
Postgraduate Certificate in Independent Political Consultancy

Political Research and Data Analysis

Political Research and Data Analysis Glossary

1. Absentee Voting:

Definition: Absentee voting allows individuals to vote by mail if they are unable to physically go to a polling station on election day. It is often used by military personnel, expatriates, and individuals with disabilities.

2. Ballot:

Definition: A ballot is a form used to cast votes in an election. It lists the candidates or issues to be voted on and allows voters to make their selections.

3. Bipartisanship:

Definition: Bipartisanship refers to cooperation between two political parties that usually have differing ideologies. It involves finding common ground and working together on issues of mutual interest.

4. Candidate:

Definition: A candidate is an individual who seeks election to a political office. Candidates often campaign to promote their platform and persuade voters to support them.

5. Constituency:

Definition: A constituency is a group of voters in a specific geographic area represented by a political officeholder. It can refer to a district, state, or country.

6. Data Analysis:

Definition: Data analysis is the process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modeling data to uncover useful information, draw conclusions, and support decision-making. In political research, data analysis helps identify trends and patterns in voter behavior.

7. Demographics:

Definition: Demographics refer to statistical data relating to the population and specific groups within it. This information includes age, gender, income, education level, race, and other characteristics that can influence political behavior.

8. Electoral College:

Definition: The Electoral College is a group of electors chosen by the states to elect the President and Vice President of the United States. Each state has a certain number of electors based on its representation in Congress.

9. Exit Poll:

Definition: An exit poll is a survey conducted with voters as they leave a polling station to predict election results before official results are available. Exit polls provide insights into voter preferences and behavior.

10. Gerrymandering:

Definition: Gerrymandering is the manipulation of electoral district boundaries to favor one political party or group. It is often used to gain an unfair advantage in elections by concentrating or diluting voter support.

11. Grassroots Campaign:

Definition: A grassroots campaign is a political movement that starts at the local level and involves ordinary citizens organizing to support a cause or candidate. Grassroots campaigns rely on community support and engagement.

12. Incumbent:

Definition: An incumbent is a current officeholder seeking re-election. Incumbents have the advantage of name recognition and experience in office but may also face challenges from challengers.

13. Lobbying:

Definition: Lobbying is the practice of trying to influence government decisions by advocating for specific policies or interests. Lobbyists work on behalf of individuals, organizations, or industries to promote their agenda.

14. Margin of Error:

Definition: The margin of error is a statistical measure that indicates the amount of random sampling error in a survey's results. It represents the range within which the true population value is likely to fall.

15. Media Bias:

Definition: Media bias refers to the perceived prejudice or unfairness in news coverage that favors one political ideology or candidate over another. Bias can manifest in story selection, framing, and tone.

16. Opinion Poll:

Definition: An opinion poll is a survey that measures public opinion on a specific issue or candidate. Poll results provide insights into voter attitudes and preferences.

17. Partisan:

Definition: Partisan refers to a strong supporter of a particular political party or ideology. Partisans are often loyal to their party and advocate for its interests.

18. Political Action Committee (PAC):

Definition: A Political Action Committee (PAC) is an organization that raises money to support or oppose political candidates, parties, or issues. PACs can make contributions to campaigns but are subject to regulations.

19. Political Consultant:

Definition: A political consultant is a professional who provides strategic advice and services to political candidates, campaigns, or organizations. Consultants may specialize in areas such as messaging, polling, or fundraising.

20. Polling Station:

Definition: A polling station is a designated location where voters can cast their ballots in an election. Polling stations are set up to ensure a secure and accessible voting process.

21. Public Opinion:

Definition: Public opinion refers to the collective views and attitudes of the general population on various issues. Public opinion can influence policy decisions and election outcomes.

22. Redistricting:

Definition: Redistricting is the process of redrawing electoral district boundaries to reflect changes in population and ensure equal representation. Redistricting can impact political power and voting patterns.

23. Sample Size:

Definition: The sample size is the number of individuals surveyed or studied in a research project. A larger sample size generally leads to more reliable and accurate results in data analysis.

24. Swing State:

Definition: A swing state is a state where the level of support for political parties or candidates is closely divided. Swing states are considered crucial in determining the outcome of an election.

25. Tracking Poll:

Definition: A tracking poll is a survey conducted over time to monitor changes in public opinion or candidate support. Tracking polls provide insights into trends and momentum in political campaigns.

26. Voter Turnout:

Definition: Voter turnout is the percentage of eligible voters who participate in an election by casting their ballots. High voter turnout is often seen as a sign of civic engagement and political interest.

27. Write-In Candidate:

Definition: A write-in candidate is an individual whose name is not printed on the ballot but can be manually written in by voters. Write-in candidates must meet eligibility requirements to be considered valid.

28. Youth Vote:

Definition: The youth vote refers to the voting behavior of young people, typically ages 18-29. Engaging the youth vote is important in mobilizing a demographic group with the potential to influence election outcomes.

29. Zogby Poll:

Definition: A Zogby poll is a type of public opinion poll conducted by the Zogby International polling firm. Zogby polls are known for their innovative methodology and accuracy in predicting election results.