

30210: Cleavage Politics and Group Appeals

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Office Hours: by appointment, see below
Class Hours: Mo 14:15-15:45

Description

Under pressure from increasing political instability and societal challenges, there is a renewed interest in the social basis of contemporary politics. The declining electoral support of mainstream political parties, like the Social -, and Christian Democrats, and the rise of new parties, such as the greens and the radical right, indicate a fundamental shift in the makeup of the post-war electoral coalitions. Class-based mobilization and conflict over welfare state policies are less influential in driving political behavior. Preferences over immigration, Europe, or climate change form new, group-based alliances that crosscut economic considerations and realign the social basis of politics. Others disagree and consider the contemporary dynamics a result of individualization that, although it leads to the crumbling and de-alignment of traditional political identities, does not give rise to a new, cohesive social force to re-structure political behavior.

The seminar focuses on cleavage politics: conflict stemming from deep and lasting divides between social groups. Among others, we examine cleavage formation, the social forces driving electoral support, historical legacies, the role of crisis and critical junctures, the dimensional alignment of political issues, the sociological basis of traditional and new cleavages, mobilization in party and protest politics, the role of agency in cleavage formation, and the use of group appeals by political entrepreneurs. Next to theories on cleavage politics and group appeals, the seminar emphasizes the methodological approaches applied in empirical studies, highlighting their potential to be used by students during their research for their MA thesis. We rely on literature primarily focused on Western Europe, but we also review studies on the political dynamics in Eastern Europe, North America, and South America.

Course Requirements

Weekly attendance is desired. If you are unable to attend, please send an email prior to the course. Other requirements are:

- Active participation in class,
- Reading the literature
- Writing three short comments on the week's readings
- Giving short presentations on the progress of your research
- Write a seminar paper (3000 words) or take an oral exam

Course Objectives

This seminar is designed for second and fourth semester students in the MA programme Sociology – European Societies at the Freie Universität Berlin. The seminar assumes no prior knowledge of the literature on cleavage structures or group appeals. At the end of the seminar, successful students:

1. will be familiar with the main theoretical approaches to the study of cleavages
2. will be familiar with the main methodological approaches to the study of cleavages.
3. will be able to evaluate and identify gaps in the relevant literature.
4. will be able to formulate an original research question related to the topics of the seminar
5. will be able to argue using the analytical concepts learned in the seminar
6. will be able to select an appropriate research design for the research question they have formulated.

Office Hours

I offer my office hours on Mondays between 10:00-11:00, and between 13:30-14:00. To sign up for an office hour, you need to make an appointment using the link below:

<https://calendly.com/endre-borbath/office-hour>

If you do not manage to make an appointment using this link, please send me an e-mail! We can meet on-site, in room 309 (Garystr. 55, 14195 Berlin) or online, using the Webex link: <https://fu-berlin.webex.com/meet/endre.borbath>

Online learning

Blackboard

I provide the course materials via Blackboard and also offer general information about the course, discussion forums and a platform for further exchange between students. Please contact me if you have any questions about the course materials, technical problems with Blackboard, or organisational issues.

Student presentations and final paper

Posts on the readings of the week

You are asked to make three written comments on the week's readings. You should post these in the discussion forum on Blackboard under the relevant week. It is up to you to decide for which week you write these comments. You must post your comments by **Friday, the week before class**. Comments should be approximately 250 words.

The comments:

- Should relate to both readings assigned for that week.
- Should highlight a positive aspect that you appreciated in the readings.
- Should highlight a critical aspect that you feel could be improved in the readings.
- Include any questions you might have.
- Ideally refer to the comments made by your colleagues.

Presentations

Each student is required to give a presentation in one of the sessions of the seminar. The presentation will be on one of the readings assigned for that session. It should be between 10-15 minutes, **no longer than 15 minutes**. You will be asked to email me your slides **by Friday, the week before the class**. The presentations will also be uploaded to Blackboard and made available to all students in the class.

Some guiding questions that a successful presentation might address are

- What is the central research question of the study?
- Is the contribution of the study theoretical, empirical, or both?
- What are the main theoretical propositions advanced by the study?
- If the study is empirical, what research design and methods do the authors use to investigate their research question? Are these appropriate to the theoretical claims? Does the empirical evidence provide sufficient support for the authors' thesis?
- If it is a theoretical study: what debate does the study contribute to? What are the key theoretical ideas introduced? What are the key analytical concepts introduced? Do these go beyond the context of the particular study?
- What is the central comparison on which the study is based? Both theoretically (different scholarly traditions) and empirically (space, time, levels of analysis).
- How does this study relate to the overall theme of the seminar and other readings we have discussed so far?
- How do you evaluate the study? Do you find it convincing? If so, why? Or why not?

Seminar Paper

As part of the seminar you will be asked to either 1) write a seminar paper or 2) take an oral exam. **You only have to do one of these.**

You will be required to write a seminar paper of 3000 words, including references. The deadline for this paper is the end of the summer term, **the 30th of September 2023**. The paper is the final 'product' of the seminar, allowing you to showcase what you have learned throughout the semester. **The seminar paper should present an argument.** This is the critical requirement for how the papers will be assessed. You are encouraged to discuss the topic of your paper with me in advance!

There are usually three types of papers: 1) a literature review, 2) the analysis of an empirical case, or 3) a book review. In the first type of paper, the student makes a theoretical proposition, which often means a set of hypotheses based on a critical review of a relevant strand of literature. In addition to what we have discussed in the seminar, the paper should also refer to further reading. It should go beyond summarising existing studies by critically engaging with them and using the debate to frame an original argument. You can think of this type of seminar paper as the first part of the journal articles we read during the seminar, containing the introduction and the theoretical/analytical framework. There is no empirical analysis or data required for this type of seminar paper, so you do not need to write the parts where the data is introduced and empirically examined.

The second type of paper provides an overview of an empirical case. This case would typically be a critical election or a wave of protest mobilisation that had long-term consequences for the cleavage structure of a country. In the second type of paper, the student applies the analytical framework and theoretical approaches reviewed in the seminar to classify the case they are examining and to tease out a 'message' about what the case teaches us. The guiding question is: What is this case about? In order to answer this question, the essay should reflect on the classification of the case in question from the perspective of a comparative social scientist.

The third type of paper is a review of a book published in the last 15 years by a major university press on a topic related to the seminar. A book review is expected to summarise the main argument of the book, review the structure in which the argument is presented, and consider the extent to which the empirical evidence supports the main argument. A key element of a successful review is to situate the book within relevant debates/literature. The purpose of this is to assess whether the contribution the book claims to make is indeed new to the literature, and to what extent it represents a 'breakthrough' or an incremental step in relevant debates. You may find it helpful to read some existing reviews to familiarise yourself with the genre. Two journals that regularly publish book reviews are Comparative Political Studies and Party Politics.

Oral exam

As part of the seminar you will be asked to either 1) write a seminar paper or 2) take an oral exam. **You only have to do one of these.**

The oral exams take place at the end of the teaching period. **Two dates are offered: the 24th and the 25th of July.** If you do not pass the oral examination, or if you are certifiably ill on the above dates, there will be an additional date on 25 September. The oral exam lasts 25 minutes.

In preparation for the oral exam, you will be asked to send me a proposition based on one or more of the readings we have discussed in class. You need to send me your The by **Friday, the week before the exam**. The proposition should be one or two sentences long. It could be a testable hypothesis, a theoretical or a conceptual insight. In the first part of the oral exam we will discuss your thesis. In the second half of the oral exam, we will discuss some of the readings we have discussed in the seminar.

Academic Integrity and Honesty

Students must comply with the University's Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found in the MA Sociology - European Societies: Study Guide, at <https://wikis.fu-berlin.de/display/ifs/Plagiarism>. Please familiarise yourself with the study guide and these rules. Not knowing the rules is no excuse for plagiarism!

Many students feel overwhelmed by the tasks and responsibilities of the first year of the MA programme, especially if they are new to Germany and Berlin. This is normal! If you are having difficulties, e.g. with the seminar paper, please contact me. Please remember to always respect the rules of academic integrity and honesty!

Class Structure

Introduction - Session 1

In the first session we introduce the seminar, discuss the aims and expectations. We also distribute the readings for the student presentations.

Old and new divisions - sessions 2-3

In this part of the seminar we discuss the concept of cleavages and review one of the central debates between the dealignment and realignment traditions. Guiding questions are: What are cleavages? How have they evolved over time in European societies? Are cleavages still relevant for describing contemporary political dynamics?

Elites and Citizens - Sessions 4-5

In this part of the seminar we will discuss elite appeals to group identities and cleavage formation from the perspective of citizens. Guiding questions are: Do elites appeal to group identities? What are the consequences of group appeals for electoral behaviour? How do citizens relate to the emerging new cleavage? Do citizens define their own identity along the same dimensions as those that structure party competition?

Ideologies and political transformation - sessions 6-9

In this part of the seminar we will systematically examine the consequences of cleavage transformation from the perspective of selected party families. Guiding questions are: How do mainstream parties respond to cleavage transformations? What is the role of challenger parties in driving

cleavage transformation? What is the role of populism and authoritarianism in the cleavage transformation dynamics?

Variation across arenas, countries and over time - sessions 10-12

In this part of the seminar we will discuss variations in cleavage structures across political arenas, European regions and over time. Guiding questions are: How do changes in cleavage structures affect mobilisation in the protest arena? What are the drivers of cleavage formation in Southern and Eastern Europe? How do parties relate to cleavages in normal times and in times of crisis, such as the period of the Covid-19 pandemic?

Schedule and Readings

Introduction

Week 1, 17.04.2023 - Introduction

Introducing the seminar, clarifying goals and expectations, dividing up the presentations.

Old and new cleavages

Week 2, 24.04.2023 - Past and current dynamics

Lipset, Seymour Martin, and Stein Rokkan. 1966 (1990). "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments." In *The West European Party System*, edited by Peter Mair, 91–138. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19827-583-1.

Ford, Robert, and Will Jennings. 2020. "The Changing Cleavage Politics of Western Europe." *Annual Review of Political Science* 23 (1): 295–314. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-052217-104957>.

Week 3, 08.05.2023 - Realignment or dealignment?

Kriesi, Hanspeter, Edgar Grande, Romain Lachat, Martin Dolezal, Simon Bornschier, and Timotheos Frey. 2006. "Globalization and the transformation of the national political space: Six European countries compared." *European Journal of Political Research* 45 (6): 921–956. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2006.00644.x>.

Goldberg, Andreas C. 2020. "The evolution of cleavage voting in four Western countries: Structural, behavioural or political dealignment?" *European Journal of Political Research* 59 (1): 68–90. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12336>.

Elites and citizens

Week 4, 15.05.2023 - Group appeals

Thau, Mads. 2021. "The Social Divisions of Politics: How Parties Group-Based Appeals Influence Social Group Differences in Vote Choice." *The Journal of Politics* 83 (2): 675–688. <https://doi.org/10.1086/710018>.

Ares, Macarena. 2022. "Issue politicization and social class: How the electoral supply activates class divides in political preferences." *European Journal of Political Research* 61 (2): 503–523. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12469>.

Week 5, 22.05.2023 - Citizens' perspective

Dassonneville, Ruth, Liesbet Hooghe, and Gary Marks. 2023. "Transformation of the political space: A citizens perspective." *European Journal of Political Research* online first. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12590>.

Bornschieer, Simon, Silja Häusermann, Delia Zollinger, and Céline Colombo. 2021. "How "Us" and "Them" Relates to Voting Behavior-Social Structure, Social Identities, and Electoral Choice." *Comparative Political Studies* 54 (12): 2087–2122. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414021997504>.

Party families and political transformation**Week 6, 05.06.2023 - Social democracy**

Berman, Sheri, and Maria Snegovaya. 2019. "Populism and the Decline of Social Democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 30 (3): 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2019.0038>.

Abou-Chadi, Tarik, and Markus Wagner. 2019. "The Electoral Appeal of Party Strategies in Postindustrial Societies: When Can the Mainstream Left Succeed?" *The Journal of Politics* 81 (4): 1405–1419. <https://doi.org/10.1086/704436>.

Week 7, 12.06.2023 - Greens

Dolezal, Martin. 2010. "Exploring the Stabilization of a Political Force: The Social and Attitudinal Basis of Green Parties in the Age of Globalization." *West European Politics* 33 (3): 534–552. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402381003654569>.

Dalton, Russell J. 2009. "Economics, environmentalism and party alignments: A note on partisan change in advanced industrial democracies." *European Journal of Political Research* 48 (2): 161–175. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2008.00831.x>.

Week 8, 19.06.2023 - Radical right

Kitschelt, Herbert. 2007. "Growth and Persistence of the Radical Right in Postindustrial Democracies: Advances and Challenges in Comparative Research." *West European Politics* 30 (5): 1176–1206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402380701617563>.

Bornschieer, Simon, and Romain Lachat. 2009. "The Evolution of the French Political Space and Party System." *West European Politics* 32 (2): 360–383. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402380802670677>.

Week 9, 26.06.2023 - Populism & authoritarianism

Vachudova, Milada Anna. 2021. "Populism, Democracy, and Party System Change in Europe." *Annual Review of Political Science* 24 (1): 471–498. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041719-102711>.

Hillen, Sven, and Nils D. Steiner. 2020. "The consequences of supply gaps in two-dimensional policy spaces for voter turnout and political support: The case of economically left-wing and culturally right-wing citizens in Western Europe." *European Journal of Political Research* 59 (2): 331–353. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12348>.

Variation across arenas, countries, and over time

Week 10, 03.07.2023 - Protest dynamics

Hutter, Swen, and Endre Borbáth. 2019. "Challenges from left and right: the long-term dynamics of protest and electoral politics in Western Europe." *European Societies* 21 (4): 487–512. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2018.1494299>.

Castelli Gattinara, Pietro, Caterina Froio, and Andrea L. P. Pirro. 2022. "Far-right protest mobilisation in Europe: Grievances, opportunities and resources." *European Journal of Political Research* 61 (4): 1019–1041. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12484>.

Week 11, 10.07.2023 - Southern and Eastern Europe

Colombo, Francesco, and Elias Dinas. 2023. "Networks of Grievances: Social Capital and Mainstream Party Decline." *Comparative Political Studies* 56 (3): 363–394. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140221100195>.

Rovny, Jan. 2014. "Communism, Federalism, and Ethnic Minorities: Explaining Party Competition Patterns in Eastern Europe." *World Politics* 66 (4): 669–708. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887114000227>.

Week 12, 17.07.2023 - Normal times and crisis

Koedam, Jelle. 2022. "A change of heart? Analysing stability and change in European party positions." *West European Politics* 45 (4): 693–715. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2021.1915659>.

Rovny, Jan, Ryan Bakker, Liesbet Hooghe, Seth Jolly, Gary Marks, Jonathan Polk, Marco Steenbergen, and Milada Anna Vachudova. 2022. "Contesting Covid: The ideological bases of partisan responses to the Covid-19 pandemic." *European Journal of Political Research* 61 (4): 1155–1164. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12510>.