

Hauptseminar, Frühjahr 2011

THE RULES OF THE GAME: COMPARATIVE ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

Termin: Wednesdays 12h00-13h30

Raum: A 5, 6 Bauteil B - B 317

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Elections are the central and defining feature of democracy. While most electoral research focuses on voting behaviour, a significant portion of election research evaluates electoral systems as systemic variables. This class will focus the latter perspective. Electoral systems are a crucial link in the chain connecting the preferences of citizens to governments; they also represent some of the most powerful instruments which undergird power sharing arrangements.

The purposes of this seminar is to introduce some of the major theoretical and conceptual building blocks concerning electoral institutions, the types, the emergence, change, effects and related measurement. After an overview of election laws and election systems around the world, we will evaluate how electoral systems influence party systems, representation, citizen attitudes and behaviour, the quality of democracy, corruption, and electoral misconduct. The course will proceed thematically, with participants discussing a subset of the pertinent scholarly literature every week. Discussion should focus on a major theoretical or empirical controversy. Key methodological issues are addressed the context of each theme: the emphasis will be placed on causality and finding out what makes for good and convincing arguments.

Class will meet every Wednesday from 12h00 to 13h30 in Room A 5, 6 Bauteil B - B 317 starting on 16.02.2011 until 06.01.2011 The seminar and its evaluation will be conducted in English.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

1. February 16: Introduction/ Identifying Types of Electoral Systems
2. February 23: Democratic Institutions: Competing Views
3. March 2: The Number of Political Parties
4. March 9: Substantive Representation
5. March 16*: Descriptive Representation
6. March 23: Electoral System Design for New Democracies
7. March 30*: Corruption/Fraud
8. April 6: Citizen Behavior and Attitudes
9. April 13: Electoral System Reform/Change
10. May 4: Are there "better" types of electoral institutions? How do we know?
11. May 11: Student Presentations
12. May 18: Student Presentations
13. May 25: Student Presentations
14. June 1: Student Presentations

March 16 and March 30: both these sessions will need to be rescheduled since the instructor will be attending conferences abroad.

REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) Attendance is obligatory, and each student is expected to actively participate in the weekly seminars (participation counts for 20% for your grade, so keep that in mind). If you miss one meeting, you will have to write a two-page summary of the seminar literature. In case you miss more than three seminars you will not pass the course. Every week's session will entail a discussion of the readings; hence you need to prepare for each session and be ready to discuss the texts in details (see note below about the readings). Take notes, look up words and concepts you are not familiar with, look at references in the text and consult other material cited and suggested by me. You should plan to spend about a working day per session. Most important, you should bring 2-3 questions you would like to debate in class with your peers; this ensures a lively in-class experience.

To prepare for the seminar you should think about:

- How the readings fit together; what unites them;
 - What are the main debates, puzzles? What are the main hypotheses defended by the authors? Are there sub-hypotheses?
 - What are the main variables? What is the theoretical argument that links the variables? Is there a theory?
 - What level of analysis is used? (Micro or macro) Ask yourself who performs the action: people, voters, elites, political parties, institutions, society, states, or other (social) structures?
 - What kind of method is each of the authors employing? (Case studies, comparison of many cases, qualitative, quantitative, a mix of methods)
 - Are the empirical findings robust? Are you convinced? Why/Why not?
 - Taking all the readings together, are the findings unanimous, or split about an issue?
 - Are the different arguments to explain a phenomenon reconcilable?
 - Why do you think findings are split? Do authors use different methods, variables, countries, years, definitions, to arrive at their findings?
 - Overall, what do we know about a topic? Which variables are at work?
 - What is there still to know about a topic?
 - What is most convincing: the theory or the empirical findings?
 - Are there things you might have not understood?
 - What are the normative underpinnings?
- 2) Write 3 short seminar papers (about 2 pages, 12pt font, 1.5 spaced), for the topics of your choice. These are due in class each week, beginning on February 23. Because they are meant to encourage you to think about the readings before you come to class, no late reviews will be accepted.

In your reviews, you should:

- a) Summarize the main arguments of the readings for the week. What are the readings about? How do they relate to each other?
- b) Critique the readings – consider methodology, logic, biases, omissions, etc. Do the authors prove what they propose convincingly? Why or why not?

Below are some examples of evaluation criteria to help you make your point. You don't need to deal with all these items at once, just those you feel are relevant to your argument.

- Originality: new findings? New theory?
- Simplicity/parsimony (uses many or few variables to make a point?)
- Coherent/internally consistent (no propositions that contradict each other)
- Pertinent/useful (you can apply this to real world cases)

- Predictive (you can make predictions using this theory, and if the predictions coming from it are validated by facts)
 - Is this generalizable to many cases/countries, or just applicable to a single/few cases?
 - Does it seem normative or objective? (Do the authors speak about how things are in the real world, or how things should be?)
 - Are the variables adequately conceptualized and operationalized? Are the concepts clear? Were the measures chosen to evaluate concepts adequate?
 - Was the choice of design acceptable, or could you recommend a better way to test the theory?
- 3) Write an original research paper on a reasonably well-designed research proposal (which I should approve ahead of time, by, say, March 16). Send in a proposal via e-mail (Jessica.fortin@uni-mannheim.de) so that I can comment on this as early as possible. The topic should be directly related to this course. The structure of the research paper should be modeled on an academic article from a peer-reviewed journal, with about 20-24 pages (12pt font, 1.5 spaced). It is important that you ask and try to answer a clearly stated question. Due date is June 10, 17h00. You will present your papers (10-15 minutes) in one of the 4 last sessions of the class.
- 4) In addition to presenting your paper during one of our final meetings, you will discuss one of the other's papers (act as a "discussant"). This should be a 3-4 minutes presentation about the strengths and weaknesses of the paper you are discussing, and more importantly, potential suggestions for improvement. The goal of this is to give everyone in the class a chance to improve their research projects before official submission.

Your final grade will be based on these four elements:

Participation (incl. discussant role): 20%
 Short seminar papers: 20%
 Final seminar paper: 50%
 Presentation of seminar paper 10%

LATE PAPER POLICY:

I understand that printers break, dogs/uncles/grandmas sometimes die, and hard drives often fail around final paper due dates. I will accept late papers, but each late day will cost you 5% of your grade. Short seminar papers cannot be handed-in late for the above cited reasons.

READINGS:

I have selected sections from a various amount of articles and books to cover topics in order to permit interesting comparisons and some disagreement on certain issues. I have also suggested some "recommended" readings. These are there to help you deepen your understanding of a given topic, so don't be afraid to take a look at them. The secret to cope with a bulk of reading is to read strategically: Knowing how to *skim* readings is an important professional skill for students (you can't realistically be expected to read ALL the materials for each class you are taking, right?). In most cases, you can skim the empirical details, especially if they are buried in complex formulas. For this, you need to read purposefully, look out for the important "stuff" in a text, and keep tidy notes about:

- The central question or puzzle the author seeks to answer or resolve;
- The definition of the dependent variable, or what the author wants to explain;
- The main independent variables the author(s) thinks are at work;
- The theory, or the rationale, that links independent to dependent variables; why should certain things be related?
- The author's research design: the types of evidence used to test hypotheses, where the evidence comes from, and if you are convinced by it all.

COURSE READINGS:

WEEK 1 (February 16): Introduction/ Identifying Types of Electoral Systems

Required readings:

- Norris, Pippa. 2004. *Electoral Engineering. Voting Rules and Political Behavior*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 2, pp.39-66).
- Golder, Matt. 2005. Democratic Electoral Systems around the World, 1946-2000. *Electoral Studies* 24:103-121.
http://homepages.nyu.edu/~mrg217/es_published.pdf

Recommended (but not required):

- International IDEA. *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*, chapters 2-3 (pp. 27-118)
<http://www.idea.int/publications/esd/>

WEEK 2 (February 23): Democratic Institutions: 2 Competing Views

Required readings:

- Lijphart, Arend. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Chapters 1-3, pp.9-47).
- Bingham Powell Jr. G. 2000. Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Chapters 2, pp.20-43).
- Norris, Pippa. 2004. *Electoral Engineering. Voting Rules and Political Behavior*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 3, pp.66-77).

WEEK 3 (March 2): The Number of Parties

Required readings:

- Lipset, Seymour M., and Stein Rokkan. 1967. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction," in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*. S.M. Lipset and S. Rokkan (eds.). New York: The Free Press. pp. 1-64.
- Riker, W.H. 1982. The Two-Party System and Duverger's law: An Essay on the History of Political Science. *American Political Science Review* 76(4): 753-766.
- Cox, Gary and Amorim Neto, Octavio. 1997. "Electoral institutions, cleavage structures, and the number of parties." *American Journal of Political Science* 41(1):149-174.

Recommended (but not required):

- Norris, Pippa. 2004. *Electoral Engineering. Voting Rules and Political Behavior*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapters 4-5, pp.81-125). A GREAT SUMMARY OF THE DEBATE.
- Clark, William, and Matt Golder. 2006. "Rehabilitating Duverger's Theory: Testing the Mechanical and Strategic Modifying Effects of Electoral Laws" *Comparative Political Studies* 39: 679-708. A CRUSHING CRITIQUE OF NETO AND COX.

WEEK 4 (March 9): Substantive Representation/Government and Policy Outcomes

Required readings:

- Blais, Andre, and Marc Andre Bodet. 2006. "Does Proportional Representation Foster Closer Congruence Between Citizens and Policy Makers?" *Comparative Political Studies* 39(10): 1243-62.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Chapter 6, and 15, pp.90-115 and 258-274)
- Crepaz, Markus, M.L. 1996. Consensus versus Majoritarian Democracy. Political Institutions and their Impact on Macroeconomic Performance and Industrial Disputes. *Comparative Political Studies* 29(1):4-26.

Recommended (but not required):

- Golder, Matt. 2003. Explaining Variation in the Success of Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe. *Comparative Political Studies* 36(4):432-466.
- Iversen, Torben, and David Soskice. 2006. Electoral Institutions and the Politics

of Coalitions: Why Some Democracies Redistribute More than Others.” *American Political Science Review* 100(2), pp. 165-181.

WEEK 5 (March 16): Descriptive Representation (Women, Minorities)

Required readings:

- Kenworthy, Lane and Melissa Malami. 1999. Gender Inequality in Political Representation” A Worldwide Comparative Analysis. *Social Forces* 78(1):235-268.
- Salmond, Rob. 2006. “Proportional Representation and Female Parliamentarians.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 31(2): 175-204.
- Schmidt, Gregory D. 2008. The Election of Women in List PR systems: Testing the Conventional wisdom. *Electoral Studies*. 28:190-203.

Recommended (but not required):

- Norris, Pippa. 2004. *Electoral Engineering. Voting Rules and Political Behavior*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapters 8, pp.179-208).
- Paxton, Pamela, Hughes, Melanie M. and Matthew A. Painter. 2010. Growth in Women’s Political Representation: A Longitudinal Exploration of Democracy, Electoral System and Gender Quotas. *European Journal of Political Research* 49:25-52.

WEEK 6 (March 23): Electoral System Design for New Democracies

Required readings:

- Barkan, Joel D. 1995. Elections in Agrarian Societies. *Journal of Democracy* 6(4):106-116.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1996 “Constitutional Choices for New Democracies,” in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds). *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp.163-174
- Lardeyret, Guy. 1996. “The Problem with PR,” in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (eds). *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 175-180.
- Reilly, Benjamin. 2002. Electoral Systems for Divided Societies. *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 156-170.

Recommended (but not required):

- Taagepera, Rein. 1998. How Electoral Systems Matter for Democratization. *Democratization*. 5(3):68-91.

WEEK 7 (March 30): Fraud/Corruption

Required readings:

- Carey, John and Matthew S. Shugart. 1995. “Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote: A Rank Ordering of Electoral Formulas.” *Electoral Studies* 14:417-439.
- Kunicova, Jana, and Susan Rose-Ackerman. 2005. Electoral Rules and Constitutional Structures as Constraints on Corruption. *British Journal of Political Science* 35:573-606.
- Chang, Eric C., Golden, Miriam A. 2007. Electoral Systems, District Magnitude and Corruption. *British Journal of Political Science* 37(1):115-137.

Recommended (but not required):

- Golden, Miriam. 2003. Electoral Connections: The Effects of the Personal Vote on Political Patronage, Bureaucracy and Legislation in Postwar Italy. *British Journal of Political Science* 33:189-212.
- Persson, Thorsten, G. Tabellini, and F. Trebbi. 2003. Electoral Rules and Corruption. *Journal of the European Economic Association* 1(4):958-989.

WEEK 8 (April 6): Citizen Behavior and Attitudes

Required readings:

- Norris, *Electoral Engineering*, (Chapters 7, pp.151-178)
- Endersby, James W., Kreickhaus, Jonathan T. 2008. Turnout around the Globe: The Influence of Electoral Institutions on National Voter Participation, 1972-2000. *Electoral Studies* 27:601-610.

- Franklin, Mark N. 1999. Electoral Engineering and Cross-National Turnout Differences: What Role for Compulsory Voting? *British Journal of Political Science* 29(1):205-216.

Recommended (but not required):

- Singh, Shane. 2010. Contradictory Calculi: Differences in Individual's Turnout Decisions across Electoral Systems. *Political Research Quarterly* (Forthcoming).
- Banducci, Susan, Karp, Jeffrey. 2009. Electoral Systems, Efficacy and Voter Turnout. In H.D. Klingermann, *The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Blais, Andre. 2006. "What Affects Voter Turnout?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 9: 111-25.

WEEK 9 (April 13): Electoral System Reform/Change

Required readings:

- Boix, Carles. 1999. "Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems in Advanced Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 93 (3): 609-24.
- Andrews, Josephine T., Jackman, Robert W. 2005. Strategic Fools: Electoral rule choice under Extreme Uncertainty. *Electoral Studies* 24:65-84.
- Benoit, Kenneth. 2007. Electoral Laws as Political Consequences: Explaining the Origins and Change of Electoral Institutions. *Annual Review of Political Science* 10(1): 363-390.

Recommended (but not required):

- Norris, Pippa. 1995. Introduction: The Politics of Electoral Reform. *International Political Science Review* 16(1):3-8.
- Dunleavy, Patrick, Margetts, Helen. 1995. Understanding the Dynamics of Electoral Reform. *International Political Science Review* 16(1):9-29.
- Colomer, Joseph M. 2005. It's Parties that Choose Electoral Systems (or, Duverger's Laws Upside Down). *Political Studies* 53:1-21.

WEEK 10: (May 4): Are there "better" types of electoral institutions? How do we know?

Required readings:

- Powell, G. Bingham. 2006. "Election Laws and Representative Governments: Beyond Votes and Seats." *British Journal of Political Science* 36(2): 291-315.
- Shugart, Matthew S. and Martin P. Wattenberg (Eds.) 2001. *Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?* Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1-2.
- Horowitz, Donald. L. 2003. "Electoral Systems: A Primer for Decision Makers," *Journal of Democracy* 14(4):32-46.

Recommended (but not required):

- Doorenspleet, R. 2005. "Electoral Systems and Democratic Quality: Do Mixed Systems Combine the Best or the Worst of Both Worlds? An Explorative Quantitative Cross-National Study." *Acta Politica* 40(1): 28-49.
- Curtice, John, Shively, W. Philips. 2009. Who Represents Us Best? One Member or Many? In H.D. Klingermann, *The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, (chapter 7, pp.171-192).

WEEK 11: (May 11): Student Presentations

WEEK 12: (May 18): Student Presentations

WEEK 13: (May 25): Student Presentations

WEEK 14: (June 1): Student Presentations