

PARTY COMPETITION AND PARTY SYSTEM IN EU MEMBER STATES

MA in Political Science, summer semester, elective course

Lecturers: Andrija Henjak, PhD and Bartul Vuksan-Ćusa

Lecture: Friday, 13:45 – 15:15, Hall F

Seminars: Friday, 15:30 – 17:00, Hall F

Office hours: By appointment or via MS Teams

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Important dates: April 11th – 1st midterm exam, June 6th – 2nd midterm exam

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory for 9 of 13 seminars and 4 of 6 lectures. Attendance will be checked at each seminar session. For lectures, attendance will be checked randomly during the semester on six occasions, and students must be present for at least four of these checks

Grading system: 9/10 exam, 1/10 weekly quizzes

Aim and purpose

Dynamic political developments in recent decade manifested themselves most visibly through changes within party systems. What once were systems in full sense of the word, with stable voter alignments, party organizations and patterns of competition are now unstable and changing rapidly. This makes studying party systems difficult as its principal components are evolving literally in front of our eyes. Therefore, studying party systems just by looking at their systemic features and parties just by looking at their organizational and ideological traits will not take us very far in understanding what is happening around us, since all these elements are changing as we talk about them.

However, there are underlying processes which cause these developments, and which drive changes we see in party systems and parties. These are developments in how economy affects political life, how it shapes social structure and positions of groups and individual within it, how we reach political decisions in complex multilevel political structure within the EU and what role parties play in this process.

Thus, the primary objective of the course is to introduce students to these developments to help them understand causes behind changes we observe within party systems and its developments, and the role political parties play within it.

To this end the course will start by looking at the changing nature of democratic politics and representative systems, and the role parties perform. The course will then examine development of cleavage structure and its contemporary form and will proceed to investigate more recent developments within party systems, most notably the emergence of new parties, party system dynamics and party system instability.

Learning outcomes

1. Knowing and understanding the role of political parties in the contemporary system of representative governance.
2. Knowing and understanding the shape of political alignments in European societies and their development.
3. Knowing and understanding the shape of political competition within contemporary European party systems.
4. Knowing and understanding the causes of party system instability and the role new parties play within in.
5. Knowing and understanding the causes of political alignments at the micro level.

Course outline

• February 28th – Session 1, parts 1 and 2

Part 1. Introduction

Andrija Henjak

Party systems and parties; what are parties in democracies and what functions they perform; what are party systems and what are their principal elements

Part 2. Contemporary democratic representative governance and the role of political parties

- function of representative governance in democracies; contemporary representative governance and political parties; role of parties in representative governance and how it developed

LITERATURE

-Armin Schäfer and Wolfgang Streeck (2013) Introduction: Politics in the Age of Austerity, in Wolfgang Streeck and Armin Schafer (eds) *Politics in the Age of Austerity*, pages 1 – 23.

-Peter Mair and Wolfgang Streeck (2013) Smaghi versus the Parties: Representative Government and Institutional Constraints, in Wolfgang Streeck and Armin Schafer (eds) *Politics in the Age of Austerity*, pages 143 – 168.

- **March 7th – Session 2**

Social and economic changes and transformation of the role of political parties

Andrija Henjak

Parties as organizations within changing social and economic context; embeddedness of political parties, representative function and political economy; changes in political economy and changes in the role of political parties; changes in party function and changes in party organization

LITERATURE

-Johnathan Hopkin (2020) *Anti-system politics: The Crisis of Market Liberalism in Rich Democracies*, pages 3 – 16 and 21 – 49.

- **March 14th – Session 3**

Development of political cleavages in contemporary Europe

Andrija Henjak

What are cleavages and how they structure European politics over time; cleavages: from social structure to political identities; cleavages: from political identities to political behavior; parties and representation of social and political identities

LITERATURE

- Simon Bornschier, Lukas Haffert, Silja Hausermann, Marco Steenbergen and Delia Zellinger (2024) *Cleavage Formation in the Twenty First Century*, Cambridge Elements.

- **March 21st – Session 4**

Political alignments and political competition in Western democracies

Andrija Henjak

Dimensions of political competition citizens and parties in an issue space; issue salience and party strategies; electoral coalitions and party strategies

LITERATURE

- Peter Hall, Georgina Evans and Sung In Kim (2023) *Political Change and Electoral Coalitions in Western Democracies*, Cambridge Elements.

- **March 28th – Session 5**

Social structure and voter alignments – from social structure to political preferences

Andrija Henjak

- Social structure as determinant of political preferences; social and economic traits as determinants of political preferences; social groups and their political preferences on multiple issue dimension; from social structure to political preferences to partisan alignment

LITERATURE

- Herbert Kitschelt and Phillip Rehm (2022) Polarity Reversal: The Socio-economic Reconfiguration of Partisan Support in Knowledge Societies. *Politics and Society*, 1 – 47.
- Tarik Abou Chadi and Simon Hix (2020) Brahmin Left Versus Merchant Right? Education, Class, Multiparty Competition and Redistribution in Western Europe. *Politics and Society*, 1 – 13.

• April 4th – Session 6

Structure of political competition in European political spaces

Andrija Henjak

Parties and party blocks as elements of competition; structure of party blocks and dimensions of competition in Europe; dimension of political competition; party-voter alignment in multidimensional political space

LITERATURE

- Daniel Oesch and Line Rennwald (2018) Electoral competition in Europe's new tripolar political space: Class voting for the left, center-right and radical right. *European Journal of Political Research*, 1 – 25.
- Jonathan Polk and Jan Rovny (2018) Welfare Democracies and Multidimensional Party Competition in Europe in Phillip Manow, Bruno Palier and Hanna Schwander (eds) *Welfare Democracies and Party Politics*, pages 30 – 60.
- Ruth Dassonneville, Liesbeth Hooghe and Gary Marks (2023) Transformation of the political space: A citizens' perspective *European Journal of Political Research*, 1 – 20.

April 11th – I Midterm Exam – Session 7

- **April 18th – Session 8**

Changes in party systems and the rise of new parties

Andrija Henjak

Rise of challenger parties, centrist reform and anti-system parties; centrist antiestablishment reform parties and causes of their rise and fall; antisystem political parties and their political appeals; rise of antisystem political parties and its causes

LITERATURE

-Johnathan Hopkin (2020) *Anti-system politics: The Crisis of Market Liberalism in Rich Democracies*, pages 50 – 89.

- Sean Hanley and Allan Sikk (2016) Economy, corruption, or floating voters? Explaining the breakthroughs of anti-establishment reform parties in eastern Europe. *Party Politics*, 522 – 533.

- **April 25th – Session 9**

European Union and European party systems

Andrija Henjak

European integration as a dimension of political competition; political parties' alignment on European integration; developments of partisan positions and partisan competition over European integration

LITERATURE

- Liesbeth Hooghe and Gary Marks (2018) Cleavage theory meets Europe's Crisis: Lipset, Rokkan and the Transnational Cleavage. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 109 – 135.

- **May 2nd – Session 10**

Behind the buzzword: populism as a concept

Bartul Vuksan-Ćusa

Approaches to populism; defining populism; conceptual problems and its implications; populism and democracy

LITERATURE

- Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser (2012) Populism and (liberal) democracy: a framework for analysis in Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy?*, pages 1–27.

- **May 9th – Session 11**

Populist supply: parties and party systems

Bartul Vuksan-Ćusa

Varieties of populist parties; effects of populism on party systems; populist parties in the longitudinal perspective; are populists detrimental to democracy?

LITERATURE

- Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser (2013) Exclusionary vs. Inclusionary Populism: Comparing Contemporary Europe and Latin America. *Government and Opposition*, pages 147–174.
- Stijn van Kessel (2014) The populist cat-dog: applying the concept of populism to contemporary European party systems *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 99 – 118.

• May 16th – Session 12

Populist demand: citizens' perspective

Bartul Vuksan-Ćusa

Voters of populist parties; approaches to studying individual-level populism; cleavages and voting for populists; mainstream vs. populist voters

LITERATURE

- Matthijs Rooduijn (2018) What unites the voter bases of populist parties? Comparing the electorates of 15 populist parties. *European Political Science Review*, pages 351–358.
- James L Guth and Brent F Nelsen (2021) Party choice in Europe: Social cleavages and the rise of populist parties *Party Politics*, 453 – 464.
- Cedric M Koch, Carlos Melendez and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser (2023) Mainstream Voters, Non- Voters and Populist Voters: What Sets Them Apart? *Political Studies* , 893 – 913.

• May 23rd – Session 13

TBA,

Višeslav Raos

• May 30th – National Holiday

June 6th – II Midterm Exam – Session 14

Course requirements

- **1. Class attendance**

Students are expected to attend both lectures and seminars as well as to regularly read assigned texts prior to each meeting. Students are also **expected to participate in class discussions**. Students need to attend at least 9 out of 13 class sessions and 4 out of 6 lectures. Lecture attendance will be checked randomly during the semester.

- **2. Weekly quiz**

Students are expected to read the literature, and knowledge of the literature will be tested with weekly quizzes containing from 3 to 5 multiple choice questions.

- **3. Mid-term exam**

The class has two midterm exams composed from **two parts**. The first part is composed from 20 multiple choice questions with 25 minutes of answering time and the second part is composed from an open book exam with between one and three questions and lasting 120 minutes. Attending both mid-term exams is mandatory. Students need to achieve minimal 11 points in multiple choice part and at least a minimal passing grade in the open book exam to pass the exam.

- **4. Final exam**

The final exam is composed from 40 multiple choice question with 50 minutes of answering time and an open book exam with between two and five questions lasting 180 minutes. To achieve a passing grade student needs to achieve a minimum of 22 points in multiple choice exam and at least a passing grade in the open book exam.

- **5. Final grade**

The share of weekly quizzes in the final grade is 10 percent, the share of midterm exams is 45 percent and the share of final exam is 90 percent. In the midterm and final exams both grade components carry the same weight. Students can gain up to 10 percent of additional points through active participation in seminars and lectures.