

Socio-political Marketing
Master in Marketing
Master in Political Science
Academic year 2012-123, second semester
10 ECTS

Preliminary Syllabus

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Objectives and skills

The module aims to provide students with the skills needed to analyse, plan, and develop socio-political marketing campaigns. It emphasizes political marketing operations with particular emphasis on electoral campaigns and the rise of candidate-centred politics.

Contents

If we conceive of the political system as divided in terms of a market, it is characterized by its supply side and demand side. The supply side characterizes the provision of political products – candidates, parties, and policies – while the demand side refers to voters who select between potential office holders. The module is divided into two blocks to be developed in parallel, with 15 sessions of 2 hours each.

Supply Side: Politicians, Parties, and Policies

This block introduces students to core concepts relating to electoral competition and communication strategies employed by campaigns and authorities in government. It begins with a conceptualization of parties as political entrepreneurs competing for voters and moves onto the manners in which they attempt to sell their candidates and policies, once in office. The course is oriented towards student application of course theoretical content to empirical concerns. While the instructor will make available some social media and materials from broadcast outlets, students are encouraged to obtain data directly related to their interests.

- *Spatial Models of party competition*: How do parties position themselves and the constraints on their positioning? Type of elections and electoral systems and their implications for party competition. How can parties and candidates change the configuration of political space?
- Political marketing: To what extent do campaigns gear towards a market orientation and to what extent are they oriented more towards sales, i.e. selling their candidacies and policies to publics?
- Campaign functions: What instrumental and symbolic functions do political campaigns serve in

modern democracies?

- Campaign field operations: The role of personalized campaign communications in shifting votes and influencing turnout.
- Political professionalization: Professionalization in historical context. Campaign professionalization and differentiated communication strategies and the evolution of the government press secretary.
- Mediatization: In what ways do campaigns and governments adapt their messaging to the logics of media organizations and under the contrasting effects of partisan and public broadcasting?
- Candidate-centred politics: Is campaign-centred politics an American phenomenon? To what extent is there an Americanization of campaign politics elsewhere? What factors underpin the focus on political personalities?
- Campaigns in government: The rise of the permanent campaign.
- Digital networks and political organization: What are the consequences of political organizations centred around digital networks in terms of participation costs, task distribution, and organizational structure?
- Campaigning 2.0: Integrating the internet into campaign and governing operations. What functions do social media play in a political campaign? How do governments make use of social media?

Electoral behaviour and tools for the analysis of the electoral market

This block introduces students to the basic concepts with the consumption side of politics. This includes political behaviour, as well as data sources (electoral, demographic and opinion surveys) and methods of analysis necessary for preparing reports on the 'electoral market' on which the campaign strategies will be based. The orientation is primarily applied, and many of the sessions will be held in the computer rooms, where practices take place with the software for data analysis.

- Socio-political marketing. Presentation and introduction to the module. How do the elections work? Introduction to voting behaviour: why do we vote as we vote?
- Spatial models of voting. The spatial representation of the electorate. The structure of competition within the political space.
- Election campaigns. Historical development and effectiveness. Does political campaigning make a difference?
- Election forecasting: Data types and sources. The pre-election polls and the election results. Types of surveys. Aggregate data. Focus groups and qualitative data. Semantic polling based on digital data streams (e.g. Twitter and Google Search).
- Electoral systems: key features and political consequences.
- What factors explain participation / abstention in the elections?
- Geographic analyses of voting behaviour. Mapping vote distributions.
- Territorial segmentation of the electoral 'market': how to classify municipalities and districts.
- Campaign advertising: Institutional factors and the place of advertising. Negative campaigning and its effects on turnout.
- The media malaise thesis and campaign coverage.
- The role of candidates: analytical tools.
- Political personalities and public opinion: the consequences of scandal politics on public support.
- The campaign issues. Issues and elections. Issue voting. Valence vs position issues. Issue ownership.

- Campaign engagement and digital media: Consequences of technology use on information costs, political interest, and electoral participation.
- Election dynamics. Analysis of vote transfers from aggregated and individual data.

Basic Bibliography

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Evaluation

To be evaluated the student must attend at least 80% of all sessions.

The evaluation will take into account the following elements:

- Participation (20%) Active participation in the sessions will be assessed
- Course project (80%) The project will consist in developing a communication/campaign plan for the party chosen by student or an analysis of a political campaign. The campaign plan or analysis of a campaign should integrate the content of the two blocks of the course and will therefore be necessary to present a communication strategy and data analysis in support of its efficacy or explaining its effects.