

Comparative Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change

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Section 1

Introduction to the course

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- Radical parties from the left, but specially from the right, have become mainstream actors in many national parliaments.
- Electoral volatility has increased (sometimes shockingly, e.g., Italy 2013, France 2017) and the outcomes of elections are becoming harder and harder to predict.
- Polarization is on the rise too, and together with the larger fragmentation of parliaments has made the negotiations for cabinet formation increasingly complicated (sometimes extremely even, e.g., Spain 2019, Belgium 2019-20).

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

Section 2

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- It is organized as a four-day intensive seminar divided in two weekend blocks:
 - 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 'transformative waves' on their current composition.
 - 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 (revealed) preferences of the electorate.

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- Actively engage in class activities
- Complete all the mandatory readings (one per session)
- Select one reading for each weekend (two in total) and write a short response paper (300-500 words) to them
- 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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- 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 7 (13:45 – 15:15): Changing party-systems? Wrapping-up workshop on electoral volatility

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