

## Campaigning and voting in Europe: new challenges, new perspectives

Workshop, Paris 14-16 December 2015

<http://elections-europe2015.org>

A plethora of elections have taken place across the European continent over the last twelve months, from the European parliamentary election involving all 28 member states in May 2014 to more recent national contests in Greece, Romania, Spain, Poland, Denmark, Finland, Portugal, Estonia and the UK.

This conference aims to examine the conduct of European campaigns and their impact on voter turnout and voter choices.

Research on voting behaviour has increasingly pointed to the growing importance of short-term external factors over longer term sociological forces as key determinants of voter behaviour (for example the declining impact of social cleavages on voting behaviour as shown in Western Europe (Best, 2011, Clark and Lipset, 1991, Evans and Tilley, 2011, Franklin et al., 2009) or the growing relevance of campaign factors (Schmitt-Beck and Farrell, 2001) and the work of Green et al (2008) on US contests). While the campaign itself has been seen as a critical component among these more proximate influences it remains something a 'black box' in terms of what aspects of the design and conduct of the campaign have most impact on voters. Are elections mainly determined by long term factors as captured in the famous soundbite 'It's the economy, stupid'? Or is consistency of message, brand and image across media channels and party representatives a determining factor? Or is it in the affective response to negative publicity and minimization of internal gaffes? Or is it really more about those one-off unpredictable and accidental moments that grab media and public attention? Typically, the successful campaign is by and large judged in the post-election aftermath – with the winning party or candidate being deemed to having run the most effective campaign.

In this conference we seek to dissect more closely the elements of an election campaign and particularly to try to deal with the question of how we identify and measure a successful campaign. To explore this we aim to bring together scholars of parties, political communication and electoral behaviour in a bid to connect the analysis of the supply and demand side of election campaigns.

We invite papers that seek to model and compare election campaign strategy and practice over time and also space as well as papers that examine responses of citizens to campaigns. In particular we seek to develop global understandings of what works and what does not in terms of enhancing their effects on outcomes?

Papers may address, but should not be limited to, questions such as:

How elections campaigns have changed in styles, strategies, tools and with what impacts?

Is big data changing both the conduct of campaigns and the study of voting behaviour?

Are voters becoming less predictable, more changeable and so more open to persuasion?

To what extent is it policies or personalities which determine outcomes?

### **Keynote speakers:**

Claes de Vreese, Professor of Political Communication, University of Amsterdam, NL

Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck, Professor of Political Science & CSES, University of Mannheim

The format will be workshop style: 20 minutes for presentation and 20 for discussion

Important dates:

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2015 – submission of abstract

[Abstract: 500 words (theoretical and methodological approach, data description, preliminary findings; your name and university)]

Please send any questions and the abstracts to: **europeselections@audencia.com**

18<sup>th</sup> September 2015 – decision on acceptance

18<sup>th</sup> September 2015 – registration open

15<sup>th</sup> November 2015 – end of registration

### Scientific committee

Rachel Gibson, Manchester University, UK

Karolina Koc-Michalska, Audencia Business School, FR

Darren Lilleker, Bournemouth University, UK

Ralph Negrine, University of Sheffield, UK

Sylvie Strudel, Université Paris 2 Panthéon-Assas, FR

Thierry Vedel, Sciences-Po Paris, FR

Conference supported by:

International Communication Association, Political Communication Division

International Political Science Association (RC22)