

Abstracts

A Comparative Analysis of Political Communication Culture in Denmark

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The article maps three constitutive features of political communication culture in Denmark based on comparative survey data from nine European countries: 1. The low degree of politicization of the media, although a clear difference between apolitical journalists and somewhat more politicized media organizations should be taken into account. 2. A high degree of political success in setting the public agenda based on a political logic as well as on a media logic, suggesting a pervasive process of professionalization. 3. A high impact of public opinion polls on political maneuverability, not least when it comes to polls commissioned by the media.

We are all spin doctors

– About conceptualizing and measuring the second order voter

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Theories of public opinion, voting behavior and political communication all have different views on what constitutes the perception of the voter. In spite of these differences they share the conception of the voter as a first-order perceiver of politics. In this article we introduce a second-order voter who understands politics from the point of view of the political party. We conceptualize the second-order voter using the growing concept-formation literature, and estimate the spread of the second-order voter through a survey which employs an innovative questioning technique – an association exercise. Through a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the association data we conclude that a second order view of politics is a significant part of how the voter makes sense of politics.

The news media's impact on public expenditure decisions

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There is broad consensus that the media is a central arena for politics. It is, however, contested whether the media is also a strong independent actor that influences the political agenda and the political decisions, including decisions about the size and content of the public budgets. This article is focused on the latter question. The main conclusion is that the media's effect on public spending decisions is rather limited. Thus, media scholars should be careful not to confuse a mediatization of the political process and communication with increased media influence on important spending decisions. This conclusion is based on a discussion on the relevant theoretical arguments put forward in the literature as well as an account of several recent studies that in different ways empirically evaluate the media's influence on public spending decisions.

Public media subsidies from mail privileges to license-fee agreement

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Studying Danish media policy over time, we find three regulatory regimes combining different ways and means of the political influence. The first period is termed government-authorised one-sidedness (app. 1723-1894). The second period is characterised as party-authorised more-sidedness (app. 1894-1940). The current period may be regarded as parliamentary-authorised pluralism (app. 1945-2010). Key vehicle of regulation has been different kinds of media subsidies, e.g. mail privileges, tax exemption, and license fees. Political elites in varieties of alliances have markedly preferred public subsidy (»the carrot«) rather than public censorship (»the stick«) in order to make news media act differently than they would have done on strictly market-based conditions. In this fashion the state influence not only influence journalism but also the political legitimacy of representative democracy because the news media play an important role as proxy public sphere.