

PARTIES AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS IN EUROPE: COMMUNICATION OF THE ACTORS

DEVELOPMENTS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN EUROPE

2nd lesson

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LEARNING GUIDE

- Lesson length: 9 slides
- Content:
 - 4 phases of political communication:
First phase
 -: Second phase
 -: Third phase
 -: Fourth phase
- Recommended minimum duration for review: 30 minutes
- Suggested minimum time for learning: 1 hour
- The learning of the curriculum is aided by a reading lecture and self-assessment questions.
- Recommended minimum duration of this full lesson: 2 hours.



4 PHASES OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: FIRST PHASE

- [Jay Blumler](#) and Dennis Kavanagh (1999) differentiated three periods of political communication in their epoch-marking work.
- The first is the two decades after WW2 which is said to be the 'golden age' of parties that can be understood by
 - the long-term commitment of voters to parties and the party logic behind the communication of the parties.
 - Fact-based political speech.
 - The mediatory nature of media
 - Etc.

4 PHASES OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: FIRST PHASE

- At the same time we may **not forget** that messages coming from politics reached those who are not interested in politics with less success.
- The important communicational technique of the age is the program-based rhetoric that was adjusted to the given medium by the politicians.

4 PHASES OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: SECOND PHASE

- The second period starting from the 1960's is defined by the restricted channels of the media. National channels became dominant that had an effect on the kind and amount of messages that could get to the voters.
 - The voters' commitment to parties started to loosen and the not committed voters' group became larger and larger.
 - Typically pictures broadcasted from the television defined the opinions of politics and its actors.
 - For the sake of controlling the self-sufficient media in a way, politicians learnt new tricks and techniques to influence the agenda selection of the media.
 - Press conferences, interviews and debates broadcasted by the media got a bigger emphasis in the political actors' communication which set the base for the modern campaigns.

4 PHASES OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: SECOND PHASE

- The **paradox** of the age is that while consumers were ready to receive the news about politics that were influenced in this way, the news was less relevant.
- Party logic was changed to media logic.

4 PHASES OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: THIRD PHASE

- The third period started in the 1990's when media became multi-channelled and 24-hour news broadcast channels appeared. All this happened globally that was accompanied by the revolution of the computers, at the end of which Internet appeared.
 - People's news retrieval patterns changed. They faced information abundance getting news from more places (as opposed to the earlier restricted channels).
 - The competition among the mediums got more serious, priority became more important in accuracy and this is why news flow accelerated.
 - These processes resulted in people choosing mediums not dealing with politics easier that made the appearances of politicians in the media fall even though they had although they had had a high priority in previous times.

4 PHASES OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: THIRD PHASE

- Political actors **left** party logic **behind** in their communication for good and learnt media logic thus stepping into mediatisation where media does the agenda selection that politics is trying to influence.
 - In this heightened communicational environment there is a greater and greater role of **who can direct attention** to himself and keep it as well.

4 PHASES OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: FOURTH PHASE

- Jay Blumler introduced the fourth phase (era, period) of political communication in 2006.
- In this period, the fragmentation of media is accelerated. The different channels that are available on the internet as well create information overflow that came from the information abundance of the third period.
- The possibility or illusion of making people consume the information that they want is ultimately created.
- In this era, the relationship between the politicians and journalists loosen as political actors are now able to target their own messages through social networking sites and traditional media has to have a reaction to that.
- Similarly to the previous period, mediums will be the mediators of messages but not necessarily forming them.

4 PHASES OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: FOURTH PHASE

- Besides, the non-political actors' (famous people, celebrities) communication will bloom as community sites offer the same chance for them as well. There is an exceptionally vivid communicational environment that has a result of mixing political information with non-political pieces of information.
- Another outcome of this period is that politicians have to pursue a multi-dimensional information management, while – in the third period – it was them who controlled the news appearing about them on TV, radio and press.

4 PHASES OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: FOURTH PHASE

- Political elite will still handle traditional media as an important channel and during this endeavour it can easily disregard the special communication of the new period.
- In the enhanced fight for the users' attention political actors concentrate more on the appearance of their message than its content.

ABOUT THIS LESSON

The images used in the curriculum can be found online and are freely accessible.

The curriculum is for educational purposes only.

Compulsory and recommended literature sources for the given course were used as sources for the lesson.

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