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University of
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Research Seminar: 615-502b Spring Term 2020

Political Representation and Policy Preferences

Last update: December 19, 2019

Term: Spring term 2020
Time: 28/02; 20/03; 08/05; 13:00–17:00
Room: AFL-F-172/173 (Affolternstr. 56)
ECTS: 6

Lecturer: Stefan Müller
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Office hours: email for appointment

Course Content

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 how can we measure election promises and latent party positions reliably? In this seminar, we will first compare theories of policy-making and connect them with theories of party competition. Second, we discuss different approaches of measuring party positions, political ideology, and the saliency of policy areas in detail. Third, we will analyse in detail how party competition influences policy-making and identify the circumstances under which parties adjust their positions.

The second semester includes an applied introduction to quantitative text analysis in order to classify text into policy areas and measure party positions. The aim of the seminar is the development of an innovative research design that forms the basis for a BA thesis.

Details

- MA Research Seminar

- Language: English

- Grading: Wiki posts: 15%; Poster: 15%; Research paper: 70%

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 methodological approaches

4. Planning and writing a research design which forms the basis of the BA thesis, to be written in the second part of the module (FS 2020)

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.

- Michael Gallagher, Michael Laver, and Peter Mair (2011). *Representative Government in Modern Europe*. 5th edition. Maidenead: McGraw-Hill.

- Andrea Volkens, Judith Bara, Ian Budge, Michael D. McDonald, and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, eds. (2013). *Mapping Policy Preferences From Texts: Statistical Solutions for Manifesto Data Analysts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Technical Background and Prerequisites

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

Research Design and Quantitative Methods

- Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- John Gerring (2001). *Social Science Methodology: A Critical Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- 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.

- Hadley Wickham and Garrett Grolemund (2017). *R for Data Science: Import, Tidy, Transform, Visualize, and Model Data*. Sebastopol: O'Reilly.

Academic Writing

- Stephen B. Heard (2016). *The Scientist's Guide to Writing: How to Write More Easily and Effectively Throughout You Scientific Career*. 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.

Expectations and Grading

- 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. I also add optional readings which will be presented by students during their in-class presentation (see details below).

- Students will prepare a **Presentation** of their research projects. The presentation must not exceed 7 (!) minutes and will be held on 28 February and 20 March 2020.

- Students will write Wiki posts for the research outlines by their group peers. Posts must be submitted no later than 2 days prior to the respective presentation. Overall, the posts count towards 15% of the grade.

- Students also prepare a **Poster** which will be presented on 8 May 2020. The poster must be submitted as a PDF file no later than one week before the presentation (i.e. 1 May 2020). The poster counts towards 15% of the grade.

- Students write a research paper which needs to be submitted by ??? 8pm. The paper counts towards 70% of the grade. The paper must not exceed ??? words (including footnotes, captions, and references). Students submit the research paper as a PDF file at OLAT.

Course Structure (Autumn Term 2019)

Week 1: Organisation and Introduction (18.09.2019)

– Expectations

– Discussion of syllabus

– Initial information on presentations, the research proposal, and the second term

Mandatory Readings

- Nick Clarke, Will Jennings, Jonathan Moss, and Gerry Stoker (2018). *The Good Politician: Folk Theories, Political Interaction, and the Rise of Anti-Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: ch. 1.

Week 2: Parties and Party Systems (25.09.2019)

– What are political parties?

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

– How can we distinguish between different types of democracies?

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.

Week 3: Mandate Model of Democracy (02.10.2019)

- What is the 'democratic mandate'?

- How we measure campaign promises/pledges?

- Do parties fulfil their promises?

Mandatory Readings

- 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: 29–40.

- Robert Thomson, Terry J. Royed, Elin Naurin, Joaquín Artés, Rory Costello, Laurenz Ensser-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.

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

Week 4: Research Design: Research Question and Dependent Variable (09.10.2019)

- How do we identify and specify a good research question?

- What is a dependent variable and why do we require variation?

- What are different types of research designs?

Mandatory

- Glenn Firebaugh (2008). *Seven Rules for Social Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: ch. 1.

- Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: ch. 1; 107–12.

Optional

- Robert Adcock and David Collier (2001). "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research". *American Political Science Review* 95 (3): 529–546.

- Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten (2013). *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: ch. 4.

Week 5: Research Design: Falsifiability and Causal Inference (16.10.2019)

- Why do theories need to be falsifiable?

- What is causal inference and can we draw causal conclusions from observational data?

Mandatory Readings

- Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: ch. 3.

Optional

- John Gerring (2001). *Social Science Methodology: A Critical Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: ch. 7.

- Paul W. Holland (1986). "Statistics and Causal Inference". *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 81 (396): 945–960.

Week 6: Measuring Public Opinion (23.10.2019)

- What is public opinion?

- How can we measure public opinion?

- What are advantages and shortcomings of different survey instruments?

Mandatory Readings

- Peverill Squire (1988). "Why the 1936 Literary Digest Poll Failed". *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52 (1): 125–133.

- Adam J. Berinsky (2017). "Measuring Public Opinion with Surveys". *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 309–329.

Optional/Presentations

- Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman (2007). "Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies". *American Political Science Review* 101 (4): 637–655.

- Petra M. Boynton and Trish Greenhalgh (2004). "Selecting, Designing and Developing Your Questionaire". *BMJ* 328 (7451): 1312–1315.

Week 7: Economic Voting and the Cost of Governing (30.10.2019)

- What is democratic accountability?

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

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.

- Heike Klüver and Jae-Jae Spoon (forthcoming). "Helping or Hurting? How Governing as a Junior Coalition Partner Influences Electoral Outcomes". *The Journal of Politics*.

Optional/Presentations

- 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 8: CLASS CANCELLED (06.11.2019)

Week 9: Party Competition (13.11.2019)

- What goals do parties and politicians pursue?
- How do parties compete with each other, and how can we measure party competition?
- What are the differences between accountability and responsiveness?
- Do parties and politicians react to public opinion?

Mandatory Readings

- 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.

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

Optional/Presentations

- G. Bingham Powell (2004). "The Chain of Responsiveness". *Journal of Democracy* 15 (4): 91–105.

- 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.

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

- Christoffer Green-Pedersen (2007). "The Growing Importance of Issue Competition: The Changing Nature of Party Competition in Western Europe". *Political Studies* 55 (3): 607–628.

- 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.

Week 10: Party Positions, Salience and Issue Ownership (20.11.2019)

– 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/Presentations

- Justin Leinaweaver and Robert Thomson (2016). "Greener Governments: Partisan Ideologies, Executive Institutions, and Environmental Policies". *Environmental Politics* 25 (4): 633–660.

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

- 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.

- Daniel Bischof and Markus Wagner (2019). "Do Voters Polarize when Radical Parties Enter Parliament?". *American Journal of Political Science* published ahead of print (doi: 10.1111/ajps.12449).

Week 11: Methods: Data Wrangling and Visualisation (27.11.2019)

– Recap: Using R to answer substantive research questions

– Introducing useful datasets

– Broad overview of methods and software for quantitative text analysis

Mandatory Readings

- Hadley Wickham and Garrett Grolemund (2017). *R for Data Science: Import, Tidy, Transform, Visualize, and Model Data*. Sebastopol: O'Reilly: skim ch. 1–6.

Optional

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

- Kieran Healy (2019). *Data Visualization: A Practical Introduction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Week 12: Methods: Quantitative Text Analysis [I] (04.12.2019)

– What is quantitative text analysis?

– What is a text corpus, tokenisation, and a document-feature matrix?

Mandatory Readings

- 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.

- Kasper Welbers, Wouter Van Atteveldt, and Kenneth Benoit (2017). "Text Analysis in R". *Communication Methods and Measures* 11 (4): 245–265.

- Kenneth Benoit, Kohei Watanabe, Haiyan Wang, Paul Nulty, Adam Obeng, Stefan Müller, and Akitaka Matsuo (2018). "quanteda: An R Package for the Quantitative Analysis of Textual Data". *The Journal of Open Source Software* 3 (30): 774.

See also: https://muellerstefan.net/teaching/2019-autumn-qta.pdf.

Week 13: Methods: Quantitative Text Analysis [II] (11.12.2019)

– How can we apply the methods discussed in the previous session to real-world data?

Mandatory Readings

- Michael Laver, John Garry, and Kenneth Benoit (2003). "Extracting Policy Positions from Political Texts Using Words as Data". *American Political Science Review* 97 (2): 311–331.

- Kenneth Benoit, Drew Conway, Benjamin E. Lauderdale, Michael Laver, and Slava Mikhaylov (2016). "Crowd-Sourced Text Analysis: Reproducible and Agile Production of Political Data". *American Political Science Review* 110 (2): 278–295.

Optional

- Kohei Watanabe and Stefan Müller (2019). *Quanteda Tutorials*. URL: https://tutorials.quanteda.io.

See also: https://muellerstefan.net/teaching/2019-autumn-qta.pdf.

Week 14: Representation in the Age of Digital Democracy (18.12.2019)

– 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/Presentations

- 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.