

# Syllabus

## Can Voters Hold Politicians Accountable?

Instructor: Martin Vinæs Larsen

July 31, 2018

**Student responsibilities.** Read papers critically and engage with instructor in class. Present solution to one of six small assignments uploaded to course website. Write response papers for two sessions. (Response papers should include an original argument/critique of the readings. Not just a summary.)

**Exam.** Six hour assignment set by instructor. Exam questions will be similar to questions laid out in the small assignments uploaded to class website.

**Prerequisites.** Methods 1, 2 & Theories and Approaches to Political Science. Some training in statistics with a focus on causal inference is recommended.

**Classes.** 10 sessions from 09.00 to 13.30 (lunch: 12.00-12.30).

**Questions.** Preferably in connection with class, but you can also write mvl@ps.au.dk.

### Day 1: Introduction & Retrospective voting

1. Key jr., V.O. The Responsible Electorate, Chapter 1, pp. 1-8.
2. Kramer, G. H. (1971). Short-term fluctuations in US voting behavior, 1896–1964. *American political science review*, 65(1), 131-143.
3. Healy, A., & Malhotra, N. (2013). Retrospective voting reconsidered. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 16, 285-306.
4. Achen, C. & Bartels, L. (2016). Democracy for Realists, Chapter 1, 4, pp. 1-20, 90-115.
5. Lenz, G. (2012) Follow the Leader?, Chapter 1, 2, pp. 1-53.
6. Elster, J. On the Nature and Scope of Rational Choice Explanation. In: “Readings in the philosophy of social science”, pp. 60-72.

## Day 2: Contract Theory

1. Larsen, M. (2018) Simple Sanctioning and Selection models. Lecture Note, pp. 1-7.
2. Persson, T. & Tabellini, G. (2002). Political Economics, Chapter 4, pp. 47-63
3. Besley, T. (2006) Principled Agents?, Part of Chapter 3, pp. 75-92, 126-133
4. Alt, J., Bueno de Mesquita, E., & Rose, S. (2011). Disentangling accountability and competence in elections: evidence from US term limits. The Journal of Politics, 73(1), 171-186
5. Ferraz, C., & Finan, F. (2011). Electoral accountability and corruption: Evidence from the audits of local governments. American Economic Review, 101(4), 1274-1311.

## Day 3: Institutions I: Information about Outcomes

1. Snyder Jr, J. M., & Strömberg, D. (2010). Press coverage and political accountability. Journal of political Economy, 118(2), 355-408.
2. Alt, J. E., Lassen, D. D., & Skilling, D. (2002). Fiscal transparency, gubernatorial approval, and the scale of government: Evidence from the states. State Politics & Policy Quarterly, 2(3), 230-250.
3. Pande, R. (2011). Can informed voters enforce better governance? Experiments in low-income democracies. Annu. Rev. Econ., 3(1), 215-237.
4. Arias, E., Larreguy, H. A., Marshall, J., & Querubin, P. (2016). Priors Rule: When Do Malfeasance Revelations Help and Hurt Incumbent Parties. Working paper.

→ Also read about Metaketa I on *egap.org*

## Day 4: Institutions II: Centralization of Executive Power

1. Powell Jr, G. B., & Whitten, G. D. (1993). A cross-national analysis of economic voting: taking account of the political context. American Journal of Political Science, 391-414.
2. Ruder, A. I. (2014). Institutional design and the attribution of presidential control: Insulating the president from blame. Quarterly Journal of Political Science, 9(3), 301-335. (Nb. kan være svær at finde, søg på tidsskriftet i AU library og gå derefter hen til det korrekte år.)
3. Hobolt, S., Tilley, J., & Banducci, S. (2013). Clarity of responsibility: How government cohesion conditions performance voting. European journal of political research, 52(2), 164-187.

4. Larsen, M. V. (2018). Is the Relationship Between Political Responsibility and Electoral Accountability Causal, Adaptive and Policy-Specific?. *Political Behavior*, Early View.

### **Day 5: Institutions III: Open Economies and Federalism**

1. Hellwig, T., & Samuels, D. (2007). Voting in open economies: The electoral consequences of globalization. *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(3), 283-306.
2. Kayser, M. A., & Peress, M. (2012). Benchmarking across borders: electoral accountability and the necessity of comparison. *American Political Science Review*, 106(3), 661-684.
3. Anderson, C. D. (2006). Economic voting and multilevel governance: a comparative individual level analysis. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(2), 449-463.
4. Kogan, V., Lavertu, S., & Peskowitz, Z. (2016). Performance federalism and local democracy: Theory and evidence from school tax referenda. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(2), 418-435.
5. Sances, M. W. (2017). Attribution Errors in Federalist Systems: When Voters Punish the President for Local Tax Increases. *The Journal of Politics*, 79(4), 1286-1301.
6. Burnett, C. M., & Kogan, V. (2017). The politics of potholes: Service quality and retrospective voting in local elections. *The Journal of Politics*, 79(1), 302-314.

### **Day 6: Behavioral Limitations I: Misattributions and Misperceptions**

1. Healy, A., & Lenz, G. S. (2014). Substituting the end for the whole: why voters respond primarily to the election year economy. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(1), 31-47.
2. Healy, A., & Malhotra, N. (2009). Myopic voters and natural disaster policy. *American Political Science Review*, 103(3), 387-406.
3. Huber, G. A., Hill, S. J., & Lenz, G. S. (2012). Sources of bias in retrospective decision making: Experimental evidence on voters' limitations in controlling incumbents. *American Political Science Review*, 106(4), 720-741.
4. Tilley, J., & Hobolt, S. (2011). Is the government to blame? An experimental test of how partisanship shapes perceptions of performance and responsibility. *The Journal of Politics*, 73(2), 316-330.

5. Bisgaard, M. (2015). Bias will find a way: Economic perceptions, attributions of blame, and partisan-motivated reasoning during crisis. *The Journal of Politics*, 77(3), 849-860.
6. Prior, M., Sood, G., & Khanna, K. (2015). You cannot be serious: The impact of accuracy incentives on partisan bias in reports of economic perceptions. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 10(4), 489-518.
7. Bisgaard, M., & Slothuus, R. (2018). Partisan elites as culprits? How party cues shape partisan perceptual gaps. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62(2), 456-469.

## **Day 7: Behavioral Limitations II: Irrelevant Events**

1. Achen, C. & Bartels, L. (2016). *Democracy for Realists*, Chapter 5, pp. 116-146.
2. Fowler, A., & Hall, A. B. (2016). Do shark attacks influence presidential elections? Reassessing a prominent finding on voter competence. *The Journal of Politics*. 1-29
3. Wolfers, J. (2002). Are voters rational?: Evidence from gubernatorial elections. NBER working paper, p 1-31.
4. Healy, A. J., Malhotra, N., & Mo, C. H. (2010). Irrelevant events affect voters' evaluations of government performance. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107(29), 12804-12809.
5. Fowler, A., & Montagnes, B. P. (2015). College football, elections, and false-positive results in observational research. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112(45), 13800-13804.
6. Healy, A., Malhotra, N., & Mo, C. H. (2015). Determining false-positives requires considering the totality of evidence. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112(48), E6591-E6591.
7. Fowler, A., & Montagnes, B. P. (2015). Reply to Healy et al.: Value of ex ante predictions and independent tests for assessing false-positive results. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112(48), E6592-E6592.
8. Ashworth, S., Bueno de Mesquita, E., & Friedenberg, A. (2018). Learning about voter rationality. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62(1), 37-54.
9. Busby, E. C., Druckman, J. N., & Fredendall, A. (2017). The political relevance of irrelevant events. *The Journal of Politics*, 79(1), 346-350.
10. Busby, E. C., & Druckman, J. N. (2018). Football and Public Opinion: A Partial Replication and Extension. *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, 5(1), 4-10.

## **Day 8: Policy Congruence & Responsiveness**

- Lax, J. R., & Phillips, J. H. (2012). The democratic deficit in the states. *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(1), 148-166.
- Achen, C. & Bartels, L. (2016). *Democracy for Realists*, Chapter 3, pp. 52-89.
- Lenz, G. (2012) *Follow the Leader?*, Chapter 3-5, pp. 54-125.
- Tausanovitch, C., & Warshaw, C. (2014). Representation in municipal government. *American Political Science Review*, 108(3), 605-641.

## **Day 9: Inequality in Accountability**

- Feigenbaum, J. J., & Hall, A. B. (2015). How High-Income Neighborhoods Receive More Service From Municipal Government: Evidence From City Administrative Data. Working Paper, pp. 1-25.
- Hicks, T., Jacobs, A. M., & Matthews, J. S. (2016). Inequality and Electoral Accountability: Class-Biased Economic Voting in Comparative Perspective. *The Journal of Politics*, 78(4), 1076-1093.
- Sances, M. W. (2016). The Distributional Impact of Greater Responsiveness: Evidence from New York Towns. *The Journal of Politics*, 78(1), 105-119.
- Holbein, J. (2016). Left behind? Citizen responsiveness to government performance information. *American Political Science Review*, 110(2), 353-368.
- de Benedictis-Kessner, J. (2018). How Attribution Inhibits Accountability: Evidence from Train Delays. *The Journal of Politics*, 80(4), 1-10.

## **Day 10: Review**