

Syllabus 2023/2024

# Comparative Politics / Vergleichende Politik (Vorlesung)

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Wednesdays 12:15-13:45

Room: BIN-1-B.01

## Lecture content

This lecture covers concepts, theories, methods and evidence in the field of comparative politics. We will introduce the main theories of comparative politics (macro-historical sociology, institutionalism, cultural theories, rational choice) and comparative methods, using empirical applications to the most important elements of political systems: state and nation-building, regimes (democracy and authoritarianism), institutions (parliaments, governments, federalism, direct democracy, electoral systems), political actors and processes. We will address questions such as why some countries are democracies and other not; how autocratic regimes maintain themselves; what types of government form and with what consequences for representation; how and why electoral systems differ, and with what consequences; how party systems vary and how parties compete for electoral support; how citizens participate and are represented in democracies; why power is delegated to supranational governments and how European institutions can be characterized in comparative terms; and whether there is a democratic backlash.

## Course objectives

The students acquire in-depth knowledge of the range of political institutions in place across the world as well as the basic principles underlying various institutional arrangements. The class familiarizes them with various regimes of the world and current political developments. It equips each student with the conceptual and methodological tools necessary to put them into comparative perspective and to make sense of them. The students therefore decisively develop their methodological skills, learning to systematically analyze political objects, to apply theories and concepts in a reflexive manner, to mobilize the comparative literature, and to test hypotheses.

**Modalities:** The lectures will take place in person. All lectures will be recorded and made accessible via OLAT.

**Evaluation:** 90 minutes written exam, online (mix of multiple-choice questions and essays)

**Readings** are all uploaded on OLAT. This module does not have a set textbook. Required readings are marked with an asterisk (\*), while other readings are listed as suggestions for further exploration of the topic. If you wish to supplement this bibliography with more introductory textbook chapters on the topics, I can recommend consulting one of the following textbooks:

- Caramani D. (2023) *Comparative Politics* (6<sup>th</sup> edition). Oxford University Press.
- Clark W., Golder M., Golder S. (2018) *Foundations of Comparative Politics*. CQ Press.
- De Vries C.E., Hobolt S., Proksch S.-E., Slapin J. (2021) *Foundations of European politics: a comparative approach*. Oxford University Press.

### Overview of lectures

- 1) Why and how do we compare? An introduction [20 September]
- 2) Theories of comparative politics [27 September]
- 3) State-building [4 October]
- 4) Democratic transitions and democracy [11 October]
- 5) Non-democracies [18 October]
- 6) Political participation and voting behaviour [25 October]
- 7) Electoral systems and their determinants [1 November]
- 8) Party systems and party competition [8 November]
- 9) Models of government [15 November]
- 10) Institutional veto players: federalism, bicameralism and constitutional courts [22 November]
- 11) Representation [29 November]
- 12) European integration and multi-level politics [6 December]
- 13) A democratic backlash? / Revision class [13 December]
- 14) Exam [20 December]

## I. Methodological and theoretical foundations

### 20.09. Class 1: Why and how compare? Introducing comparative politics: concepts, questions and methods

- Introduction to the lecture
- What are the major differences in how political institutions are designed around the world? Why does this matter?
- How can political differences between societies be conceptualised and measured?
- What are the main methodological approaches? How can we make causal claims in comparative politics?

*No readings*

### 27.09. Class 2: Theories of comparative politics

- Why do we need theories in comparative politics?
- What are the key theoretical approaches to comparative politics?

#### Readings

Hall P., Taylor R. (1996) Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms. *Political Studies* 44(5): 936–57.\*

Peters G.B. (2020) Approaches in comparative politics. In: Caramani D. (ed.) *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, chapter 2: 35-49.

Zuber C., Kaiser A. (2016) Die politische Theorie des Neoinstitutionalismus: James March und Johan Olsen. In: Brodocz A., Schaal G.S. (Ed.): *Politische Theorien der Gegenwart II*, 4. Auflage, S. 301-331. Opladen/ Farmington Hills: Verlag Barbara Budrich/UT.

## II. State, democracy and autocracy

### 04.10. Class 3: State-building

- Why and how did States emerge historically?

#### Readings

Spruyt H. (2007) War, Trade and State Formation. In: Boix, C. und Stokes, S. (Ed.) The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 211-35.\*

Clark W.R., Golder M., und Golder S.N. (2018) The Origins of the Modern State. In: *Principles of Comparative Politics*. SAGE Publications, chapter 4: 89-125.

Tilly C. (1990) Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1990. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, chapters 1 and 3: 1-37 and 67-95.

### 11.10. Class 4: Democratic transitions and democracies

- Why do some countries become, and remain, democratic and others not?
- How do we measure democracy?

#### Readings

Acemoglu, D., Robinson, J.A. (2006) What do we know about democracy? In: *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*: 48-88.\*

Clark W.R., Golder M., und Golder S.N. (2018) Democratic transitions. In: *Principles of Comparative Politics*, SAGE Publications, chapter 8: 269-328.

Ansell B., Samuels D. (2010) Inequality and Democratization: A Contractarian Approach in *Comparative Political Studies* 43(12), 1543–1574.

Geddes B. (2007) What causes democratization? In: *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, chapter 14: 317-339.

### 18.10. Class 5: Non-democracies

- What are the different types of non-democracies? How do they allocate power?
- How do autocratic regimes remain stable and maintain themselves?

#### Readings

Clark, W. R., Golder, M., and Golder, S. N. (2018) Varieties of Dictatorship. In: *Principles of Comparative Politics*, SAGE Publications, chapter 10: 353-400.\*

Gandhi, J., Przeworski, A. (2007) Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats. *Comparative Political Studies* 40(11), 1279-1301.

### III. From voters to governments: varieties of power delegation mechanisms

#### 25.10. Class 6: Political participation and voting behaviour

- Why do people turn out to vote and participate in politics?

##### Readings

De Vries C.E., Hobolt S., Proksch S.E., Slapin J.B. (2021) Voting decisions. In: *Foundations of European Politics*, Chapter 5, 72-86.\*

Blais A. (2007) Turnout in Elections in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kurer T., van Staalduinen B. (2022) Disappointed Expectations: Downward Mobility and Electoral Change in *American Political Science Review*, (2022) 116(4): 1340–1356.

Paulsen T., Scheve K., Stasavage D. (2023) Foundations of a New Democracy: Schooling, Inequality, and Voting in the Early Republic. *American Political Science Review* 117(2): 518–536.

#### 01.11. Class 7: Electoral systems and their determinants

- How do electoral systems vary?
- What are the origins of electoral systems?

##### Readings

De Vries C., Hobolt S.B., Proksch S.-O., Slapin J. (2021) Electoral systems and direct democracy. In: *Foundations of European Politics*, Chapter 6: 90-103.\*

Horowitz D.L. (2003) Electoral Systems: A Primer for Decision Makers. *Journal of Democracy* 14(4): 115-127.

Boix, C. (1999) Setting the rules of the game: the choice of electoral systems in advanced democracies. *American Political Science Review* 93 (3): 609-624.

#### 08.11. Class 8: Party systems and party competition

- How do party systems vary between countries?
- Why are party systems changing?
- How do parties compete for electoral support?

##### Readings

De Vries C., Hobolt S.B., Proksch S.-O., Slapin J. (2021) Political Parties + Party Competition. In: *Foundations of European Politics*, Chapters 8 and 9: 132-167.\*

Meguid B.M. (2005) Competition between unequals: The role of mainstream party strategy in niche party success. *American Political Science Review* 99 (3): 347-359.

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

### 15.11. Class 9: Models of government

- How do models of government vary?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of presidential versus parliamentary systems?

#### Readings

Clark, W. R., Golder, M., and Golder, S. N. (2018) Parliamentary, presidential, and semi-presidential democracies. In: *Principles of Comparative Politics*, SAGE Publications, chapter 12: 453-511.\*

Cheibub J.A., Limongi F. (2002) Democratic institutions and regime survival: Parliamentary and presidential democracies reconsidered. *Annual Review of Political Science* 5 (1): 151-179.

Samuels D. (2004) Presidentialism and Accountability for the Economy in Comparative Perspective. *American Political Science Review* 98(3): 425-36.

### 22.11. Class 10: Institutional veto players: federalism, bicameralism and constitutional courts

- How is power distributed in liberal democracies?
- What are the origins and consequences of federalism, bicameralism and constitutionalism?
- How are decisions made in consensual and majoritarian systems?

#### Readings

Clark, W. R., Golder, M., and Golder, S. N. (2018) Institutional Veto Players. In: *Principles of Comparative Politics*. SAGE Publications, Chapter 15.\*

Tsebelis G. (1999) Veto Players and Law Production in Parliamentary Democracies: An Empirical Analysis. *American Political Science Review* 93(3): 591-608.

Vanberg, Georg (2015) Constitutional courts in comparative perspective: A theoretical assessment. *Annual Review of Political Science* 18: 167-185.

### 29.11. Class 11: Representation

- What are the main forms of representation?
- How does representation differ in majoritarian and consensual systems?

De Vries C., Hobolt S.B., Proksch S.-O., Slapin J. (2021) Representation. In: *Foundations of European Politics*, Chapter 7: 112-131.\*

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

Betz et al. (2021) Women's Descriptive Representation and Gendered Import Tax Discrimination. *American Political Science Review* 115(1) : 307-315.

Thomson R. et al. (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.

Traber D. et al. (2022) Social status, political priorities and unequal representation. *European Journal of Political Research* 61: 351-373.

## IV. Current developments and challenges

### 06.12. Class 12: Regional integration and multi-level politics

- How does the sharing of authority with supranational institutions vary across countries?
- How can we characterize the political system of the EU in comparative terms?
- How does European integration affect domestic politics?

#### Readings

De Vries C., Hobolt S.B., Proksch S.-O., Slapin J. (2021) Multilevel Politics. In: *Foundations of European Politics, Chapter 3.*

Rose R. (2013) The EU System: Accountable to a point. In: *Representing Europeans. A pragmatic approach.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, chapter 1: 17-34.

Hooghe L., Marks G. (2018) Cleavage theory meets Europe's crises: Lipset, Rokkan, and the transnational cleavage. *Journal of European Public Policy* 25(1), 109-135.

Parsons C., Weber T. (2011) Cross-Cutting Issues and Party Strategy in the European Union. *Comparative Political Studies* 44(4), 383-411.

### 13.12. Class 13: Is there a democratic backlash? / revision class

- What does a "democratic backlash" imply?
- What drives support for populist and illiberal politicians in democracies?
- Q&A about the course and what to expect from the exam

#### Readings

Pippa N., Ingelhart R. (2019) Understanding Populism. In: *Cultural Backlash Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism.* Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1 (see also chapter 2: *The Cultural Backlash Theory*).\*

Waldner D., Lust E. (2018) Unwelcome Change: Coming to Terms with Democratic Backsliding. *Annual Review of Political Science* 21: 93-113.

### 20.12. Final exam