, when 43.7% states disappointment towards politics. The data show the attitudes until 1995, when mistrust towards politics seemed to be stable (31.7%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9: Attitudes toward politics: 1985–1995 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wish for participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistrust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disgust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This dissatisfaction continues to be present even today, as illustrated by the Eurobarometer’s polling results (and also confirmed by the findings of my survey). Eurobarometer 71 (Spring 2009) shows that 56% of Greeks are disappointed by their everyday lives, while 48% of them believe that the following year will be worse than the present. Moreover, the degree of institutional trust in the Greek political system in very low:

26 Note. The following question was asked: When we speak about politics some things come to mind first. How do you feel about politics? (up to 2 answers). Table Source: Papathanassopoulos, 2000: 52
27 N = 2,000, representative sample, June 2–18, 1995.
only 15% of Greek society trusts the political parties, only 25% trusts the government, and 67% does not trust the Parliament.

As set forth below, these findings are corroborated by the results of my survey. Clearly, there is very low trust in the Greek political system in general. For example, approximately 70% of the respondents have low or no trust in the Parliament and approximately 80% of the respondents have low or no trust to the government and the political parties.

Figure 5: Level of Trust to Greek Institutions (Government, Parliament, Political Parties) in %

Moreover, the respondents’ trust is very low when it concerns other institutions, including the police and the Greek Orthodox Church. Approximately 78% of the respondents have low or no trust in the police, while 88% have low or no trust in Greek Orthodox Church.
The graphs above depict the high discontent the respondents have for political and social institutions (parties and the parliament) that traditionally have been influential such as the TV and the church. On the other hand, new media (such as the internet and satirical shows) seem to be alternative institutions in which respondents place more faith. Below (Figure 7), one can see that more than the half respondents trust the Internet while satirical shows also have more distributed levels of trust.

On the other hand, the media environment is more diverse. New media, such as the internet and satirical shows, seem to be alternative institutions in which respondents place more faith. Also, the radio and the printed press also enjoy high trust. The TV though is a medium to which respondents show discontent. Figure 7 presents that half of the respondents trust the Internet while satirical shows also have higher levels of trust, even though they are part of a distrustful medium (TV).
Approximately 79% of the respondents have low or no trust in television, which is the lowest across the media. Internet has the highest level of trust (approximately 51%) compared to all the media, while the satirical shows seem to trust more than the half of the respondents.

Figure 7: Levels of Trust in Greek Institutions (TV, Internet, Satire, Printed Press, Radio) in %

Lakis Lazopoulos also expressed his dissatisfaction to the political system:

I believe that the political system rose right after junta has collapsed. There are no longer healthy powers. The political parties are weathered; the whole political system is weathered; they do not have any energy, any potential; they cannot read today’s times; they are incapable of providing solutions to current problems. They are left behind. They cannot pass the test of history. It is over (April 15, 2010).

These phenomena (particularly the citizenry’s growing ‘indifference’ towards politics) are attributed not only to the problems in the Greek political system, but also to the role of media in politics’ evolution. Papathanassopoulos notes that ‘in the past, party workers mobilized citizens and sympathizers to attend the rallies, from which the parties could also gauge the popularity of their leaders. With the dominance of television, such political
gatherings are on the wane, and journalists now look to television ratings to see which politicians attract the most viewers.’ (2000: 56).

Ierotheos Papadopoulos also believes that:

[t]he televisualization of politics is a very dangerous thing and it leading to meiosis-democracy. We live in a period of tele-democracy, when the anchor of news broadcasting can determine the course of political things. The anchor (of satire or news) can control a Minister by demanding from him/her to intervene during the broadcasting. Moreover, anchors pressure ministers to take certain measures or decision on the spot. This kind of conversation should take place in the parliament and not on TV. Because of the televisualization of politics, people have ended up believing what Lazopoulos or TV anchors say and not what the Ministers say. This is very dangerous. Whether a Minister tells the truth or not, should be challenged in the Parliament. The media have not contributed to the people’s greater political engagement; they have contributed to even greater devaluation of politics (December 17, 2009).

So, the question that arises is: Are Greek people less interested in politics than in the past? I argue that they are not. The ways one person might engage have changed and it is not through traditional political activities (such as being a member in a party), mainly because of this greater dissatisfaction. Mistrust of or dissatisfaction with institutions or political powers of a system does not necessarily turn the citizens of that system to a more apolitical attitude; on the contrary, people that feel these sentiments will seek alternative routes to express this frustration. Satire emerged when this dissatisfaction became more evident and palpable, and as it became more political: watching satire is one of these options.

One of my initial hypotheses was that there is a reciprocal relationship between viewing satire and political activity. For this reason, I decided to run a regression test on my
sample and determine whether there is such a correlation and to identify whether there is an ascertainable trend. The variables I used were:

a. **Dependent Variable:** How often a respondent watches satirical shows. The degree of viewership was measure on a scale of [Never – Hardly Ever – Sometimes – Regular].

b. **Independent Variable:** Which of the following political activities the respondent performed in the last 12 months.

The options concern more traditional activities, which reveal one’s political participation. The additive index of political activity consists of the following:

a. Attended a political rally, speech, or organized protest of any kind

b. Written a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine or called a live radio or TV show to express a political opinion

c. Posted a message on a blog or on a social networking site (Twitter, Facebook) to express a political opinion

d. Worked or volunteered for a political party

e. Been an active member of any group (union, NGO, non-profit, lobby etc) that tries to influence public policy or government

Running regression and correlation models separately for each of the shows, revealed that higher viewership of Al Tsantiri News and RadioArvyla will result in respondents being engaged in less political activities, while Ellinofreneia shows the opposite; the higher the viewership, the more likely to engage politically. This finding supports my initial argument on watching satire as alternative to political engagement. Moreover, I run the same test adding the variable of age and it shows that it is statistically significant for the two main shows i.e. Al Tsantiri News and RadioArvyla. Tables 10, 12 and 14 depict the significance of the two variables for all three shows.
Table 10: Correlation of Al Tsantiri News in regards to Political Activities and Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Political Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al Tsantiri News</td>
<td>.180*</td>
<td>-.147**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 11: Regression Test for Al Tsantiri News - Coefficients*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.836</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>29.370</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Activities</td>
<td>-0.025</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>-2.825</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.225</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>3.688</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Al Tsantiri News Viewership

Table 12: Correlation of Ellinofreneia in regards to Political Activities and Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Political Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ellinofreneia</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>.283**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.440</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 13: Regression Test for Ellinofreneia - Coefficients*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.208</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>20.649</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Activities</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.283</td>
<td>6.493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.097</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Ellinofreneia
Table 14: Correlation of RadioArvyla in regards to Political Activities and Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Political Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RadioArvyla</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.142**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 15: Regression Test for RadioArvyla - Coefficients\(a\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>3.655</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>37.833</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Activities</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>-.096</td>
<td>-2.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.215</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>-.155</td>
<td>-3.505</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(a\). Dependent Variable: RadioArvyla

To sum up, for ‘Table 11: Regression Test for Al Tsantiri News - Coefficients\(a\)’ the effect of political activities (b = -0.124, p= 0.005) is statistically significant and its coefficient is negative, indicating that the more the Al Tsantiri News is watched, the lower the political activities.

Same case with the effect of age (b = 0.162, p=0.000). It is statistically significant and its coefficient is positive, indicating that the more Al Tsantiri is watched, the higher the age.

The regression equation for Al Tsantiri News Viewership will take the form:

\[
\text{Viewership} = (-.025) (\text{Political Activities}) + (+ 0.225) (\text{Age}) + (+2.836) (\text{Constant})
\]

For ‘Table 13: Regression Test for Ellinofreneia - Coefficients\(a\)’ the effect of political activities (b=0.283, sig. p=0.000) is statistically significant and its coefficient positive, indicating that the more the Ellinofreneia is watched, the higher the political activities. The effect of age is not statistically significant (p=0.922).

The regression equation for Ellinofreneia Viewership will take the form:
For ‘Table 15: Regression Test for RadioArvyla - Coefficients’ the effect of political activities (b=-0.96, p=0.30) is statistically significant and its coefficient negative, indicating that the more the RadioArvyla is watched, the lower the political activities. The effect of age (b=-0.155, p=0.000) is significant and its coefficient negative, indicating that the more the RadioArvyla is watched, the lower the age.

The regression equation for RadioArvyla Viewership will take the form:

\[
\text{Viewership} = (-0.019) \times (\text{Political Activities}) + (-0.215) \times (\text{Age}) + (3.655) \times (\text{Constant})
\]

This statistical analysis manifests that watching the two main shows (Al Tsantiri News and RadioArvyla) depends on how politically active one is; however, it is a negative relationship i.e. the less active the person is, the more satire will watch. Ellinofreneia is a different case, in which not only political activity is correlated but also positive i.e. the more political active the person is the more Ellinofreneia will watch. This finding confirms Manos Voularinos’s view that the audience of the show has solid political ideology before choosing to watch the show and they are highly engaged politically.
7.4 Are Greeks Politically Informed by Satire?

My initial hypothesis was that ‘Greek people do not receive their political information from satirical shows, but rather turn to the traditional media outlets such as the TV and newspapers.’ This hypothesis was not confirmed by my findings, especially as it regards younger people. The research showed that Greeks actually choose to be informed about politics by satirical shows. For their part, the presenters of Greek satire programs believe that they provide information in a more understandable and pleasant way that is attractive for their viewers.

Giannis Servetas articulated the same opinion, when discussing his opinion on media and their role as news organizations:

Personally, I think that this is not news. The news is a big joke. I can get over a bad show but not a stupid show [. . . ] So, the news presents things in a stupid way and what is the reaction of the audience? They resort to satire shows. Personally, if I were a viewer I would prefer to sit at home and get informed by Kanakis (March 22, 2010).

According to my survey’s results the majority of respondents replied that they actually do, get informed about political issues and news from satirical shows. As illustrated in Figure 8, 31.92% of the respondents regularly get informed, while 42.62% sometimes get informed, about such issues from satirical programs.

Traditional news outlets such as the nightly televised news broadcasts and the morning news talk shows do not seem to be as popular as I had stated in my hypothesis. Table 16 shows that 56.96% of the respondents often watch nightly news while the rest hardly ever watches such programs. Figure 8 reveals that the vast majority of the sample – 76.11% – does not watch morning news, which is interesting since these shows are always very early before one has to go to work.
In addition, I attempted to identify any possible correlation between the sources of political information (such as being informed by satire [Dependent Variable] or being informed by TV news [Dependent Variable]) and (a) the political activities in which one is engaged [Independent Variable]\(^{29}\), (b) interest in politics [Independent Variable], and (c) age [Independent Variable].

Using Night TV News Viewership as the Dependent Variable revealed very interesting findings. Running a regression test shows that the more one watches TV news, the more likely one is to have less interest in politics (Table 16: Regression Test for Night News - Coefficients). Moreover, age also seems to have a correlation to political information sources: older respondents are more likely to get informed via nightly TV news.

\(^{29}\)I used the same additive index of political activity, as presented earlier. Also, the interest in politics was measure in a scale of: Not at all – A little – Fairly Enough – Very Much.
Table 16: The effect of political interest \((b = -0.229, p = 0.000)\) is significant and its coefficient is negative, indicating that the more the night news is watched, the lower the political interest.

The effect of age \((b = 0.410, p = 0.000)\) is significant and its coefficient is positive, indicating that the more the night news is watched, the higher the average age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>2.329</td>
<td>.450</td>
<td>5.180</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Activities</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>-.072</td>
<td>-1.321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Interest</td>
<td>-.229</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>-.216</td>
<td>-4.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.410</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.239</td>
<td>5.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>.199</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>2.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Affiliation</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.031</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>-2.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Night News

Thus, the respondents who choose TV nightly news as the source of their political information are more likely to be less interested in politics and more likely to be of an older age.

For those who use satirical programs to obtain their political information the results of the regression test suggest that the respondents who choose to inform themselves of political issues by satirical shows are more likely not to be engaged in political activities and be female.

Table 17: The effect of political activities \((b = -0.031, p = 0.006)\) is significant and its coefficient is negative, indicating that the more the Satirical Shows is watched (in order to be informed), the lower the score on the political activities index.
The effect of sex ($b = 0.249$, $p = 0.002$) is the strongest factor and is significant and its coefficient is positive, indicating that the more the Satirical Shows is watched, the more likely to be of female sex.

### Table 17: Regression Test for Satirical Shows - Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>3.129</td>
<td>.399</td>
<td>7.837 .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political Activities</td>
<td>-.031</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>-2.743 .006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political Interest</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>1.813 .070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>-.266 .790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>3.136 .002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>-.060</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>-.704 .482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Party Affiliation</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>-.292 .771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.175</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>-1.724 .085</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Satirical Shows

This statistical analysis marks a significant difference between Watching Night News and Satirical Shows for the purposes of getting political information. The trend that is developed shows that the less politically interested and older a person is, more likely to be informed by TV Night News. On the contrary, the less politically active and of female gender a person is, the more likely to be informed about politics by satirical shows.

### 7.4.1 Remarks

Antony Downs discusses the process of how information is produced and how people acquire it. He claims that information ‘is used as a means to some decision-making end. As with all means the usefulness of this information and the manner in which is selected depend upon the end it serves’ (1957: 125). Viewers therefore act as conscious citizens deciding the sources of their political information in order to proceed to their political decision-making. The results of my survey suggest that satirical shows in Greece have proven to be a very
useful pool for this kind of information since traditional news outlets seem to have failed to satisfy the needs of the citizens for information.

While discussing about the content of nightly news Giannis Servetas mentioned:

If you watch the news, it is always the same. You can predict what is going to happen tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. Politics have a certain direction and we already know it. For whatever is going on today we have a video from ten years ago from Aman. We have videos from Aman\textsuperscript{30} that fit the current situation so well. I can describe you the last days of Easter. The lamb is going to get expensive; everybody is going to complain […] I can tell you what is going to happen day-by-day (March 22, 2010).

This critique of traditional news media explains why night and morning news tend not to be as appealing anymore as sources of political information. The presentation format, and indeed much of the content, has been the same for so many years, and (at least younger) viewers simply are not interested in learning from these sources anymore.

As discussed earlier, Young and Tisinger showed in their research that ‘watching late-night comedy is positively and significantly correlated with watching almost all forms of traditional news’ (2006: 128). The Greek case does not resemble the author’s finding though.

Running regression models separately for each of the shows revealed that the higher viewership does not necessarily mean a positive correlation to consumption of other news sources. In the case of Al Tsantiri News [Dependent Variable], the higher the viewership will result in respondents more likely watching less TV [Independent Variable]. Higher viewership of RadioArvyla [Dependent Variable] will result in respondents consuming less Radio and the Internet, while watching more TV [Independent Variables]. Finally, the higher Ellinofreneia’s [Dependent Variable] viewership is, the respondents are likely to consume

\textsuperscript{30}Before this show: RadioArvyla’, Antonis Kanakis and Giannis Servetas had a show called Aman, which was a comedy show. The main characteristic of this show was that they did short plays while disguised.
news less from the Internet, TV and Radio [Independent Variables] and more from newspapers.

To sum up, for ‘Table 18: Regression Test for Al Tsantiri News and other News Sources - Coefficients’ the effect of TV consumption (b = -0.233, p= 0.000) is statistically significant and its coefficient is negative, indicating that the more the Al Tsantiri News is watched, the less likely for respondents to watch TV.

The regression equation for Al Tsantiri News Viewership and Newspaper will take the form:

\[
\text{Viewership} = (-0.233)(\text{TV}) + (+3.358)(\text{Constant})
\]

For ‘Table 19: Regression Test for Ellinofreneia and other News Sources - Coefficients’ the effect of newspaper (b= -0.185, p=0.000) and the Internet (b= -0.152,
consumption is statistically significant and its coefficient negative, indicating that the more the Ellinofreneia is watched, the less likely for respondents to watch TV. The effect of TV (b=-0.127, p=0.001) is significant and its coefficient positive, indicating that the more the RadioArvyla is watched, the more likely for respondents to watch TV.

The regression equation for Ellinofreneia Viewership will take the form:

\[
\text{Viewership} = (+0.127)(TV)+(-0.185)(Newspaper)+(-0.152)(Internet)+(+3.024)(\text{Constant})
\]

For ‘Table 20: Regression Test for RadioArvyla and other News Sources - Coefficientsa’ the effect of TV (b=-0.174, p=0.000), Radio (b=-0.084, p=0.008) and the Internet (b=-0.132, p=0.003) is statistically significant and its coefficient negative, indicating that the more the RadioArvyla is watched, the less likely for respondents to consume news from TV, Radio and the Internet. The effect of Newspapers (b=0.125, p=0.000) is significant and its coefficient positive, indicating that the more the RadioArvyla is watched, the more likely for respondents to consume news from newspapers.

The regression equation for RadioArvyla Viewership will take the form:

\[
\text{Viewership} = (-0.174)(TV)+(+0.125)(Newspaper)+(-0.132)(Internet)+(-0.084)(\text{Radio}) + (+3.591)(\text{Constant})
\]
The statistical analysis showed that the Greek case does not follow the American paradigm introduced by Young and Tisinger. When the Greek respondents watch a satirical show does not mean that they will consume other sources of news too.
8.1 Why the Viewers Watch Satirical Shows?

As discussed in Chapter 5, U&G and cultivation theory can provide useful explanations for the reasons a viewer chooses to watch a certain shows, and particularly satirical shows. My survey not only revealed the reasons one watches satirical programs but also whether these reasons also correspond to the justification given by the shows’ presenter for creating these shows.

Ierotheos Papadopoulos, whose occupation it is to be highly politically informed, stated that he watches these shows in order to be entertained; also he does not learn anything new about politics, even though there might be instances that he might discover a new aspect about a political event. ‘I watch satirical shows to relax after a long day during which I am consumed with politics and news…Most of the time the issues that these shows undertake, I have a priori relevant information about it. However, I need to say that the humorous ways these shows present the issues might offer an alternative aspect of a political issue.’ (December 17, 2009).

The vast majority (approximately 97% of the sample) chooses to watch these shows in order to be entertained and have fun. Moreover, approximately 70% of the respondents also tend to agree that the reason they watch the shows is because they want to be informed and updated (Figure 9).
Interestingly the connection to the presenters looks as powerful for a reason to watch. The presenters have been on TV for more than 15 years with different shows and viewers select this option in order to explain why they watch these shows. Approximately 56% tend to agree that they like the presenters (Figure 9), while approximately 68% admits that agrees with the hosts’ opinions. It is concluded that there is a para-social interaction developed between the viewers of these shows and the hosts, especially when it comes down to viewership too (Figure 10). The two shows that have presenters (RadioArvyla and Al Tsantiri News have higher viewership) which is be explained by the cues and relationships developed between the audience and the presenters.
Some respondents chose to disclose more information about the reasons they choose to watch satire, providing valuable input. The main reason given is that viewers believe that these shows present reality and truth.

Respondent 1: ‘Reality is being projected, even the most hideous; approached from a different angle, a different eye, commented with smart and accurate sayings; sometimes it is kind exaggerated but always true and essential.’

Respondent 2: ‘Satire escapes from the typical ‘political correct’ format and refers to [and] comments on events and issues that would not be able to be presented somewhere else.’

Finally, the idea of anticipatory socialization as described in my methodology chapter is confirmed by the survey’s findings. Approximately 92% of the respondents engage in discussions, which concern moments drawn from satirical shows. This is further supported by the findings of Figure 11: respondents watch the shows in order to be updated and informed; hence, the respondents can share this information with the people they socialize with.
My argument is also supported by the results on the same question posed to those that they do not watch satirical shows (and who therefore do not anticipate socializing through the information provided by these shows). Approximately 56% of these respondents do not engage in conversations that concern instances drawn by satirical shows. On the one hand, because they do not have the information needed to participate in such discussions, but also because they do not anticipate doing so.
8.2 The Medium

As mentioned earlier, cultivation theory is also a way to understand TV and how views about issues are formed. According to cultivation theory’s assumptions, TV is a pervasive, accessible and coherent medium. These are assumptions, which the presenters of RadioArvyla and Lakis Lazopoulos aspire to realize.

Antonis Kanakis mentioned:

Personally, I like TV. I want to say and to distinguish myself from this imputation of TV. TV is a medium, it doesn’t have a personality by itself; we give it a personality. So, according to the way you use it, it is going to have a different value. Therefore, I like TV because it is a strong medium. There are many things that I don’t like about it [...] it is a medium that can be fascist and can control all your senses. In some aspects, it is as if television forces or creates some of your thoughts and actions: how you perceive things to be, what you see, what you hear, what you can imagine. It does not give you the space for anything; neither to think something else nor to imagine something else. It provides you everything. These are the disadvantages of this medium (March 22, 2010)

Lakis Lazopoulos also acknowledges TV’s power and accessibility.

TV as a medium definitely is powerful because you have a large audience. Even if it sounds absurd, it is as if you can hear the laughs from inside the houses; it is as if all Greece is laughing and this is a very intense feeling for someone who has a satirical show and his intention is to inform and entertain (April 15, 2010).

Moreover, another assumption of cultivation theory seems to be confirmed by the survey’s results: TV creates and maintains beliefs about the world (or, at least, viewers believe that TV does so). The respondents were asked to pick the adjectives that characterize satirical shows. In response, many termed the shows to be highly stereotypical. Some respondents chose to
disclose personal views about the shows; they describe the shows as ‘propagandist’, ‘manipulative’ and ‘populist, trying to preserve certain directed views’ or that they create ‘trends.’ The aforementioned remarks support that some of the viewers are fully aware that these shows are mediated and part of a general social structure. Moreover, they recognize that certain views are maintained or even reinforced by presenting stereotypes.

8.3 Are viewers influenced?

The shows’ anchors seem to believe that their viewers are influenced, though in a positive, critical and constructive way. Lakis Lazopoulos believes that his viewers are not influenced but rather develop a new way to become critical: ‘I don’t believe that my viewers are influenced. Viewers are influenced by anything they hear in daily life. The main issue is to provide the viewers with an alternative side which in most cases is not the usual one.’ (April 15, 2010)

RadioArvyla’s anchors also share the same view:

I think viewers get influenced. I don’t think it is bad for people to get affected. However, to accept an opinion just because you like how it is presented it is bad. What we hope it is not happening is that people who watch our show accept whatever we say just because they enjoy our show and because we say it. We like people to watch it, to argue against it and then if after they process it and they agree with us, then that is OK. (March 22, 2010).

On the other hand, an Ellinofreneia’s writer believes that the viewers of his show are not influenced by it because of its low viewership and because he considers that, the viewers have a specific ideological orientation, which is pretty much set in advance.

Davison in 1983 developed his hypothesis on the ‘third person effect’ by supporting that ‘In its broadest formulation, this hypothesis predicts that people will tend to overestimate the influence that mass communications have on the attitudes and behavior of others. More
specifically, individuals who are members of an audience that is exposed to a persuasive communication (whether or not this communication is intended to be persuasive) will expect the communication to have a greater effect on others than on themselves.’ (1983: 3). This hypothesis is confirmed by this survey’s findings too.

The survey showed an interesting finding regarding whether the respondents believe that they get influenced. My filter question was whether one watches satirical shows or not. As a result, I asked directly those who watch whether their political views and opinions are influenced by satirical shows. Approximately, 78% of the respondents denied that they are influenced by watching satire (Figure 13).

![Figure 13: Are your political views influenced from satirical shows? (%)](image)

Those respondents who claimed that they do not watch satirical shows, could not be asked whether they are influenced by satire shows (because they do not watch); however, I asked them whether they believe that satirical shows influence the political views of those who watch. Figure 14 shows that 75% of the respondents believe that others who watch satire are influenced politically.
The ‘third person effect’ explains this difference to the responses produced by the two different groups (those who watch and those who do not). The respondents who watch support that they are not influenced by what they see, since they belong to the specific community. The respondents who do not watch believe that others are influenced because they are critical towards these shows and they believe that they are manipulative.
Chapter 9. Conclusion

Political engagement is a fundamental to the proper functioning of society; through political participation, citizens can pursue their own interests by choosing the political forces that will rule their world. However, political engagement has transformed through time and so too has its meaning altered.

A new development of political engagement is the emergence of satirical shows on TV. Research proves the existence of a strong correlation, positive and negative, between citizens’ political engagement and watching these types of shows. Gray, Jones and Thompson comment the landslide of satirical shows on American TV:

First it speaks of the immense popularity of satire TV: being funny ad smart sells and has proven a powerful draw for the audiences’ attention. Second, the rapid spread of the clip highlights satire’s viral quality and cult appeal, along with the technological apparatus that now allows such satire to travel far beyond the television set almost instantaneously. Consigned to basic or pay cable channels (as it often is in the United States), satire has nevertheless frequently commanded public attention and conversation more convincingly than shows with ten times the broadcast audience […] Satire can energize civic culture, engaging citizen-audiences, inspiring public political discussion, and drawing citizens enthusiastically into the realm of the political deft and dazzling ease (2009: 4).

Satire is a new medicine capable of keeping citizens alert and interested in politics when other traditional forms of political engagement seem to fail. Political participation has traditionally been identified by two main activities: voting and party membership. In Europe, both activities have been in decline. However, it is unfair to say that citizens have ceased to
care about politics. That these two traditional paths to politics have been in decline has enabled other political routes to emerge – for example, engagement through viewing satire.

This explored whether watching satirical shows in Greece enhances viewers’ political engagement or whether it is a new form of participation acting as an answer to the increasing cynicism experienced in Greek political life. The Greek paradigm offers new avenues of research about watching satire, turning away in many cases from the findings of similar American research.

This thesis explored the role of TV satire in Greek politics and employed theories and methodologies driven by the disciplines of communication and political science to do so. U&G theory offered explanations for the reasons viewers selectively choose to watch Greek satirical shows. Greek viewers found these shows humorous and entertaining, but interestingly too, watching satire is a mean to socialize in the wider environment and engage in political conversation with friends, family and colleagues. The idea of anticipatory socialization was confirmed by the survey’s findings. Approximately 92% of the respondents engage in discussions, which concern moments drawn from satirical shows. From those that they do not watch, approximately 56% do not engage in conversations that concern instances drawn by satirical shows.

Cultivation theory provided a systemic framework to examine the institutions governing TV as a medium. Shanahan and Morgan support that these institutional constraints that TV experiences are inevitable, even with the advent of new media:

As the scene changes, the story remains the same. No matter what new media develop, under current policies and institutional conditions we cannot envision an environment in which story resources are not controlled by a relatively small number of elite institutions. The essential propositions of cultivation do not become false in such a new media environment; rather in many respects, they are strengthened. This
rather grim prognostication is born out of a sense of history, from looking at new technologies with the same glasses we use to look at the old ones […] As Gerbner so often points out, now stories are told by people with something to sell rather than something to tell. The new media will change this only in very small ways: the total number of stories out there may increase along with number of technologies by which they may be consumed, but membership in the story-tellers’ club will remain highly restricted (1999: 219).

Hence, the medium remains partly monolithic, leaving little room for viewer choice. Satirical shows are part of a larger powerful medium (TV) which is owned and controlled by elites. The satirical agenda is determined by the agenda set by their respective channels and news organization, leaving very little option for non-conformity. Even though the privatization of Greek TV seemed to offer pluralism and a new way to further democratize politics, the constraints remain consistent and entrenched. Satirical shows cannot escape the limitations the medium poses on their agenda and therefore it is apparent that the content of these shows is rarely differentiated from the norm or even among shows.

The following hypotheses were tested by three methodological techniques, survey, interviews and content analysis:

**H1:** TV satire shows significantly influence and form the public's preferences and political opinions and therefore its political activities/engagement.

**H2:** The Greek viewers do not get their news from watching satirical TV shows but rather from traditional news outlets.

My research confirmed the first hypothesis. The statistical analysis of the survey sample depicted demonstrated that watching the two main shows (Al Tsantiri News and RadioArvyla) depends on how politically active one is; however, it is a negative relationship – that is, the less political active one is the more satire one will watch. Analysis of the
viewership of a third show, Ellinofreneia, demonstrated a different conclusion: not only is political activity correlated with viewership, but also that correlation is positive – that is, the more political active one is the more one will watch Ellinofreneia.

The research’s findings do not converge with that of the American literature. According to University of Pennsylvania’s National Annenberg Election Survey:

[American] Viewers of late-night comedy programs, especially The Daily Show with Jon Stewart on Comedy Central, are more likely to know the issue positions and backgrounds of presidential candidates than people who do not watch late-night comedy (2004).

The American case demonstrates that comedy shows’ viewers tend to be more politically active and well informed about politics than non-viewers. American research demonstrates that watching comedy shows acts to enhance the engagement of already politically-interested viewers; that is, viewers of TV satire in the U.S. are already politically-savvy, and their viewership of TV satire spurs them to consume additional news sources in the course of their political engagement.

The Greek case does not comport with the American case. Cynicism and mistrust to politics has reached such a high level that political interest and activities are negatively correlated to satire viewership. Furthermore, those who watch satire in order to be politically informed, tend to be less interested and rarely consume alternative news sources.

Because of the above findings, this thesis argued and concluded that watching Greek satire on TV is an alternative route to political engagement and not a supplement to political engagement. Watching satire is involves being immersed in highly political and ideologically particular content; however, this experience (i.e., watching) does not translate to actual political activity via traditional modes of political engagement.
The second hypothesis – that viewers do not watch satire to obtain political information – was not confirmed. Apparently, the Greek polity represented in the survey has shifted to satirical shows in order to become informed about politics. This was a surprising finding, taking into consideration that the Greek culture involves a tradition of reading newspapers and spending a great amount of time in front of a television.

Learning about political news and elections from satirical shows has become a habit for the Greek public. Satirical shows in Greece have proven to be a very useful pool for this kind of information since traditional news outlets seem to have failed to satisfy the needs of the citizens for information. Satirical shows have begun to replace traditional news outlets rather than creating a more diverse consumption of news; satire has not created more politically engaged citizens.

Greek satirical shows are political places disseminating political information. Warner has argued that:

In the past two decades, politician have increasingly utilized what are known as branding techniques of commercial marketers to just such an end, in the hopes of persuading the citizen/consumer to trust their product – their platform and policy positions- to the exclusion of all others. These branding techniques relying on the emotional rather than rational appeals are in the attempt to achieve automatic, unreflective trust in the brander product […] One intriguing model comes from the same realm as the original branding technique, the media saturated world of consumer capitalism, where an insurgent movement know as culture jamming is at the forefront of this type of disruption […] John Stewart and his fake news program, The Daily Show, act as political culture jammers (2007: 18-9).

It is essential that these venues should be exploited by the political powers in order to re-align and re-engage citizens to the democratic process. It is a great opportunity for politics to re-
enter vigorously the Greek culture. There is evidence that satirical shows in Greece have an
effect on viewers and influence their political engagement, as viewers turn to satire in order
to be informed; why not then have politicians take advantage of this new opportunity, in
order to promote their policy position in a humorous way and restore political trust? Since,
the way democratic policies function is through parties and party candidates, it is essential for
citizens to be re-engaged in traditional modes of politics. The American example seems to
work for the time being; new media and new venues interact with traditional parties and
modes of political engagement in a sort of ‘virtuous circle.’

This thesis laid the foundations for other researchers to take on similar studies. It is
imperative to further research the correlation of TV satire and Greek politics, because of the
lack of literature regarding this issue. These shows have significant effects on viewers’
perceptions of political issues. Moreover, Greek satirical shows have become new venues for
political debate and engagement; viewers turn to these shows in order not only to be
entertained but also politically informed and engaged. When satirical shows cease to be
perceived as corrosive to democracy and politics; and politicians realize the benefits these
shows offer to viewers, and indeed, can offer to the politicians themselves, then there is great
hope that Greek citizens will abandon cynicism and mistrust and once again become involved
in traditional politics again.
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Pappas, T. S. & Dinas, E. 2006, ‘From Opposition to Power: Greek Conservatism Reinvented’, South European Society and Politics, vol. 11, no. 3-4, pp. 477-495


Spourdalakis, M. & Tassis, C. 2006, ‘Party Change in Greece and the Vanguard Role of PASOK’, *South European Society and Politics*, vol. 11, no. 3-4, pp. 497-512.


Content Analysis: Episodes


RadioArvyla, 2008, television program, ANTENNA Channel, Athens, 21 October.

RadioArvyla, 2009, television program, ANTENNA Channel, Athens, 16 March.

RadioArvyla, 2009, television program, ANTENNA Channel, Athens, 5 May.

RadioArvyla, 2009, television program, ANTENNA Channel, Athens, 30 April.

RadioArvyla, 2009, television program, ANTENNA Channel, Athens, 12 April.


RadioArvyla, 2009, television program, ANTENNA Channel, Athens, 26 February.

RadioArvyla, 2009, television program, ANTENNA Channel, Athens, 6 May.


Interviews

Interview with Ierotheos Papadopoulos, Head of the EC’s Representation in Greece, 15 December 2009.

Interview with Antonis Kanakis, Presenter of RadioArvyla in ANTENNA Channel, 22 March 2010.

Interview with Giannis Servetas, Presenter of RadioArvyla in ANTENNA Channel, 22 March 2010.

Interview with Manos Voularinos, Writer of Ellinofreneia in SKAI Channel, 15 March 2010.

Interview with Lakis Lazopoulos, Presenter of Al Tsantiri News in MEGA Channel, 15 March – 10 April 2010.
Works Consulted

AGB Nielsen Media Research:


Content Analysis Resources: http://academic.csuohio.edu/kneuendorf/content/

Eurobarometer’s technique was used in order to construct the survey’s scales:


Greek National Council for Radio and Television: http://www.esr.gr/arxeion-
xml/pages/esr/esrSite/main?section=1a6156445e291e7983571826e98263e5&categ=f1e4bb6d5e351e7983571826e98263e5&lang=13d2f9c34f714615bb4dc81fadb1220


APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Coding Book

Codebook
This codebook is designed to help the coders in the process of coding episodes from the satirical shows, RadioArvyla and Al Tsantiri News. This is a study of the above satirical shows’ content.

Each variable is defined on its use in this study. The coders should refer only these definitions and instructions. Coders should code each unit in an aggregative way i.e. choose the values (labels) that best suit to describe each unit.

**Unit of Analysis:** Each individual component which is coded. Specifically, the unit is each period interrupted by the commercial breaks

**Episode ID:** Fill in the episode’s ID number, as indicated by the Researcher.

**Coder ID:** Indicate the number of the individual who coded that sheet.

**Character Name:** Give the name of the character i.e. presenter / anchor.

**Variable:** An operationalization of a concept that varies, with an exhaustive and mutually exclusive set of values represented by response options; also, referred to as ‘item’ or ‘question’.

**Labels:** The names of the values that each variable has.

**Program interruption:** one or more non-program segments shown during the airing of a program (e.g., a break that contains commercials and station identification).

**Response option** - a specific value among a set of exhaustive and mutually exclusive values that the coder selects when coding a variable by placing an ‘x’ in the appropriate box on the coding sheet.

**Program** - traditional unit of television content; typically 30, 60, 90 or 120 minutes in length.

**Screen** - the physical border that encloses the image on a television set.

**Definitions**

**Comedy:** including sketches comedy, standup comedy.

**Parody** of other shows or media: A type of humor imitating the characteristic style of some other shows in humorous way

**Satire:** Commenting or being critical to social situations by using exaggeration.

**Character’s Personality Traits**

**Lively:** Briskly alert, energetic and vivid.

**Tense:** Marked by strain or suspense.
Aggressive: Hostile and attacking towards institutions or political figures.
Egocentric: Concerned with the individual rather than society. Selfish.
Cold: having lost freshness through passage of time. Showing no enthusiasm.
Preaching: To speak, plead, or argue in a moralistic way with an intention to guide.
Opinionated: The Character holding his own opinion, obstinately, stubbornly.

Variable Jokes:
Disparagement: A type of humor that makes fun of another person. It can be verbal or non-verbal humor.
Childish: A type of humor that indicates a lack of maturity or it is too simple.
Animal-Human Joke: A type of humor using animals behaving as human beings or vice versa.
Sex jokes: A type of humor using sexual comments.
Dark Humor: A type of humor using Death, Pain and Fear or being cynical.
Religious: A type of humor concerned with sacred matters or religion or the church.

Video Presence
Anchor has a stronger presence over the video: The presenter dominates the conversation and the video just illustrates his/her points.
Anchor has less presence compared to video: The video is more significant compared to what the Presenter is saying or acting.
Anchor has approximately equal presence with the video: the coder cannot decide whether the video or the anchor has stronger presence during the unit of analysis.
Appendix 2: Coding Sheets

Coding Sheet 1

Date of coding: _____________________________
Name of coder: _____________________________
Sampling information [ ID#:                          _____ ]

Aired: Month: ___ Date: ___ Year: ___ ___

Day of week:
(1.) Sunday  _____ [1]
(2.) Monday   _____ [2]
(3.) Tuesday  _____ [3]
(4.) Wednesday _____ [4]
(5.) Thursday _____ [5]
(6.) Friday   _____ [6]
(7.) Saturday _____ [7]

CHANNEL: _________

1. Duration of program?
   _____ [1] 30 minutes
   _____ [2] One hour
   _____ [3] 90 minutes
   _____ [4] Two hours
   _____ [5] Other (How long in minutes? __ __ __)

2. Duration of Unit: __________

3. Characters Personality Traits

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<thead>
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<td>Cold</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egocentric</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preaching</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinionated</td>
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</table>

Notes:
Coding Sheet 2

Date of coding: _____________________________
Name of coder: _____________________________
Sampling information [ ID#: _____________________________ ]

Aired: Month: __ __ Date: __ __ Year: _ _ _ _

Day of week:
(1.) Sunday ______ [1]
(2.) Monday ______ [2]
(3.) Tuesday ______ [3]
(4.) Wednesday ______ [4]
(5.) Thursday ______ [5]
(6.) Friday ______ [6]
(7.) Saturday ______ [7]

CHANNEL: __________

1. Duration of program?
   ______ [1] 30 minutes
   ______ [2] One hour
   ______ [3] 90 minutes
   ______ [4] Two hours
   ______ [5] Other (How long in minutes? __ __ __)

2. Duration of Unit: ____________

3. Simultaneous video pictures? (Check all that apply)
   ______ [0/1] Yes, simultaneous RELATED video pictures
   ______ [0/1] Yes, simultaneous UNRELATED video pictures
   ______ NO

4. Anchor vs. Video
   ______ Anchor has stronger presence over the video
   ______ Anchor has approximately equal presence with the video
   ______ Anchor has less presence compared to video

Notes:
Date of coding: _____________________________
Name of coder: _____________________________
Sampling information [ ID#: _____________________________ ]

Aired: Month: __ __ Date: __ __ Year: _ _ _ _

Day of week:
(1.) Sunday _____ [1]
(2.) Monday _____ [2]
(3.) Tuesday _____ [3]
(4.) Wednesday _____ [4]
(5.) Thursday _____ [5]
(6.) Friday _____ [6]
(7.) Saturday _____ [7]

CHANNEL: __________

1. Duration of program?
   _____ [1] 30 minutes
   _____ [2] One hour
   _____ [3] 90 minutes
   _____ [4] Two hours
   _____ [5] Other (How long in minutes? __ __ __)

2. Duration of Unit: __________

3. HUMOR AND JOKES

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<tr>
<td>Black humor</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex joke</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious joke</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. Genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
Date of coding: _____________________________
Name of coder: _____________________________
Sampling information [ ID#: _____________________________ ]

Aired: Month: __ __  Date: __ __  Year: _ _ _ _

Day of week:
(1.) Sunday  _____ [1]
(2.) Monday  _____ [2]
(3.) Tuesday  _____ [3]
(4.) Wednesday  _____ [4]
(5.) Thursday  _____ [5]
(6.) Friday  _____ [6]
(7.) Saturday  _____ [7]

CHANNEL: __________

5. Duration of program?
   _____ [1] 30 minutes
   _____ [2] One hour
   _____ [3] 90 minutes
   _____ [4] Two hours
   _____ [5] Other (How long in minutes? __ __ __)

6. Duration of Unit: __________

7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Character A:</th>
<th>Character B:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government and administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers and MPs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International events and trends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media and entertainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work, industry and unions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure activities and sport</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime and justice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
Appendix 3: Survey Questions

SURVEY

Section 1: Warm up questions

1. How much are you interested in politics?
   a. Very much
   b. Fairly Enough
   c. Very Little
   d. Not at all

2. How often do you use the following media?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Everyday</th>
<th>Some days a week</th>
<th>Once a week</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Do you watch satirical shows? [FILTER QUESTION]
   a. Yes
   b. No

Section 2: Viewership and U&G

[ONLY THOSE WHO ANSWERED YES IN QUESTION 3]

4. How often do you watch the following shows on TV?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Show</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al Tsantiri News</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellinofreneia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RadioArvyla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ola 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please Specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Why do you watch satirical shows? Scale the following answers from 1 (I strongly disagree) to 5 (I strongly agree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have fun / I am entertained</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get informed / I want to be updated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the host</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree with the hosts’ opinions &amp; views</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learn sth here that I don’t learn in other places</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please Specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Do you discuss or criticize with friends, colleagues or family instances that you have watched in satirical shows?
   a. Never
   b. Hardly Ever
   c. Sometimes
   d. Regularly

7. How often if ever, do you learn something about political figures, the government or news events from satire shows such as ‘Al Tsantiri News’ or ‘RadioArvyla’?
   a. Never
   b. Hardly ever
   c. Sometimes
   d. Regularly

8. Are you bothered when during satirical shows there are negative satirical comments for political persons that you like?
   a. Very Much
   b. Fairly Enough
   c. A little
   d. Not at all

9. Are you politically influenced from satirical shows?
   a. Definitely Yes
   b. Maybe Yes
   c. Definitely No
   d. Maybe No
   e. I don’t know

Section 2: Viewership and U&G

[ONLY THOSE WHO ANSWERED NO IN QUESTION 3]

10. Why don’t you watch satirical shows? Scale the following answers from 1 (I strongly disagree) to 5 (I strongly agree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The time is not convenient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t get entertained</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I dislike the host</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I disagree with the hosts’ opinions &amp; views</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The shows have the facts wrong and inaccurate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends do not watch it neither</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please Specify)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Do you discuss or criticize with friends, colleagues or family when the topic of the discussion involves instances from satirical shows?
   a. Never
   b. Hardly Ever
c. Sometimes  
d. Regularly

12. Do you get upset when you hear satirical comments drawn by the shows when they engage political figures that you feel close?  
   a. Very Much  
   b. Fairly Enough  
   c. A little  
   d. Not at all

13. Do you believe that satirical shows influence the political views of their viewers?  
   a. Definitely Yes  
   b. Maybe Yes  
   c. Maybe No  
   d. Definitely No  
   e. I don’t know

Section 2: Viewership and U&G

[EVERYONE ANSWERS THESE QUESTIONS]

14. Do you feel that the act of watching satirical shows is a political act?  
   a. Definitely Yes  
   b. Maybe Yes  
   c. Maybe No  
   d. Definitely No  
   e. I don’t know

15. Do you agree or disagree that satirical shows are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 (strongly disagree)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 (strongly agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stereotypical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funny/Humorous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Misleading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Informative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Inaccurate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (Please Specify)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Section 3: Political Knowledge

[EVERYONE ANSWERS THESE QUESTIONS]

16. Do you happen to know who the President of Democracy is?
   f. Konstantinos Stephanopoulos
   g. Giorgos Papandreou
   h. Karolos Papoulias
   i. Konstantinos Karamanlis
   j. None of the above

17. What is the main political issue on the agenda right now?
Answer:

18. How often, if ever, do you learn something about politics and news from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Hardly Ever</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TV channels night news</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Morning TV news</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Talk Shows</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV satire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 4: Political Engagement and Greek System

[EVERYONE ANSWERS THESE QUESTIONS]

19. On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very strongly) how much would you say that you trust the following institutions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Police</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Parties</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed Press</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greek Orthodox Church</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satirical Shows</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Today, when you follow politics, for which party you would say that you have a more positive opinion?
   a. PASOK
   b. ND
   c. SYRIZA
21. Which of the following have you done in the past 12 months? Please check all that apply.
   a. Attended a political rally, speech, or organized protest of any kind
   b. Written a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine or called a live radio or TV show to express a political opinion
   c. Posted a message on a blog or on a social networking site (Twitter, Facebook) to express a political opinion
   d. Worked or volunteered for a political party
   e. Been an active member of any group (union, NGO, non-profit, lobby etc) that tries to influence public policy or government
   f. Talked about politics with family, friends, co-workers, fellow students or others.

22. What did you vote in the following elections?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National Elections October 2009</th>
<th>European Elections June 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t vote</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASOK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYRIZA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAOS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KKE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank Vote</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 5: Demographics

23. What is your sex?
   a. Male
   b. Female

24. To which age group you belong to?
   a. 18-29
   b. 30-44
   c. 45-59
   d. Over 60

25. Are you a student?
   c. Yes
   d. No

26. Pick you educational background from the choices below:
   e. Basic education
   f. High School
   g. University level
27. Do you have any comments or anything you would like to add?
Appendix 4: Interview Questions

Questions to the Presenters

Q1: Why did you choose to present a satirical show in TV? In order to inform, amuse, influence the viewers? Why did you choose TV as a medium?

Q2: What drives your show? Your content is driven by your personal political views, the media news agenda or what the show’s viewers ask you to discuss?

Q3: How do you choose the issues presented? What is the selection process regarding the issues that will be presented each time you have a show? Where do you get your information (internet, the news organizations etc)?

Q4: Do you watch other satirical shows? Are you influenced by their agenda and content?

Q5: Do you think that your show’s viewers’ are influenced by your stance on political issues?

Q6: What is your opinion about the media news organizations such as TV channels and newspapers? Where do you think your show fits in?

Q7: Do you think that you play a vital role in Greek politics? In other words, do you think that there is a political and democratic deficit which you and your show intend to cover?

Q8: Do you think that the personalization or ‘televisualization’ of politics is it a good thing or not? Does it contribute or enhance citizens’ engagement in politics/elections?

Q9: Did the de-regulation of the broadcasting sector play a vital role in the evolution of satirical shows? In other words, did the birth of private channels provide the ‘necessary’ freedom to be engaged in political satire?

Q10: Who do you think watches your show? Which are the distinct characteristics of your show’s viewers?
Interview Questions with Ierotheos Papadopoulos

Q1: Do you watch satirical shows? If yes which ones?

Q2: Why do you watch satirical shows in TV? *In order to be informed, amused, influenced?*

Q3: What do you think drives the content of these shows? *Host’s personal political views, the media news agenda or what the show’s viewers ask the hosts to discuss.*

Q4: Are you influenced by the shows agenda and content? Are your political views, perceptions on politicians influenced?

Q5: What is your opinion about the media news organizations such as TV channels and newspapers?

Q7: What is your opinion about our political system?

Q8: Do you think that satirical shows play a vital role in Greek politics? In other words, do you think that there is a political or democratic deficit that is essential to have this kind of shows in order for our democracy to be improved?

Q9: Do you think that the personalization or televisionization of politics is it a good thing or not? Does it contribute or enhance citizens’ engagement in politics/elections?

Q10: Do you agree with the following statement: ‘Lazopoulos is doing politics and not satire’.

Appendix 5: Consent Forms

SURVEY INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

You are invited among another 200 people to take part in the following survey, designed to explore the role of TV satire in Greek politics. Your responses will be kept completely anonymous, as no sensitive information will be asked and it will be impossible to identify any individual participant. You may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. Please indicate your willingness to participate by checking the appropriate box.

Thank you

☐ I agree to participate in this survey
☐ I do not agree to participate in the survey
INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

I agree to be interviewed for a research study regarding the role of TV satire in Greek politics and its impact on the audience’s political views, conducted for a Georgetown University thesis. The purpose of this study is to discover how TV satire programming influences the political agenda, the audience’s opinions over political issues and the viewers’ processing of information. I have been told that another five people will be interviewed for the same thesis.

The discussion will be voice recorded only if I agree below. If the voice recorder is used, it will only be used by the researcher to remember what the participant said. I grant my permission to be quoted directly. I have been told that I can state that I don't want the discussion to be taped and it will not be. I can ask that the tape can be turned off at any time.

All research data will be stored in a locked file cabinet and the audio files/tapes will be destroyed after three years of the research analysis’s completion.

If you have any questions, please contact
Katerina Matsa,
MA Candidate, Georgetown University,
Communication, Culture and Technology program,
Email: kem95@georgetown.edu
Phone number: +1 202-436-4936 (USA number) / +30 6944549708 (Greek Number).

Or

Social & Behavioral Sciences IRB-C
Dasha Chestukhin, Project Coordinator
Georgetown University
Fax: (202) 687-4847
Email: dc286@georgetown.edu
Phone: +1 (202) 687-6553

Thank you.
Please sign your name below if you consent to be interviewed

Name

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ I agree to be voice recorded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ I agree to be quoted directly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>