

Political Institutions: Analysis and Comparison

Vertiefungsseminar

1 Description

Institutions are a key unit of analysis in comparative politics. In this class we will discuss different theoretical approaches used to understand political institutions. The focus will be on emergence, stability and institutional change. We will also highlight differences and commonalities between democratic and autocratic institutions. A main focus is on how institutions help shape political behaviour and outcomes.

2 Time and Location

The seminar will take place on **Tuesdays, 17:00-18:30** in room **C 421** from *24 October 2017 to 13 February 2018*. There are *no classes* between 23 December and 07 January.

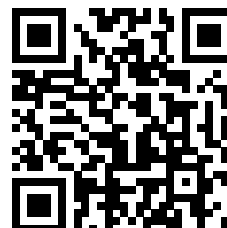
3 Office Hours and Contact

Contact address

University of Konstanz
Dept. of Political Science and Public Administration
Center for Data and Methods
Universitätsstr. 10
78464 Konstanz

Office: Y109
Email: sebastian.koehler@uni-konstanz.de
Phone: +49 (0) 7531 88 - 2069
URL: <http://sebastiankoehler.eu>
twitter: @PolEconSK

Digital Business Card:



Office hours

Office hours are on *Mondays, 17:00-18:00*. Please book an appointment on *ilias* before noon on the day of the office hour.

4 Learning Goals

After successful completion of the class, students will

- understand different theoretical approaches to political institutions
- be able to use the different approaches as analytical tools for a comparative analysis
- understand the dynamics of institutional stability and change
- be able to identify key characteristics and effects of political institutions
- be able to develop a research question

5 Assessment

Summative

The final grade is a weighted average of the term paper (60%), a poster presentation (20%), an exposé + bibliography (10%), and a blog post/news comment (10%).

Term paper (60%)

The term paper is a written essay of about 4000 words. For this essay, you will pick a research question which can be answered by summarizing *and* synthesizing existing literature or by means of a small data analysis. The term paper is due on 31 March 2018, although you are strongly encouraged to submit early.

I will only accept term papers submitted as a pdf file in ilias by the deadline!

Poster presentation (20%)

In the last two weeks we will have two poster sessions. You will prepare a poster outlining your term paper and the findings. The purpose of the session is to help you clarify your topic. On top of this you will give feedback on the presentations of the others.

Exposé + bibliography (10%)

The Exposé is a 1-2 page outline of your term paper. It is due on 04 December 2017. Please make sure to address the following questions:

- What is the research question you intend to answer?
- What is your (preliminary) answer to the question?
- Which theoretical argument is the basis for the answer?
- Which empirical evidence will be provided?
- How do you intend to structure the term paper?

The Exposé is not expected to be perfect. Writing is a process and your ideas and approach will likely change over the course of the term. You will receive feedback on your exposé in class.

The *bibliography* is a *well formatted* list of literature you intend to use for the term paper.

*Please submit the Exposé with the bibliography attached as one pdf file.
Make sure to upload it in ilias by the deadline.*

Blog Post/News Comment (10%)

You are expected to select a current legislative process of your choice and analyze it through the lense of one of the theoretical approaches we cover in class. Please upload the blog post/comment no later than 17 February 2018.

Weekly questions

You are expected to come up with three questions about the readings of the week. The questions are due on Mondays at 23:59. Please submit the questions directly in ilias. *Submission of 90% of the questions is a prerequisite for passing the class (i.e., you can miss at most once).*

Formative

- Weekly readings
- *Active* participation in group work and discussions
- In-class writing exercises
- Peer feedback

6 Enrollment/ilias

In order to take the class for credit you need to enroll by Friday 27 October. To enroll, please join the course on ilias. You will also be able to access the readings and other course materials there. You can use the link https://ilias.uni-konstanz.de/ilias/goto.php?target=crs_702893_rcode6KJrQc9TLk&client_id=ilias_uni (the link is active in the pdf version) or search for the course name in ilias. The password required for registration is PolIns1718KN. *Your registration is confirmed when you participate in the second session.*

The class forum

Our course in ilias has a forum set up. You can use it to ask questions or discuss topics related to the content of the class, e.g. the readings. You can also use it to ask questions related to the workflow or post best practice examples of your work organization. Lastly, you could share content related to the course topic (e.g. news articles, blogs or papers) which might be interesting for everybody.

7 Zotero

Zotero is a powerful literature management programme. Unlike most others it is free software and independent of the operating system you use. It works as a standalone solution and comes with a browser plugin. The latter allows you to directly import references into the zotero database, which you use to manage your literature. Zotero can easily be synced across several devices. It can be downloaded from <https://www.zotero.org/>. There exist plugins for the typical office applications. Zotero can also easily export to bibtex for use with \LaTeX .

8 \LaTeX

\LaTeX is a typesetting system. It allows to produce well designed documents with little effort (the exact opposite of Word). It has a relatively steep learning curve, but it is particularly useful for writing long scientific documents, so it may be worth the effort to learn \LaTeX . One particular good implementation is overleaf (<http://overleaf.com>) which is entirely web based and allows for easy collaboration. \LaTeX is fully platform independent and natively produces pdf documents.

9 General Literature on Political Institutions

- Blyth, Mark. 2002. *Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow. 2005. *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Gandhi, Jennifer. 2010. *Political Institutions under Dictatorship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Greif, Avner. 2006. *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- North, Douglass C. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rhodes, R. A. W., Sarah A. Binder, and Bert A. Rockman. 2008. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schotter, Andrew. 2008. *The Economic Theory of Social Institutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shepsle, Kenneth. 2010. *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*. 2nd Revised edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

10 Sessions

1. Introduction (24 October 2017)

2. Bank holiday (31 October 2017)

There will be no class today due to the a one-off bank holiday (500 years of Reformation). Complaints about foregone Human Capital should be addressed to Martin Luther and the Government.

3. (New) Institutionalisms (07 November 2017)

Readings:

- Diermeier, Daniel, and Keith Krehbiel. 2003. "Institutionalism as a Methodology." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 15 (2):123–44.
- Hall, Peter A., and Rosemary C. R. Taylor. 1996. "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms." *Political Studies* 44 (5):936–57.

- March, James G., and Johan P. Olsen. 1996. "Institutional Perspectives on Political Institutions." *Governance* 9 (3):247–64.
- Schmidt, Vivien A. 2008. "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse." *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (1):303–26.

4. Rational Choice Institutionalism (14 November 2017)

Readings:

- Shepsle, Kenneth A. 1989. "Studying Institutions Some Lessons from the Rational Choice Approach." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1 (2):131–47.
- Shepsle, Kenneth A. 2006. "Rational Choice Institutionalism". In: Rhodes, R. A. W., Sarah A. Binder, and Bert A. Rockman. 2006. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions* Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 23-38.
- Calvert, Randall L. 1998. "Explaining Social Order. Internalization, External Enforcement, or Equilibrium?". In: Softan, Karol, Uslander, Eric M., and Virginia Haufler. 1998. *Institutions and Social Order*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 131-162.

5. The Design of Institutions (21 November 2017)

Readings:

- Banks, Jeffrey S. 1995. "Design of Institutions: An Agency Theory Perspective". In: Weimer, David L (ed.). 1995. *Institutional Design*. Boston: Kluwer Academic. pp. 17-36.
- Calvert, Randall L. 1995. "The Rational Choice Theory of Institutions: Implications for Design". In: Weimer, David L (ed.). 1995. *Institutional Design*. Boston: Kluwer Academic. pp. 63-95.
- Ch. 02: "State-of-nature theory and the rise of social institutions". In: Schotter, Andrew. 1981. *The Economic Theory of Social Institutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 20-51.

6. Constitutions (28 November 2017)

Readings:

- Ch 5: “The Organization of Human Activity”. In: Buchanan, James M., and Gordon Tullock. 1999. *The Calculus of Consent: Logical Foundations of Constitutional Democracy*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund. pp. 43-62.
- Ch 6: “A Generalized Economic Theory of Constitutions”. In: Buchanan, James M., and Gordon Tullock. 1999. *The Calculus of Consent: Logical Foundations of Constitutional Democracy*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund. pp. 63-84.
- Ch 7: “The Rule of Unanimity”. In: Buchanan, James M., and Gordon Tullock. 1999. *The Calculus of Consent: Logical Foundations of Constitutional Democracy*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund. pp. 85-96.
- Ch 8: “The Costs of Decision-Making”. In: Buchanan, James M., and Gordon Tullock. 1999. *The Calculus of Consent: Logical Foundations of Constitutional Democracy*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund. pp. 97-116.

7. Explaining stability (05 December 2017)

Readings:

- Ch. 09: “Endogenous Institutions and Game Theoretic Analysis”. In: Greif, Avner. 2006. *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 124-152.
- North, Douglass C. 1990. “A Transaction Cost Theory of Politics.” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 2 (4):355–67.
- Calvert, Randall L. 1995. “Rational Actors, Equilibrium, and Social Institutions”. In: Knight, Jack, and Itai Sened. 1998. *Explaining Social Institutions*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. pp. 57-94.

8. Exposé and beyond (12 December 2017)

Readings:

- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. Fitzgerald. 2016. *The Craft of Research*, 4th Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

9. Institutional Change and Path Dependency (19 December 2017)

- Capoccia, Giovanni, and R. Daniel Kelemen. 2007. "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism." *World Politics* 59 (3):341–69.
- Mahoney, James. 2000. "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology." *Theory and Society* 29 (4):507–48.
- Pierson, Paul. 2000. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics." *American Political Science Review* 94 (2):251–67.

10. Endogenous Institutional Change (09 January 2018)

Readings: Readings:

- Greif, Avner, and David D. Laitin. 2004. "A Theory of Endogenous Institutional Change." *American Political Science Review* 98 (04):633–652.
- Ch 6: "A Theory of Endogenous Institutional Change". In: Greif Avner. 2006. *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 158-186.

11. Alternative Approaches to Change (16 January 2018)

Readings:

- Ch 2: "A Theory of Institutional Change". In: Blyth, Mark. 2002. *Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 17-45.

- Ch 1: “A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change”. In: Mahoney, James, and Kathleen Thelen. 2010. *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-37.

12. Regime Change and Political Survival (23 January 2017)

Readings:

- Bueno De Mesquita, Bruce, and Alastair Smith. 2010. “Leader Survival, Revolutions, and the Nature of Government Finance.” *American Journal of Political Science* 54 (4):936–50.
- Ch 2: “The Theory: Definitions and Intuition”. In: Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, Smith, Alastair, Siverson, Randolph M., and Morrow, James D. 2005. *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge: MIT Press. pp. 37-76.

13. Economic Effects of Constitutions (30 January 2017)

Readings:

- Ch. 2: “What does theory say?”. In: Persson, Torsten, and Guido Tabellini. 2005. *The Economic Effects of Constitutions*. Cambridge: MIT Press. pp. 11-34.
- Ch. 6: “Fiscal Policy: Variation across countries”. In: Persson, Torsten, and Guido Tabellini. 2005. *The Economic Effects of Constitutions*. Cambridge: MIT Press. pp. 155-186.

14. Poster Presentations (06 February 2018)

15. Poster Presentations (13 February 2018)