

# Comparative Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change

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# Section 1

## Introduction to the course

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Changes in party systems across Western Europe (WE) have fostered pressuring challenges to democracy, specially in the last two decades:

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- Radical parties from the left, but specially from the right, have become mainstream actors in many national parliaments, polarizing the public debate.
- The large number and variety of parties in parliament complicates the formation of government (e.g., Germany 2017, Belgium 2019-20) and anticipated elections due to broken coalitions are a permanent risk (e.g., Spain 2019)

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- If not, what does explain this variation?
- This seminar intends to provide students with conceptual and empirical tools to assess these questions with methodological rigour and from a critical perspective.

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  - ➊ **The first block consists of a review of European party systems, focusing on their main changes from the 1960s until now.** We will depart from the origins of major political conflicts across WE to later analyse the impact of consecutive 'transformation waves' on their current shape.
  - ➋ **The second block discusses the most relevant demand and supply factors provided by the literature to explain party-system change,** from the formation of new social classes or the effect of immigration to the role of issue politicization by new challenger parties on altering the preferences of the electorate.



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- Prepare a class presentation (30-35 min.) for the second weekend (in group or individually depending on the number of registered students).

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### Learning outcomes

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- Read scientific articles and present critical written responses
- Work in collaboration with others
- Orally present their work to a broad audience

## Section 5

### **Tentative schedule**

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## Block I - Friday 04.03.2022 (09:00 – 17:00)

- Session 1 (09:00 – 10:30): Party-systems formation and the 'freezing hypothesis'

## Block I - Saturday 05.03.2022 (09:00 – 15:15)



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- Session 8 (09:00 – 10:30): Factors of change I: demand-side explanations

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- Session 10 (13:45 – 15:15): Students presentations

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- Session 13 (10:45 – 12:15): Students presentations
- Session 14 (13:45 – 15:15): Wrapping-up discussion, advanced topics and feedback

## Section 6

### **Contact details**

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About the professor:

- My name is Álvaro Canalejo-Molero and I am a political scientist from Córdoba, Spain

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- And that's all! **I am looking forward to meeting many of you!**