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A case Study for the Region of Attica.

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the political marketing strategy used in Greek regional elections of 2019 by candidate mayors, in the case of the region of Attica. Using advance methods of multivariate analysis such as Cluster analysis, Multiple Correspondence analysis and Principal component analysis we search for the strategy patterns used in terms of selecting promotion tools, prioritizing issues on the political agenda, and focusing on the candidate or the party. The analysis investigates the profiles of the candidates with reference to the above political marketing strategies and the connection to their political characteristics. Furthermore, the detected profiles and strategies are analyzed regarding their effect on the probability to be elected. (**250 words max**)

1 Introduction

This research aims to analyze the marketing tools used in recent regional elections by candidate mayors, in the case of the region of Attica. The Attica region is chosen to be the focus of our study, as the largest in terms of population in Greece, 3,8 million in 2011 which is more than 1/3 of Greece and therefore can provide insights for the country's general population.

According to the latest administrative reform of "Kallikratis" in 2011, the prefecture of Attica is divided in 8 regional units and 66 Municipalities of different social and political characteristics.

More specifically, the various available means of promotion are recorded and evaluated, as well as the degree of intensity with which they were used during the election campaigns of the candidate combinations. In addition, attempts are made to identify correlations between the strategic choices of marketing media in relation to the ideological orientation of the combinations, but also to investigate whether this choice significantly affects the likelihood of election.

The means of marketing in terms of their use in political marketing and even more specifically in the promotion of the election campaign are divided into traditional and digital.

From 2010 onwards, the use of digital media has been on the rise, but traditional media have remained a strong preference for election campaigns. The research records which combinations they preferred which means and to what extent to investigate whether the use of digital media has a significant effect on eligibility.

The research questions are as follows:

- Does the choice of marketing tools to use in your election campaign affect the possibility of being elected?
- Does the marketing strategy differ from the candidate's ideological identity?
- Is there a significant difference between the use of traditional and digital marketing tools in the election campaign by the candidates? If so, how does each of the two options affect his or her eligibility?

For the analysis of the data collected for the mayoral candidates of all municipalities in the Attica region, advanced analysis methods are used such as cluster analysis for the categorization of persons into groups with common characteristics and then by the method of correspondence analysis and Principal component analysis. investigate in depth any correspondences between strategies for selecting marketing tools and candidates. Finally, the effect of the above on the probability of a candidate being elected using statistical tests is checked.

2 Literature review

Local politics is a political activity sphere in which communication is becoming more important (Franklin 1994). According to Brian McNair (1995) political communication is the process by which a political activity becomes known and understood. The political protagonists are those who aspire to influence the political process and therefore need to communicate their message to their potential customers who are the voters. These protagonists are primary the parties or the candidates who compete in the political environment. The political elites use various forms of communication such as public meetings or gatherings, as well as the help of other media such as newspapers, TV, radio and in recent years the internet, the social media to approach the electorate. Under these circumstances, contemporary parties have developed new strategies and tactics to use the media in a more efficient and "profitable" way (McNair 1995). These techniques derive from the world of marketing, scientifically called as "the effect of mass behavior in competitive situations" (Mauser 1983).

Political marketing resembles business marketing in the sense that political organizations, in the same way that businesses do, need to target the right audience from which they expect to receive support. To achieve this, they both need to use mass communication channels in a competitive environment, where the consumer-voter must choose between more than one product (brand). Of course, the differences in the nature of the political product and the commercial product are important, as political parties measure their success in terms of voting percentage and electoral power. Nevertheless, political marketing incorporates many of the principles and strategies applied by business marketing where the goal is commercial success, usually translated into sales and increase of market share (Ormrod et al 2013).

Political marketing consists of several processes, with the strategy remaining the most important of them. Strategy is the way through which a candidate or a party (political protagonist) will think and plan their moves to achieve their purpose, taking into account the limitations, as well as the available resources (Barber 2005).

According to Newman (1994) candidates can use political marketing based on a model that considers, when formulating and implementing the strategy, the following:

1) Focus on the candidate in the sense of the product-party, the sense of selling and the concept of marketing
2) The marketing campaign that should include at least a) segmentation of the market-

electorate, b) the placement of the candidate taking into account his strengths and weaknesses, the assessment of the competition and c) the formulation and implementation of a strategy taking into account the marketing mix (4P's-product: ideological base), push marketing (bottom up promoting), pull marketing (bottom down marketing) and d) polls-surveys.

3) Analysis of the political environment
4) Conducting the political campaign

Jennifer Lees-Marshment (2009) distinguishes political marketing in two different approaches: one is "market-oriented" and the other sales-oriented". A market-oriented party records the needs of the voters and adapts the product to them, while in the latter case the party is oriented to promote its product, ie its ideology platform but without thinking If this corresponds to the needs of the market. Digital media in recent years have enabled political protagonists to be in constant, direct even bilateral contact with customers and their needs and to be able to adjust their strategy promptly (Maarek 2014). In this way, issues and topics of interest become the product replacing the ideological background. However, there are parties that remain loyal to their product (ideological platform) and its promotion, regardless of whether it meets the needs of society and citizens (Lees-Marshement 2009).

In this research we try to identify the different marketing strategies followed by the candidates in the regional elections in Attica. Furthermore, we try to see how the candidates incorporate issues in their political agenda during their campaign (Chadjipadelis 2015) and also understand how party support can affect the political marketing strategy a candidate chooses to apply. It is important to see to what extent the candidates use traditional or digital tools, whether they prefer bottom up or bottom down promotion strategies and estimate whether the selected strategies play a significant role on being elected.

3 Sample and Methodology

The sample of the research consists of 326 candidate Mayors who participated in the 2019 Greek municipal elections for all the municipalities of region. Information about their campaigns, the promotion tools they used, as well the issues they highlighted in their political programs was gathered from primary and secondary sources. Data was collected and coded regarding:

- Various available promotion tools as recorded and evaluated from primary and secondary sources.
- The degree of intensity with which they were used during the election campaigns of the candidate combinations.
- Characteristics of the candidates such as demographics, the support of their candidacy by political parties, the positioning on the left-right ideological axis, the focus of the campaign on the candidate or on the party and the relationship with institutions and organizations
- The political agenda (agenda issues) of the candidates on the base of the three most important issues that they incorporated in their program and communicated more in their election campaigns.

The research aims to examine the following research questions

1) Are there specific marketing strategies detected in the political campaigns of the candidate Mayors?

2) Is there a specific political agenda (issues) strategy used by the candidates? Is their agenda oriented towards general politics or local matters?
3) Are these strategies associated with the left-right positioning of the candidates?
4) Are these strategies associated with the party support?
5) Does the marketing strategy and the political agenda setting affect the candidate's probability of being elected?

For the analysis of the data for the candidates of all municipalities in the Attica region, we performed advanced analysis using various multivariate methods as well as bivariate analysis for sets of variables. More specifically, Hierarchical Cluster Analysis (HCA) for the categorization of persons into groups with common characteristics (Papadimitriou and Florou 1996). Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is used to detect and summarize strategies of marketing promotion tools. Correspondence Analysis (CA) is used to investigate in depth any correlations between marketing promotion tools / political agenda strategies and other variables such as the campaign focus, the left-right positioning, and the party support. The effect of the above on the probability of a candidate being elected is checked using statistical chi-square. Finally, to jointly analyze all the variables we used Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) which allows us to visualize and comprehend multiple correspondences among multiple sets of variables (Benzécri, 1973).
For the analysis we used the IBM SPSS Statistics statistical software package and for the clustering of issues we used the statistical analysis software Méthodes d" Analyses des Données (M.A.D.), developed by Dr. Dimitrios N. Karapistolis.[1]

4 Results
4.1 Marketing strategy on selecting tools of promotion

From PCA for the promotion tools used by the candidate Mayors during their campaigns, four components were extracted (Table 1).

TABLE 1

Components	1	2	3	4
Personal posters	**,943**	,027	,014	-,136
Advertisements in the local press	**,943**	,001	,076	,069
Office hours	,671	,008	,131	**,627**
Social gatherings	-,108	,032	-,063	**,951**
Flyers	,942	,034	,013	-,126
Radio / TV commercials	**,864**	-,002	,028	,115
CV on the party website	-,012	**,916**	,170	,037
Personal website	,029	,053	**,834**	-,065
E-mail / Telephone	,026	**,808**	,335	,027
Facebook	,017	**,874**	,113	-,020
Advertisements online	,079	,473	**,734**	,052
Messenger/Twitter	,047	,308	**,869**	,025

Examining further the coefficients on each component we understand that: a) the first

component correlates is interpreted by its connection to Personal posters, Advertisements in the local press, Radio / TV commercials, b) the second is connected to CV on the party website, E-mail/Telephone, Facebook, c) the third to personal website, Messenger/Twitter, advertisements online and d) the fourth component is connected to social gatherings and office hours. The promotion tools for each component have common characteristics by which we can summarize them based on the Push/Pull marketing strategy categorization and based on the Traditional/Digital nature of the tools. Therefore, each component can simulate to a different political marketing strategy approach (table 2)

TABLE 2

Component	Description	Strategy	Tools
1	{Personal posters, Advertisements in the local press, Radio / TV commercials}	Push	Traditional
2	{CV on the party website, E-mail/Telephone, Facebook}	Push	Digital
3	{Personal website, Messenger/Twitter, Advertisements online}	Pull	Digital
4	{Social gatherings, Office hours}	Pull	Traditional

To understand better the four strategy variants, we can visualize them as four different spaces defined by two axes. The horizontal axis reflects the promotion tools strategy (traditional-digital) and the vertical axis represents the approach strategy (pull-push). Based on this visualization (figure1) the four spaces we get are interpreted as four different political marketing strategies which can described as: 1) the traditional social networks, 2)the social media strategy, 3) the traditional marketing and 4) the traditional online strategy.

FIGURE 1
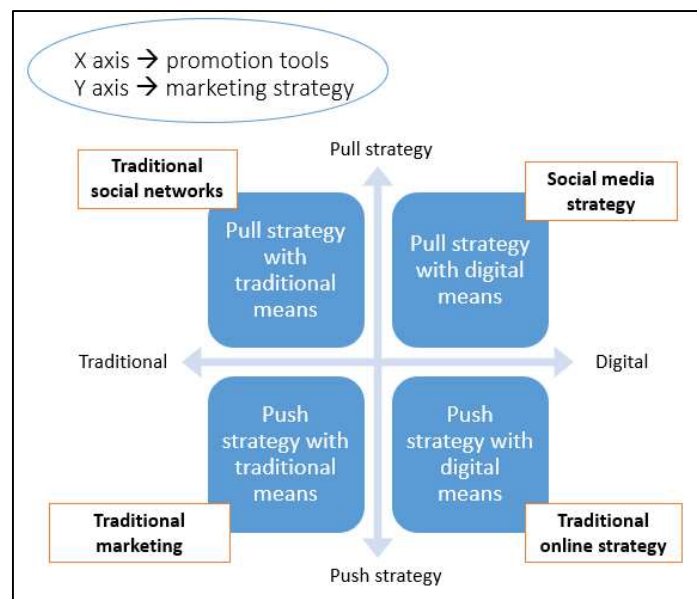
4.2 Clusters of candidates and their marketing strategy profiles

In the next step of the analysis, we apply hierarchical cluster analysis for the candidates and their scores in the four PCA components.

Cluster analysis reveals 5 profiles of candidates, and by observing the boxplots of the scores on its component (figures 2, 3, 4 and 5) we understand how its profile correlate with each one of the four-strategy approach.
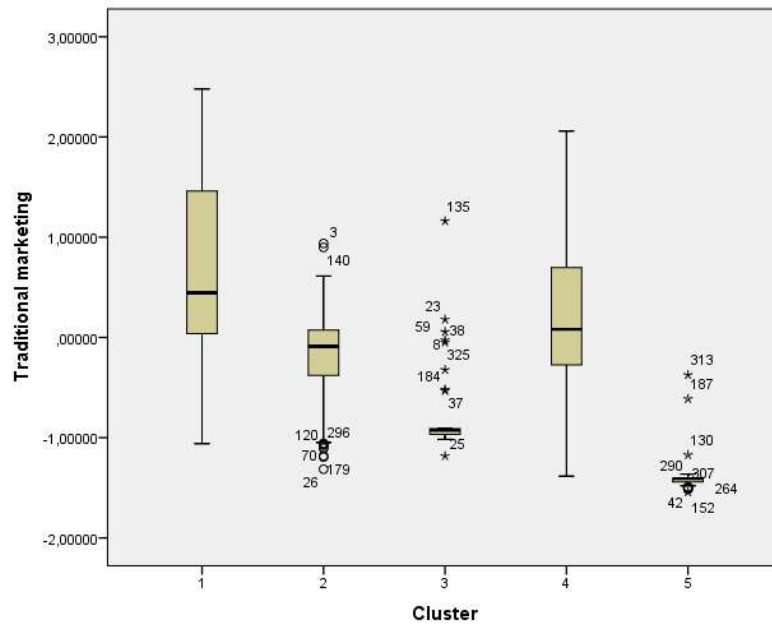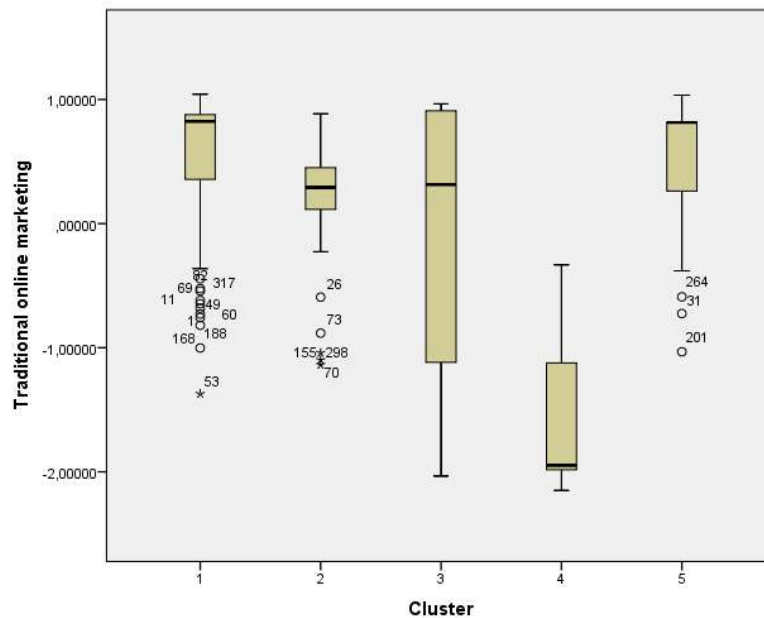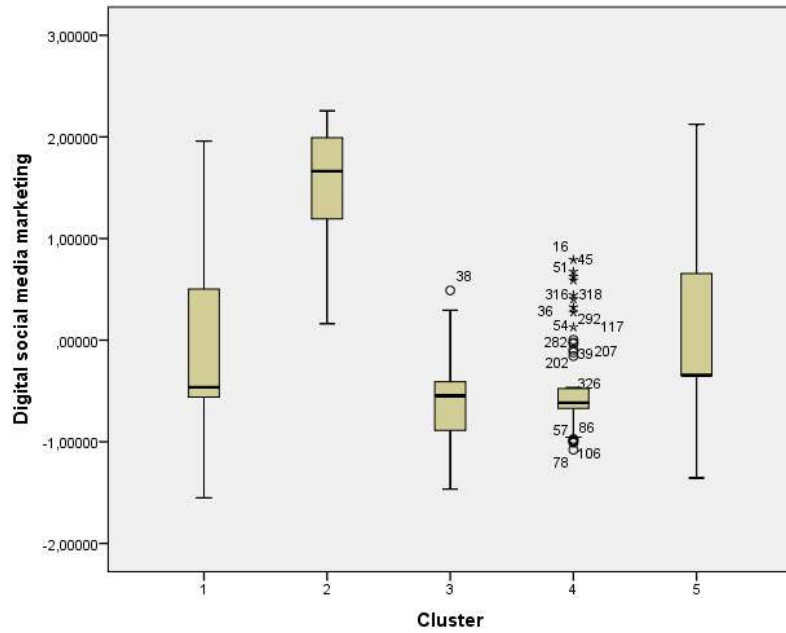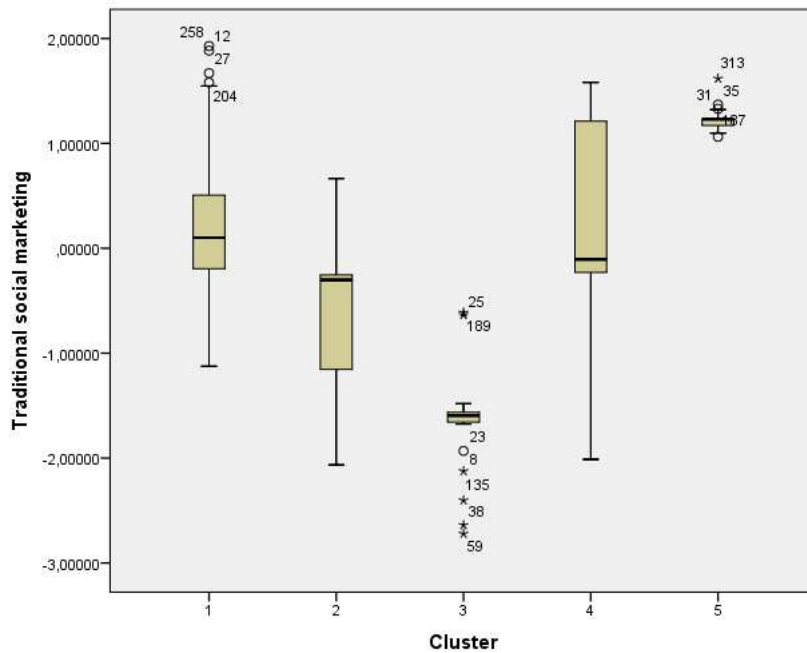
FIGURE 2

FIGURE 3

FIGURE 4

FIGURE 5

More specifically, Cluster analysis detects 5 groups of candidates who follow similar marketing strategies in their political campaigns:

- Cluster 1 is connected to the traditional marketing strategy
- Cluster 2 follows digital social media tools
- Cluster 3 has a low score in following a marketing strategy but is closer to traditional online tools
- Cluster 4 has almost no marketing activity, with a small correlation to the traditional push strategy

- Cluster 5 is connected to social gatherings and office hours, the traditional social networking and to the push strategy using digital tools

TABLE 3

Cluster	Push strategy / Traditional promotion	Push strategy / Digital promotion	Pull strategy / Digital promotion	Pull strategy / Traditional promotion
1	0,45	0,82	-0,46	0,01
2	-0,09	0,29	1,67	-0,3
3	-0,93	0,31	-0,55	-1,6
4	0,08	-1,95	-0,62	-0,11
5	-1,41	0,82	-0,35	1,23

4.3 Political Agenda – prioritizing issues

The agenda setting of the candidate Mayors is examined by detected the issues they chose to put in high priority in their campaign. The issues were summarized in nine main topics: 1) development, 2) environment, 3) waste management, 4) quality of life, 5) social protection, 6) culture, 7) civil protection, 8) security and 10) citizen services.

These nine topics can be further summarized into two main categories of issues: 1) those referring to local government responsibilities and 2) those of general politics nature. Hierarchical cluster analysis is applied, and candidate mayors are categorized in 7 clusters with reference to the issues they choose to set their political agenda.

TABLE 3

593	632	637	642	643	644	645
Development	Environment	Culture	Environment	Waste management	Development	Environment
Quality of life	Civil protection	Citizen Service	Waste management	Security	Environment	Quality of life
Social protection	Security				Social protection	Culture
					Culture	

| N = 22% | 6% | 13% | 16% | 11% | 14% | 18% |

🟦 Issues of local government

🟧 General political issues

4.4 Political agenda (issues) and Marketing strategy

Having created clusters for the political agenda and the marketing strategy we proceed with correspondence analysis to examine the connections between the new clustering variables.

The two first dimensions deriving from correspondence analysis account for the 95,8% of the total inertia and provide a sufficient explanation of the phenomenon (Greenacre, 2007).

TABLE 4

Dimension	Singular Value	Inertia	Chi Square	Sig.	Proportion of Inertia	
					Accounted for	Cumulative
1	,716	,513			**,921**	,921
2	,145	,021			**,038**	**,958**
3	,140	,019			,035	,993
4	,062	,004			,007	1,000
Total		,557	179,329	,000[a]	1,000	1,000

In the scatter plot shown in figure 6 we detect 3 main sets of clusters, defining how the strategies relate to the issues:

- We see that traditional social marketing means are linked to general politics agenda
- Traditional marketing tools are connected to local topics agenda
- Social media strategy is linked to local issues agenda
- Low marketing activity is connected to general politics agenda
- Traditional marketing is linked to local issues agenda

FIGURE 6
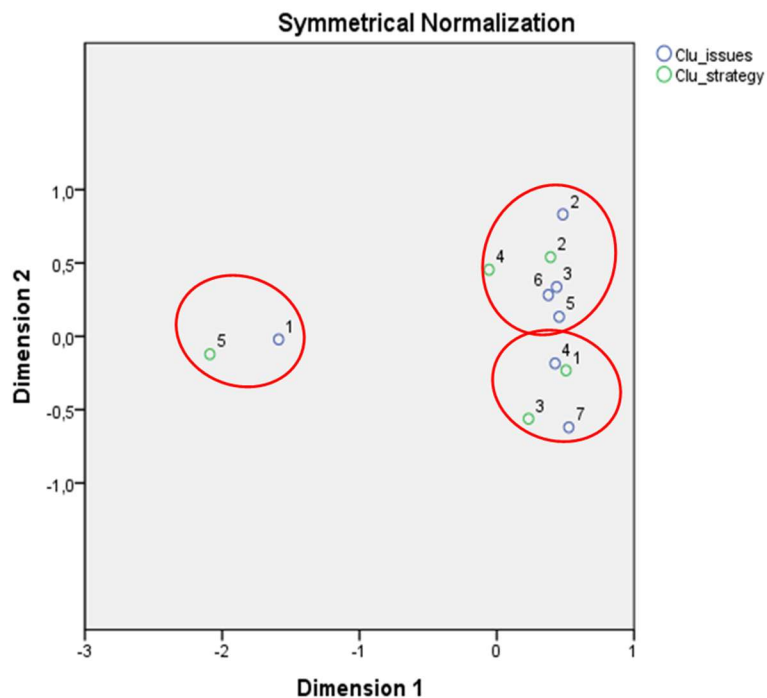
4.5 Party support and marketing strategy

An important characteristic of the candidates is their support by an official parliamentary party. In this step of the analysis, we examine whether party support is linked to specific marketing strategies and prioritization of certain issues. Correspondence analysis is used for three different sets of variables to se the existing relationships.
Analysis for positioning on the "left-right" axis and marketing strategy reveals two dimensions, accounting for the total inertia. We see that cluster 2 and 3 are linked to "centre", clusters 1 and 4 are linked to the "right" and cluster 5 is closer to the "left" (figure

7).

FIGURE 7
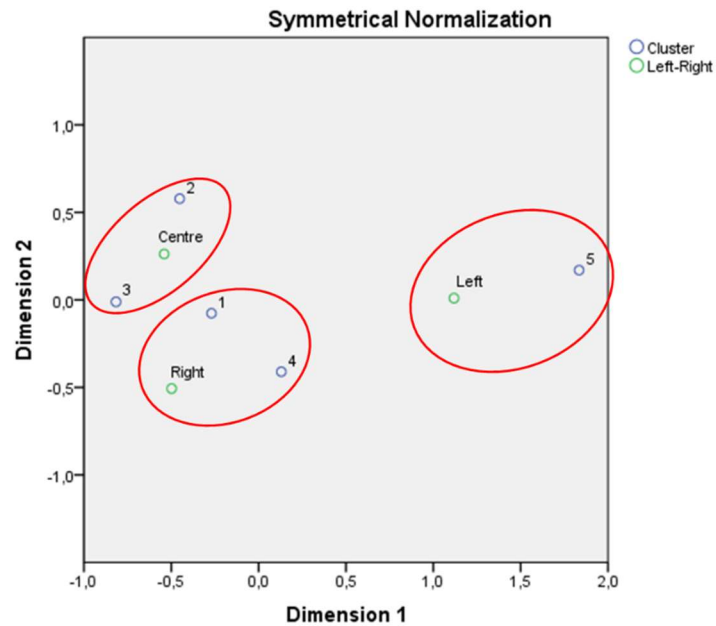
Next, we apply the same method for party affiliation and the clustering variable for marketing strategy. The two first dimensions account for 98,1% of the total inertia. At this point, the connection between different parties and strategy clusters is again clearly visible in the scatter plot of figure 8. Parties of Syriza and New Democracy, which are the two stronger parliamentary parties in 2019 are linked to clusters 1 and 4. Independent candidates and those who are supported by the socialist party of Kinal (the centre-left socialist party) are connected to clusters 2 and 3. The communist Greek party (KKE) is distinct from the rest and is linked to cluster 5.

FIGURE 8
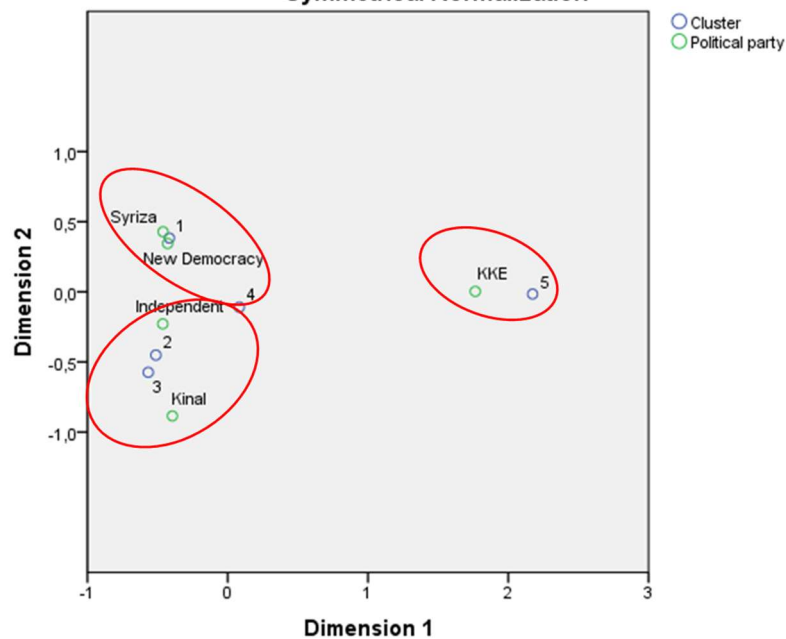
We proceed with the same method again, trying to examine the correlation between party affiliation and the issues prioritized in the political agenda. The accounted inertia is 98,4% for the two first dimensions and we detect again distinct groupings of categories between the two variables. The communist Greek party (KKE) is linked to issues cluster 1, New Democracy is connected to cluster 2, Syriza is connected to cluster 6 and independent candidates or those supported by Kinal are close to clusters 3, 4 and 7.

Up to this point both marketing strategies as well as the priority topics in the agenda are strongly connected to the factor of party support and hence to the left-right positioning of the candidates. Next, with correspondence analysis we investigate the connection between party support and the focus of the campaign, which can be set on the candidate, on the party or same on both. The first two dimensions, account for the total inertia and show that: a) The Communist party candidates have a central campaign focusing on the party, b) New Democracy candidates on the other hand promote mainly the candidate's profile and c) parties of centre, centre-left and independent candidates adopt a more balanced marketing approach (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9
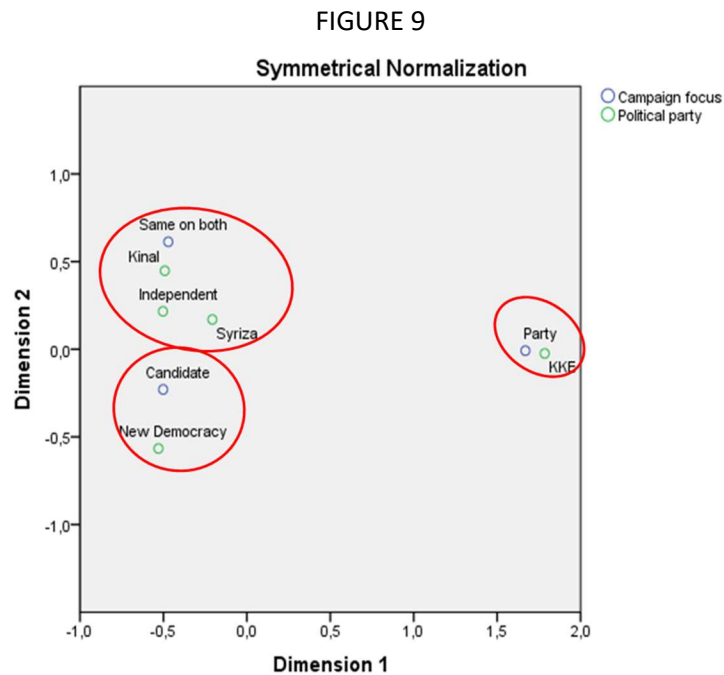
4.6 Effect of the marketing strategy and political agenda on being elected or not

After we have crated the clusters of candidates according to the different marketing strategy they choose in their campaigns and the issues they choose to emphasize in their agenda, we examine whether all these choices have a significant effect on the probability to be elected. We choose to run a chi square test for the variables of "cluster strategy" and the binary "elected-not elected" which corresponds to the result of 2019 elections for each candidate. Our null hypothesis (H0= Marketing strategy cluster and being elected or not are two independent situations) is rejected as p=0 (significance level set at 95%)

TABLE 5

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	36,212[a]	4	,000
Likelihood Ratio	43,892	4	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	27,263	1	,000
N of Valid Cases	322		

a. 0 cells (0,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7,27.

We examine the bar chart in figure 10 as well the standardized residuals in table 6 to comprehend which strategy is closer to being elected:
- Traditional marketing campaign is linked to being elected
- Low marketing activity and traditional social networking is linked to not being elected
- Social media campaigns do not seem to influence election
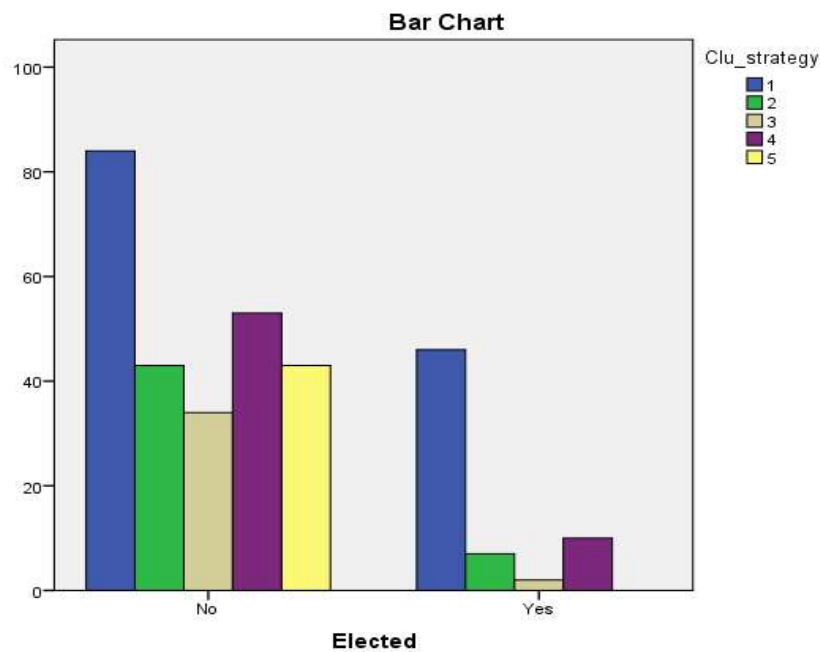
FIGURE 10

TABLE 6

Elected * Clu_strategy Crosstabulation

			Clu_strategy					Total
			1	2	3	4	5	
Elected	NO	% within Clu_strategy	64,6%	86,0%	94,4%	84,1%	100,0%	79,8%
		Std. Residual	-1,9	,5	1,0	,4	1,5	
	YES	% within Clu_strategy	35,4%	14,0%	5,6%	15,9%	0,0%	20,2%
		Std. Residual	3,9	-1,0	-2,0	-,8	-2,9	

Same wise chi-square is used to test the null hypothesis of independency between the cluster of issues and the being elected or not variable. Chi-square test shows that agenda issues a significant effect on being elected or not (p=0,1).

TABLE 7

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16,890ᵃ	6	,010
Likelihood Ratio	20,868	6	,002
Linear-by-Linear Association	7,184	1	,007
N of Valid Cases	326		

a. 1 cells (7,1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4,05.

In figure 11 and in table 8 we see that: a) an agenda focused on local government issues is more likely to assist on being elected, b) focusing on general politics has a lower chance of assisting in election.
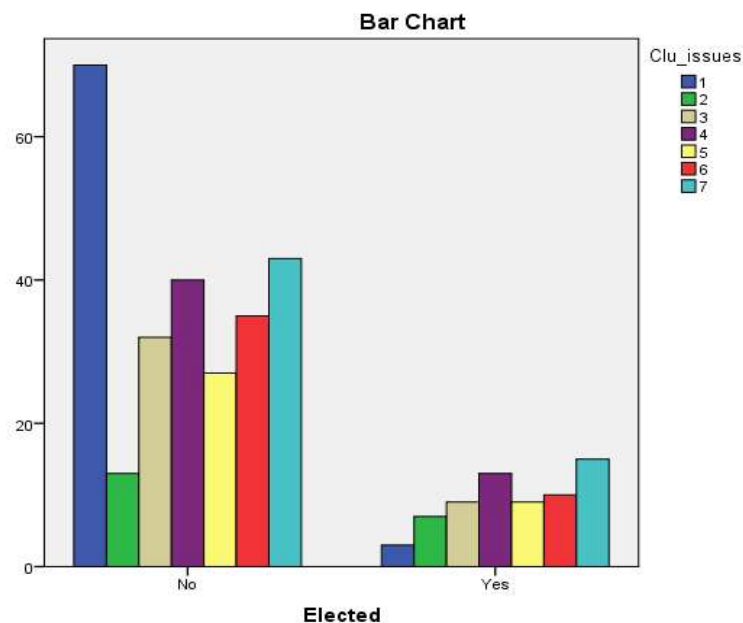
FIGURE 11

Bar Chart

TABLE 8

Elected * Clu_issues Crosstabulation

		Clu_issues							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Elected No	% within Clu_issues	95,9%	65,0%	78,0%	75,5%	75,0%	77,8%	74,1%	79,8%
	Std. Residual	1,5	-,7	-,1	-,3	-,3	-,1	-,5	
Yes	% within Clu_issues	4,1%	35,0%	22,0%	24,5%	25,0%	22,2%	25,9%	20,2%
	Std. Residual	-3,1	1,5	,2	,7	,6	,3	1,0	

5 Conclusions

Political competition reaches its highest peak during pre-elections period. Candidates, either person either party, in their effort to maximize their share in elections need to take into consideration and incorporate contemporary methods of marketing in their campaigns. Strategy in terms of political marketing, translates as the win-win positioning of one's candidacy within the candidate's spectrum. Therefore, "political market" research is essential to map the political competition field, the pros and cons of the competitors (available supply) but most importantly to record the needs and attitudes of the customers – voters (current demand). Within these frames of political supply and demand, the candidates need to adjust their strategy, including the approach method and the most optimal promotion tools to achieve a sufficient outreach to their targeted audience. Another important factor to take into consideration is the political agenda in terms of content, the issues they will choose to emphasize and prioritize in their political programs and communicate more. The above components of political marketing were examined for the region of Attica in Greece during the regional elections of 2019.

Data were gathered for all candidate mayors in Attica regarding the promotion tools they used most, their party affiliation, their positioning on the left-right axis, the issues they put on top of their political agenda their political history (candidates or elected in older elections), the focus of their campaign (candidate or party) and last if they were elected in 2019. All data were analyzed in ordered to reveal distinct strategies in their political marketing strategy in terms of promotion tools and agenda setting.

Four distinct strategies were detected defined by two factors: 1) Traditional tools-digital tools and 2) Pull strategy – push strategy. Regarding issues the candidates were clustered in 6 different categories which were summarized in two main groups: 1) an agenda focused on issues of local government (relevant to the elections) and 2) an agenda oriented to general politics issues (irrelevant to the elections).

Party support and left-right positioning seems to determine in a significant way the marketing strategy and the agenda setting of a candidate. The same applies when it comes to focusing on the candidate or the party, it is connected to the party affiliation of the candidate. Left parties are linked to traditional social networks and focus mainly on the party while right parties focus on the profile of the candidate and use traditional marketing methods. Independent candidates and those who are positioned to the centre have a more balanced focus between the candidate and the party and use digital tools and social media more frequently.

When it comes to the agenda setting, the analysis shows that left parties are connected to issues of general political interest, while the rest of the parties (centre and right) prefer to focus on issues that are linked to local government topics, which are relevant to the stakes of local elections.

Applying multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) for all the variables in the analysis, we get four profiles of candidates according to their marketing strategy, agenda setting, party affiliation and previous participation in elections. In this analysis we include the binary variable elected/not elected for 2019 (figure 12).

FIGURE 12

Variable Principal Normalization.
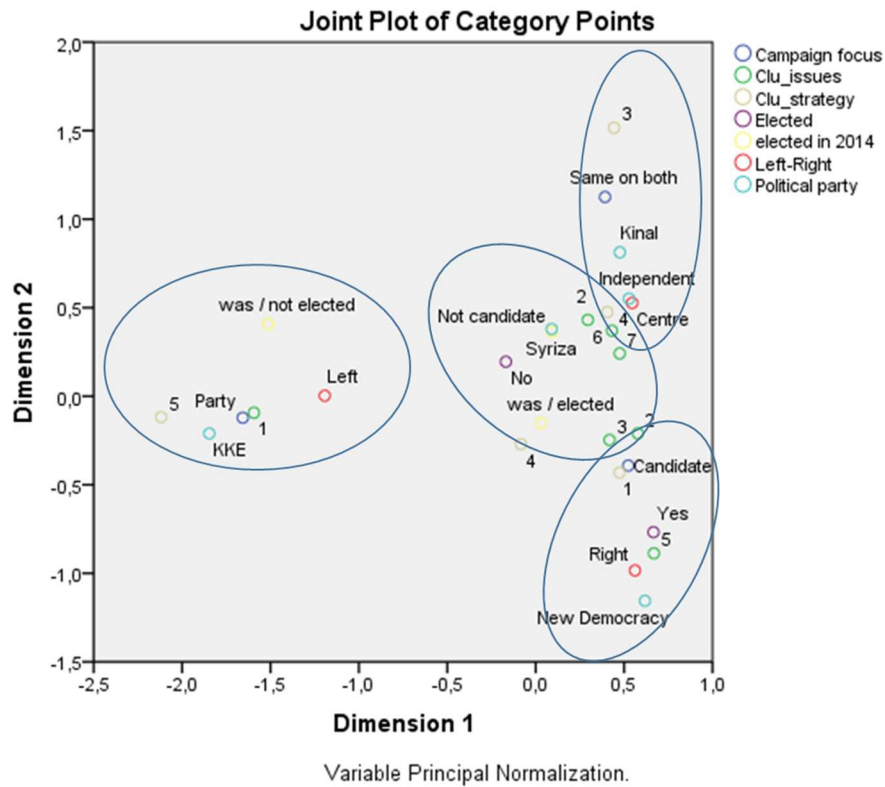
The horizontal axis is created by the difference between the communist party, the positioning on the left, the party focused campaign, the general politics agenda, the traditional social networks, and the rest of the parties, including independent candidates. The vertical axis explains the difference between the candidates who are supported by New Democracy, are positioned to the right, run a candidate-oriented campaign, focused on local issues, use traditional marketing methods, have a higher chance to be elected and those who have higher chance not to be elected are independent candidates or have the support of any other party. The four profiles are summarized in detail in table 9 as follows:

TABLE 9

Party	Left-right	Campaign focus	elected in 2019	candidate / elected 2014	Agenda issues	Marketing strategy
KKE	Left	on the party		was / not elected	general politics (development, life quality, social protection)	Push strategy / Digital promotion, Pull strategy / Traditional promotion
Syriza	Left, centre		no	not candidate	general politics (development, life quality, social protection, education, environment)	Push strategy / Traditional promotion
Kinal, Independent	Centre	same on both			Local politics (Security, Cleanliness)	Pull strategy / digital promotion Push strategy / digital promotion
New Democracy	Right	on the candidate	yes	was / elected	Local politics (Civil services, security, civil authorities, environment, education)	Push strategy / Traditional and digital promotion

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