

EDITORIAL

The Politics of Image _____ From Classroom to Campaign and Psychology

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In an age where visual communication saturates our daily lives, grasping the intricacies of image politics has become increasingly indispensable, especially at the intersection of education, political communication and psychological influence. A proliferation of images significantly shapes individuals' perceptions and reactions to various subjects from classroom to campaign and psychological settings. In this issue of the Journal of the Faculty of Humanities, Education and Liberal Arts at the European University of Tirana, the editorial and the content of a number of articles delve into three different areas of study from Education to Communication and Psychology. The journey of image politics is highlighted as a methodological tool, evolving from educational settings to campaign strategies, while also exploring the psychological traits that underlie human interactions.

In the field of education, the comprehension of the images has become essential to the work of the policy researcher as well as to the teacher-mentor's roles that are explored in the articles of a group of contributing authors to this journal. The first article analyses the policies of the Ministry of Education through historical lens whereas a team of researchers in Education further explore the mirroring relationship of the teacher as a mentor in the classroom. Both discuss fundamental competencies as a cornerstone in moulding the student's comprehension while images and their political implications are an intrinsic part of the educational system.

Visual literacy as the ability to critically assess and interpret visual content, emerges today as an educational competency that should be interwoven into educational studies curricula. Through visual literacy, for example, educators can empower students to adeptly navigate the complexities of political imagery, equipping them with the ability to distinguish between fact-based information and manipulative visuals. Such a robust educational framework in the field of Communication but also Psychology is indispensable as students evolve into informed citizens, poised to engage with political content in a discerning manner.

Educational priorities and efforts of Albania state to improve the education system during the period 1921 to 1924 are the focus of the author Nathanaïli in her article that gives an overview of the state of the educational system in the country during a period of short-lived governments and multilayered challenges faced by a troubled and poor society. The article further argues that despite those challenges, efforts were made to improve the quality of education in rural and urban areas, as well as improving the curriculum and the quality of instruction, encouraging the pursuit of education at a younger age, as is the initiative to open kindergartens, creating more opportunities, and drafting laws for education. Modernization of the system was also prioritized.

In the same vein, the article of Sina, Treska and Ivziku delves into the practice and theoretical paradigms in the professional training of teachers as mentors and their roles in the classroom. The problem is put in a regulatory context and semi-interviews are conducted with mentors, managers, mentoring supervisors and education lecturers to evaluate the situation.

The collaborative work of research students and supervisors of the Department of Humanities and Communication bring at the centerstage of this scientific journal issue the media environment in relation to politics and imagery. In an abundant media environment, the advent of social media has revolutionized the landscape of political imagery, presenting both remarkable opportunities and significant challenges. Articles by Lushaj & Budini, Doka & Mile, as well as Jaupi & Budini explore the political strategies and the new online platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and TikTok that facilitate a rapid dissemination of political images, allowing them to reach extensive audiences almost instantaneously. However, this immediacy also raises concerns regarding misinformation and the proliferation of misleading visuals. It becomes therefore imperative to encompass an understanding of context, source reliability, and the intent behind the images—an essential skill set in an era where digital manipulation is alarmingly prevalent.

In the field of Psychology, collaborative work between research students and supervisors of the Department of Psychology, Education and Sports are included in this issue as valuable contribution that highlights important relationships such as that of body image and self-esteem in adolescents in the article by Cacaj and

Toska; or that of beliefs in a postmodern spirituality framework and the symptoms of obsessive compulsive disorder in the article by Pjetrushaj and Melonashi; as well as issues of stress related symptoms in children with chronic illnesses by Hoxhaj and Karagoji; and an article about the beliefs and motivations of product sales and promotion of nutritional supplements in Albanian gyms by Metani, Isufaj and Yzbashi. They have found that most gyms promote supplements, mainly protein powders, creatine, vitamins, and amino acids and that the financial gain as well as customer demand were the primary motivators, especially among high-end and specialized gyms.

In the article about body image satisfaction and self-esteem in Albanian adolescents, authors Cacaj and Toska analyse components of an individual's well-being through a quantitative method study of the relationship between body image satisfaction and self-esteem in adolescents, an age group that is particularly sensitive to physical changes. Among the 111 teenagers surveyed, their findings revealed a positive relationship between body image satisfaction and self-esteem — as body image satisfaction increased, so did self-esteem, while Out of the 35 boys and 76 girls questioned, boys showed higher self-esteem, with an average of 32.09%, compared to girls.

Most of the articles in this issue highlight the need for more research to explore in depth the issues surrounding the visuals and the politics of image in relation to real-world political campaigns, to the classroom discourse or in psychological terms. Therefore, we can conclude that the politics of image transcends mere representation as it embodies a sophisticated interplay of manipulation and persuasion. In a world where everyone is exposed to myriad forms of political imagery, ranging from campaign advertisements to social media memes, more studies are needed to map out the substantial emotional resonance they carry that can elicit profound psychological responses. As the potency of political imagery resides in its capacity to evoke emotions rather than purely rational thought, such aspects are exploited in strategic campaigns depicting for instance a political candidate interacting with constituents to inspire feelings of trust and accessibility, while stark visuals showcasing crises can incite fear and urgency.

In summary, the politics of image represents a multifaceted phenomenon that spans from educational environments to the broader political arena and in the field of psychology. Through the navigation of the complexities inherent in visual communication, articles in this issue have critically analysed the images that shape perceptions and influence our everyday decisions. As we continue to investigate the intricate relationships between image, education, and politics, it is of utmost importance that we prioritize visual literacy as a foundational element of civic education and the visual as a valuable methodological tool in the research in various fields of studies from Communication to Education and Psychology.