

# Political communication concepts



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The term “ political communication” has proved to be continually difficult to define with any decisions since both components of the phrase are open to a variety definitions, more or less broad. Communication is and always been “ a central component in political processes whether it is leaders communicating with the public, candidates competing for votes, combatants struggling for international attention and sympathy, or citizens debating public issues”[1].

Classic definition of political communication focus on the source and motivation, political communication flows out from the political sphere and must have a political aims. Nevertheless, such definition would not be completely suitable for many of modern state, particularly given the role of media. Therefore modern texts focus on three on three actors, “ some of whom operate beyond the boundaries of any single state, each of whom produce political communication”[2]. These are: the political sphere itself (they communicate their actions to the society in order to gain legitimacy), secondly non-state actors where “ we would include a range of organizations with political motivations as well as corporate bodies and the voters”[3]. Each of these actors communicate message into the political sphere, in hope of having an influence on public life. Finally media which communicate about politics, and influence both: the public as well as political scene. Within the free and pluralistic societies each of these communicates independently in the same time cooperates with one another.

Denton and Woodrow for example provide one definition of political communication as:

“ Pure discussion about the allocations of public resources, official authority, and official sanctions”[4].

Above definition covers verbal and written political rhetoric, but not symbolic communicates acts, that are extremely important for an understanding of the political process as a whole.

The American writer Doris Graber develops a more wide-spread definition of “ what she terms ‘ political language, suggesting that it comprises not only rhetoric but paralinguistic signs such as: body language, and political acts such as boycotts and protests”[5].

It is necessary to characterize the political communication also through the terms of intension of its senders to influence the political environment.

According to Brian McNairn the intentionality of political communication should be simply defined as “ purposeful communication about politics”[6].

The scope of such a definition includes:

Forms of communication undertaken by political dissidents for the purpose of achieving specific objectives;

- Communication that is addressed to these actors by non-politicians ( citizens, journalists, and so on);
- Communication about these actors and their actions, which are contained in the various forms of media.

In this case we cannot explore only verbal or written statements, but also visual means of signification (dress, haircut, make-up, outfit) that constitute a ‘ political image’.

## **The scope of political communication:**

The problem of political communications directs the attention towards the relationship between three main elements of it by which political communication is initiated and achieved :

Political organizations (definition of it) they may seek to do this by attaining institutional, to influence the decision-making process

The audience

The media

Non- elective organisations:

Pressure groups, bussines sector, public organistains, terrorist groups

Elective political officials :

president, prime minister, national and local government, political parties

Media (broadcast and print)

## **Public citizens and voters**

Source: Key concepts in political communication.

How communications is made may vary and how audible the message is can be upon the size of any group or level of support for a party, group or cause and the tactics used to get the messages across. In a pluralistic society all groups will communicate among themselves and between one another and will be both learning from and competing with one another. The greater the number of voices competing, the more intense the competition, the better

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communication groups must be in order to be heard. Thus, we hear about professionalization of political communication, that it has become better in some way in order to be heard by more groups and individuals. The process by which political communication is carried out has evolved, become more technically and technologically sophisticated. (6) and adopted techniques from the world of corporate advertising and marketing in order to compete in the modern information-rich society.

Previously form of direct or non-mediated political communication involved public meetings in church halls, cinemas and other places, political campaigns. Such meetings are now “ few and mainly limited to countries where technology does not allow for the message to be directly to homes”[7].

Largely, political communication has become an activity aimed at a mass audience using the mass media of television. Direct political communication has become less of a feature in recent elections. As communication technology allowed mass communication, this phenomenon increasingly changed. Mass media not only chose what to broadcast as news but also pick the way it portrays groups in society. Political communication has then “ moved from being a direct, personal, face to face activity to being conducted indirectly via the mass media of mass communication”[8]. Changes in communication technology inevitably have a significant influence in all of these areas. The ability to predict the direction, forms, intensity of them is very limited. Consider the example of the proliferation of the internet, that is one of the most spectacular technological developments of the last decades, the internet first represented the revolution for democracy. ” Citizens and

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groups have greater access to political information than ever before which in turn rises the ability to distribute information, views, images, and sounds around the world... Everyone with a computer can become a mass medium"[9].

The three ages in political communication Blumler and Kavanaugh 1999- the first age took place before the start of television when the primary communication channels were strong and stable political institutions such as political parties. In the second age focus shifted to passing on messages through the mass media and increased the demand for communication professionals who were adept at exploiting these channels. In the third still emerging, age of media, the professionalization of political communication becomes even more pronounced. Political actors find themselves attempting to send messages through the multitude of channels of each of which has its own set of demands and formats,