Dr. Stefan Müller
Assistant Professor and Ad Astra Fellow
School of Politics and International Relations
Connected_Politics Lab
University College Dublin
Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland
✉ stefan.mueller@ucd.ie
🖥 https://muellerstefan.net

Year 3 Module; Spring Trimester 2020

Parties and Party Competition (POL30830)

Last update: April 30, 2020

Term: Spring Trimester 2020   Convener: Dr. Stefan Müller
Time: Mon 13:00–13:50 & Wed 15:00–15:50   stefan.mueller@ucd.ie
Locations: Mon: L107 LIB; Wed: NTh 1 ART   https://muellerstefan.net
ECTS: 5.0   Office: Newman Building, G303
Format: Lecture; group work and class discussion   Office hours: Wed 11:00–12:00

Module Description

How can we identify differences between party systems, determine party positions, and measure public opinion? Do parties keep their promises or are politicians "pledge breakers"? Are promises in certain policy areas more likely to be fulfilled? In what policy areas do parties differ in terms of their positions and issue emphasis? And do parties respond to changes in public opinion?

In this module, we first discuss the main functions of political parties, outline features of representative democracies, and identify ways of measuring public opinion. Next, we assess whether parties keep their promises, whether the "mandate model of democracy" is a desirable and realistic mode of political representation, and how existing studies on election pledge fulfilment can be improved. Afterwards, we investigate parties' willingness and capacity to respond to changes in public opinion. Fourth, we discuss different approaches of measuring party positions, political ideology, and the salience of policy areas. Based on these methodological approaches, we identify the circumstances under which parties change their positions and issue emphasis. Finally, we briefly discuss alternative types of political participation that go beyond representative government and electoral democracy.

Learning Outcomes

1. Extensive knowledge of central theories of representation, the mandate model of democracy, and party competition

2. Detailed insights into past and current approaches to study questions about pledge fulfilment, party positions, responsiveness and issue ownership

3. Critical reading and discussing complex academic literature and diverse quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches

Indicative Module Content

The following topics will be covered in this course: parties and party systems; the "mandate model of democracy"; measuring and aggregating public opinion; economic voting; the cost of governing; responsiveness; party competition; party positions, salience, and issue ownership; deliberative and direct democracy

Approaches to Teaching and Learning

- Active and task-based learning

- Group work and discussions

- In-class debates

- Problem-based learning

Overview of Assessment

- 1,000 word response paper: 30%

- 2,500–3,000 word essay from a choice set of questions: 70%

Expectations and Guidelines

- Students are expected to read the papers or chapters assigned under **mandatory readings**. These readings serve as the basis for in-class discussions about the advantages, disadvantages, and applicability of the various approaches to social science questions.

- Students are required to submit one **response paper** (1,000 words) throughout the course, which counts towards 30% of the grade. By Week 3, everyone will have been assigned a week where they will prepare a response paper. Response papers must be submitted via Brightspace no later than **Monday, 9am of the respective week**, meaning that the assignment has to be submitted *before* the texts are discussed in class. Students are required to choose *one* of the required or suggested readings for that week (readings marked with a star may not be used). Response papers must contain the following two aspects:

    1. Identify either a limitation of the paper (e.g., how a variable is measured, or an unreasonable/unnecessary assumption) or a possible extension. Either way you should have only one argument in these papers.

    2. Suggest a possible solution to that limitation or describe how you would carry out the extension. Note that what you propose should be feasible (ideally by you). If, for example, you find the author's data weak, then you should identify better data, or at least propose a plausible way of collecting these data. If you think the method is wrong, explain why and suggest a better one. If the conclusions do not follow from the premises, discuss what conclusions are actually supported. A specific course of action should be outlined. This process might help you down the line in finding a dissertation topic. I am not interested in a summary of the paper. The idea is for you to try out ideas for future research projects.

- Students submit an **essay** which counts towards 70% of the final grade. The essay must not exceed 2,500–3,000 words (including bibliography, captions, and footnotes) and will tackle one of

the 'discussion questions' which will be published in due course. For this essay, you are required to (i) draw on academic literature (articles and/or books) and (ii) properly cite the academic literature you use to prepare your essay. You should attach an *alphabetised* bibliography to your essay. Students should read beyond the reading list for this essay. The essay must be submitted via Brightspace as a `PDF` document before **15 May 2020 (8:00pm CET)**. More information on the essay will be provided in the seminar. For information on academic writing, I recommend the following sources:

– Patrick Dunleavy (2014). *How to Write Paragraphs in Research Texts (Articles, Books and PhDs)*. URL: https://medium.com/advice-and-help-in-authoring-a-phd-or-non-fiction/how-to-write-paragraphs-80781e2f3054.

– Stephen B. Heard (2016). *The Scientist's Guide to Writing: How to Write More Easily and Effectively Throughout Your Scientific Career*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

For the essay, I recommend to pay special attention to the following aspects:

– *Focus on argumentation, demonstrate critical thinking*: Your essay will be judged primarily on your ability to make nuanced arguments and to demonstrate your understanding of the nuances of the arguments presented by the authors discussed in the course and readings that go beyond the syllabus. While you are expected to engage with the material in the course during your essay, a good essay will do so in a creative way where your own voice comes through clearly. This can be done by critically commenting on the arguments of others; creatively combing arguments from others to make a case; and/or presenting your own original arguments in attempting to improve upon shortcomings in the literature that you have identified.

– *Read deeply, read widely*: Reading deeply is the most important thing for developing your essay. **But you should also read widely, consulting sources both within and beyond the syllabus.** It is possible to write a great paper by focusing on just a small number of sources. But this is rare enough. As a rule of thumb, well-researched papers usually average between one and two distinct references per double-spaced page. For a 2,500–3,000-word essay, this will amount to approximately 10–15 distinct references to texts that you have read and analysed closely.

– *Presentation*: Be attentive to the presentation of your essay, including consistent referencing-style (with page numbers provided), a bibliography, and a consistent layout. Learning how to deliver well-presented and polished-looking work is part of your undergraduate training and a highly transferable skill. Take it seriously. Poor presentation will result in lost marks. If you require information on proper citation style, please refer to the guidelines of the American Political Science Association:

  * APSA Committee on Publications (2018). *Style Manual for Political Science (Revised 2018 Version)*. URL: https://connect.apsanet.org/stylemanual/.

Essay Questions

Please choose **one** of the three questions below and make sure to follow the essay guidelines described above.

1. Katz and Mair's (1995: 5) cartel party thesis argues that "parties [have] become agents of the state and employ the resources of the state (the party state) to ensure their own collective survival." Yet, Koole (1996: 507) states that "the reality of Western party systems does not show an effective cartel of parties." First, outline the reasons for these different conclusions. Second, assess whether the developments described in Katz and Mair (1995) threaten representative democracy.

2. Why do parties enter a government as a smaller coalition partner? From a normative and strategic perspective, should parties remain in opposition rather than functioning as a junior coalition partner? Your answer should include references to the literatures on coalition formation, voting behaviour, and the cost of governing.

3. The concept of responsiveness implies that governments adjust their policies based on changes in citizens' preferences. First, summarise and critically evaluate potential ways of measuring policy responsiveness. Second, explain whether and to what degree parties react to changes in public opinion. Third, discuss whether parties should indeed respond to public opinion or instead stick to their principles.

Plagiarism is an issue we take very serious here in UCD. Please familiarize yourself with the definition of plagiarism on UCD's website and make sure not to engage in it.

Late Submission Policy

All written work must be submitted on or before the due dates. Students will lose one point of a grade for work up to 5 working days late ($B-$ becomes $C+$). Students will lose two grade points for work between 5 and 10 working days late ($B-$ becomes C). When more than two weeks are necessary, the student will need to apply for extenuating circumstances application via the SPIRe Programme Office.

<div align="center">

Student effort hours

Student effort type	Hours
Seminars	22
Autonomous Student Learning	103
Total	**125**

</div>

Introductory Readings

The seminar does not build on a single text book, but relies mostly on papers and chapters of books. For a general overview of the course content, I recommend the following books:

- G. Bingham Powell (2000). *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Russell J. Dalton, David M. Farrell, and Ian McAllister (2011). *Political Parties and the Democratic Linkage: How Parties Organize Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Giovanni Sartori ([1976] 2005). *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. Essex: ECPR Press.

- Elin Naurin, Terry J. Royed, and Robert Thomson, eds. (2019). *Party Mandates and Democracy: Making, Breaking, and Keeping Election Pledges in Twelve Countries*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

- Peter Mair (2013). *Ruling the Void: The Hollowing of Western Democracy*. London: Verso.

Technical Background and Prerequisites

The course requires knowledge of general approaches and theories of political science. The following books provide very good introductions to research design and applied quantitative methods.

Research Design and Quantitative Methods

- Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten (2019). *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. 3rd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Kosuke Imai (2017). *Quantitative Social Science: An Introduction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Syllabus Modification Rights

I reserve the right to reasonably alter the elements of the syllabus at any time by adjusting the reading list to keep pace with the course schedule. Moreover, I may change the content of specific sessions depending on the participants' prior knowledge and research interests.

Course Structure

Week 1: Conceptualising Representative Democracy (20–24 January 2020)

- Expectations
- Discussion of syllabus
- What are the main differences between the majoritarian and proportional visions of democracy?

Mandatory Readings

- G. Bingham Powell (2000). *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions*. New Haven: Yale University Press: ch. 1–2.

Week 2: Parties and Party Systems (27–31 January 2020)

– What are political parties?

– What does Lijphart mean by the Westminster Model of Democracy and the Consensus Model of Democracy?

– How can we distinguish between different types of democracies?

Mandatory Readings

- Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair (1995). "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party". *Party Politics* 1 (1): 5–28

- Peter Mair (2008). "The Challenge to Party Government". *West European Politics* 31 (1–2): 211–234.

Optional

- Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair (2009). "The Cartel Party Thesis: A Restatement". *Perspectives on Politics* 7 (4): 753–766.

- Ann-Kristin Kölln (2015). "The Value of Political Parties to Representative Democracy". *European Political Science Review* 7 (4): 593–613.

Week 3: Parties and Electoral Competition (3–7 February 2020)

– What do we mean by political cleavages?

– How have political cleavages shaped party competition?

– How do political cleavages shape party competition and policy outcomes?

Mandatory Readings

- Arend Lijphart (2012). *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. 2nd edition. New Haven: Yale University Press: ch. 1–3.

- Russell J. Dalton (1996). "Political Cleavages, Issues, and Electoral Change". *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in Global Perspective*. Ed. by Lawrence LeDuc, Richard G. Niemi, and Pippa Norris. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Optional

- Octavio Amorim Neto and Gary W. Cox (1997). "Electoral Institutions, Cleavage Structures, and the Number of Parties". *American Journal of Political Science* 41 (1): 149–174.

- G. Bingham Powell (2006). "Election Laws and Representative Governments: Beyond Votes and Seats". *British Journal of Political Science* 36 (2): 291–315.

- Matt Golder and Gabriella Lloyd (2014). "Re-Evaluating the Relationship between Electoral Rules and Ideological Congruence". *European Journal of Political Research* 53 (1): 200–212.

- John M. Carey and Matthew Søberg Shugart (1995). "Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote: A Rank Ordering of Electoral Formulas". *Electoral Studies* 14 (4): 417–439.

- Torben Iversen and David Soskice (2006). "Electoral Institutions and the Politics of Coalitions: Why Some Democracies Redistribute More Than Others". *American Political Science Review* 100 (2): 165–181.

Week 4: Party Competition (10–14 February 2020)

– What goals do parties and politicians pursue?

– How do parties compete with each other, and how can we measure party competition?

Mandatory Readings

- Kaare Strøm (1990). "A Behavioral Theory of Competitive Political Parties". *American Journal of Political Science* 34 (2): 565–598.

- Zeynep Somer-Topcu (2015). "Everything to Everyone: The Electoral Consequences of the Broad-Appeal Strategy in Europe". *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (4): 841–854.

Optional

- Donald E. Stokes (1963). "Spatial Models of Party Competition". *American Political Science Review* 57 (2): 368–377.

- Margit Tavits (2007). "Principles vs. Pragmatism: Policy Shifts and Political Competition". *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (1): 151–165.

- Tobias Böhmelt, Lawrence Ezrow, Roni Lehrer, and Hugh Ward (2016). "Party Policy Diffusion". *American Political Science Review* 110 (2): 397–410.

- Gail McElroy (2017). "Party Competition in Ireland: The Emergence of a Left-Right Dimension?". *A Conservative Revolution? Electoral Change in Twenty-First-Century Ireland*. Ed. by Michael Marsh, David M. Farrell, and Gail McElroy. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 61–82.

Week 5: Parties in Government and Challenger Parties (17–21 February 2020)

– How do incumbent parties react to challenger parties or new parties?

– Why do parties join a coalition? And which types of coalitions are most likely to be formed?

– What happens when populist parties enter parliament?

Mandatory Readings

- Heike Klüver and Jae-Jae Spoon (2020). "Helping or Hurting? How Governing as a Junior Coalition Partner Influences Electoral Outcomes". *The Journal of Politics* published ahead of print (doi: 10.1086/708239).

- Tarik Abou-Chadi and Werner Krause (2018). "The Causal Effect of Radical Right Success on Mainstream Parties' Policy Positions: A Regression Discontinuity Approach". *British Journal of Political Science* published ahead of print (doi: 10.1017/S0007123418000029).

Optional

- Paul V. Warwick and James N. Druckman (2006). "The Portfolio Allocation Paradox: An Investigation into the Nature of a Very Strong but Puzzling Relationship". *European Journal of Political Research* 45 (4): 635–665.e

- Alejandro Ecker and Thomas M. Meyer (2020). "Coalition Bargaining Duration in Multiparty Democracies". *British Journal of Political Science* 50 (1): 261–280.

- Lanny W. Martin and Randolph T. Stevenson (2001). "Government Formation in Parliamentary Democracies". *American Journal of Political Science* 45 (1): 33–50.

- Daniel Bischof and Markus Wagner (2020). "What Makes Parties Adapt to Voter Preferences? The Role of Party Organization, Goals and Ideology". *British Journal of Political Science* 50 (1): 391–401.

Week 6: Mandate Model of Democracy (24–28 February 2020)

– What is the 'democratic mandate'?

– How we measure campaign promises/pledges?

– Do parties fulfil their promises?

Mandatory Readings

- Jane Mansbridge (2003). "Rethinking Representation". *American Political Science Review* 97 (4): 515–528.

- Robert Thomson, Terry J. Royed, Elin Naurin, Joaquín Artés, Rory Costello, Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik, Mark Ferguson, Petia Kostadinova, Catherine Moury, François Pétry, and Katrin Praprotnik (2017). "The Fulfillment of Parties' Election Pledges: A Comparative Study on the Impact of Power Sharing". *American Journal of Political Science* 61 (3): 527–542.

Optional

- Bernard Manin, Adam Przeworski, and Susan C. Stokes (1999). "Elections and Representation". *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation.* Ed. by Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes, and Bernard Manin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 29–54.* (not suitable for response paper)

- Robert Thomson and Rory Costello (2016). "Governing Together in Good and Bad Economic Times: The Fulfilment of Election Pledges in Ireland". *Irish Political Studies* 31 (2): 182–203.

- Theres Matthieß (2020). "Retrospective Pledge Voting: A Comparative Study of the Electoral Consequences of Government Parties' Pledge Fulfilment". *European Journal of Political Research* published ahead of print (doi: 10.1111/1475-6765.12377).

- Robert Thomson and Heinz Brandenburg (2019). "Trust and Citizens' Evaluations of Promise Keeping by Government Parties". *Political Studies* 67 (1): 249–266.

Week 7: Measuring Party Positions and Issue Salience (2–6 March 2020)

– What are differences between positions, salience, and issue ownership?

– How can we measure latent policy positions?

– What are methodological difficulties when measuring party positions?

Mandatory Readings

- Michael Laver (2014). "Measuring Policy Positions in Political Space". *Annual Review of Political Science* 17: 207–223.

- Ian Budge (2015). "Issue Emphases, Saliency Theory and Issue Ownership: A Historical and Conceptual Analysis". *West European Politics* 38 (4): 761–777.

Optional

- Slava Mikhaylov, Michael Laver, and Kenneth Benoit (2012). "Coder Reliability and Misclassification in the Human Coding of Party Manifestos". *Political Analysis* 20 (1): 78–91.

- Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan B. Slapin (2010). "Position Taking in European Parliament Speeches". *British Journal of Political Science* 40 (3): 587–611.

- Justin Grimmer and Brandon M. Stewart (2013). "Text as Data: The Promise and Pitfalls of Automatic Content Analysis Methods for Political Texts". *Political Analysis* 21 (3): 267–297.* (not suitable for response paper)

Saturday, 9 March–Sunday, 22 March: Reading Weeks

Week 8: Responsiveness (23–27 March 2020)

– What is democratic responsiveness?

– Do parties and parties and politicians react to public opinion? And from a normative perspective, should political actors change their positions and policies depending on citizens' preferences?

Mandatory Readings

- Stuart N. Soroka and Christopher Wlezien (2019). "Tracking the Coverage of Public Policy in Mass Media". *Policy Studies Journal* 47 (2): 471–491.

- Heike Klüver and Jae-Jae Spoon (2016). "Who Responds? Voters, Parties and Issue Attention". *British Journal of Political Science* 46 (3): 633–654.

Optional

- Christopher Wlezien (1995). "The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending". *American Journal of Political Science* 39 (4): 981–1000.

- G. Bingham Powell (2004). "The Chain of Responsiveness". *Journal of Democracy* 15 (4): 91–105.* (not suitable for response paper)

- Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro (1983). "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy". *American Political Science Review* 77 (1): 175–190.

- James A. Stimson, Michael B. Mackuen, and Robert S. Erikson (1995). "Dynamic Representation". *American Political Science Review* 89 (3): 543–565.

Week 9: Economic Voting and the Cost of Governing (30 March–3 April 2020)

- What is democratic accountability?

- Why do government parties regularly lose public support at the next election?

Mandatory Readings

- Christopher J. Anderson (2000). "Economic Voting and Political Context: A Comparative Perspective". *Electoral Studies* 19 (2–3): 151–170.

- Stefan Müller and Tom Louwerse (2018). "The Electoral Cycle Effect in Parliamentary Democracies". *Political Science Research and Methods* published ahead of print (doi: 10.1017/psrm.2018.47).

Optional

- Michael Marsh and James Tilley (2010). "The Attribution of Credit and Blame to Governments and Its Impact on Vote Choice". *British Journal of Political Science* 40 (1): 115–134.

- Christopher Wlezien (2017). "Policy (Mis)Representation and the Cost of Ruling: U.S. Presidential Elections in Comparative Perspective". *Comparative Political Studies* 50 (6): 711–738.

- Alexander Herzog and Kenneth Benoit (2015). "The Most Unkindest Cuts: Speaker Selection and Expressed Goverment Dissent During Economic Crisis". *The Journal of Politics* 77 (4): 1157–1175.

Week 10: The (Ir)Rational Voter (6–10 April 2020)

- Are voters rational decision-makers, as assumed in many theories of representation?

- Under what circumstances do voters behave (ir)rationally? What are consequences of irrational voting behaviour on political processes and decisions?

Mandatory Readings

- Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels (2016). *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: ch. 5.

- Andrew J. Healy, Neil Malhotra, and Cecilia Hyunjung Mo (2010). "Irrelevant Events Affect Voters' Evaluations of Government Performance". *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (PNAS)* 107 (29): 12804–12809.

- Stefan Müller and Liam Kneafsey (2020). "Evidence for the Irrelevance of Irrelevant Events: Sports Games do not Change Political Opinions in Ireland". Unpublished Manuscript.

Optional

- Michael W. Sances (2017). "Attribution Errors in Federalist Systems: When Voters Punish the President for Local Tax Increases". *The Journal of Politics* 79 (4): 1286–1301.

- Anthony Fowler and Andrew B. Hall (2018). "Do Shark Attacks Influence Presidential Elections? Reassessing a Prominent Finding on Voter Competence". *The Journal of Politics* 80 (4): 1423–1437.

Week 11: Alternative Forms of Participation (13–17 April 2020)

– What are problems associated with representative politics?

– What other forms of participation exist? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

– How can we combine representative politics with these alternative forms of participation?

Mandatory Readings

- David M. Farrell (2014). "'Stripped Down' or Reconfigured Democracy". *West European Politics* 37 (2): 439–455.* (not suitable for response paper)

- Ramya Parthasarathy, Vijayendra Rao, and Nethra Palaniswamy (2019). "Deliberative Democracy in an Unequal World: A Text-As-Data Study of South India's Village Assemblies". *American Political Science Review* 113 (3): 623–640.

Optional

- John S. Dryzek, André Bächtinger, Simone Chambers, Joshua Cohen, James N. Druckman, Andrea Felicetti, James S. Fishkin, David M. Farrell, Archon Fung, Amy Gutmann, Hélène Landemore, Jane Mansbridge, Sofie Marien, Michael A. Neblo, Simon Niemeyer, Maija Setälä, Rune Slothuus, Jane Suiter, Dennis Thompson, and Mark E. Warren (2019). "The Crisis of Democracy and the Science of Deliberation". *Science* 363 (6432): 1144–1146.* (not suitable for response paper)

- David Altman (2011). *Direct Democracy Worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: ch. 1–3.* (not suitable for response paper)

- Shaun Bowler, Todd Donovan, and Jeffrey A. Karp (2007). "Enraged or Engaged? Preferences for Direct Citizen Participation in Affluent Democracies". *Political Research Quarterly* 60 (3): 351–362.

- Peter Mair (2013). *Ruling the Void: The Hollowing of Western Democracy*. London: Verso.* (not suitable for response paper)

- Céline Colombo (2018). "Justifications and Citizen Competence in Direct Democracy: A Multilevel Analysis". *British Journal of Political Science* 48 (3): 767–806.

- Simon Hug (2009). "Some Thoughts About Referendums, Representative Democracy, and Separation of Powers". *Constitutional Political Economy* 20: 251–266.* (not suitable for response paper)

Week 12: Representation in the Age of Digital Democracy (20–24 April 2020)

– How does the internet change democratic decision making and representation?

– Do politicians and parties react to online discussions?

Mandatory Readings

- Gary King, Benjamin Schneer, and Ariel White (2017). "How the News Media Activate Public Expression and Influence National Agendas". *Science* 358 (6364): 776–780.

- Andrew Guess, Jonathan Nagler, and Joshua A. Tucker (2019). "Less Than You Think: Prevalence and Predictors of Fake News Dissemination on Facebook". *Science Advances* 5 (1): eaau4586.

Optional

- Henry Farrell (2012). "The Consequences of the Internet for Politics". *Annual Review of Political Science* 15: 35–52.

- Pablo Barberá, Andreu Casas, Jonathan Nagler, Patrick J. Egan, Richard Bonneau, John T. Jost, and Joshua A. Tucker (2019). "Who Leads? Who Follows? Measuring Issue Attention and Agenda Setting by Legislators and the Mass Public Using Social Media Data". *American Political Science Review* 113 (4): 883–901.

- W. Russel Neuman, Lauren Guggenheim, S. Mo Jang, and Soo Young Bae (2014). "The Dynamics of Public Attention: Agenda-Setting Theory Meets Big Data". *Journal of Communication* 64 (2): 193–214.