

Political Sociology
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Introduction

Political Sociology is the study of the relationship between society and politics, sometimes – more narrowly – between civil society and the state. It can be taught in many different ways. The proposal offered here selects several main themes and at the same time aims at covering major paradigmatic and theoretical approaches.

The course focuses on several domains of the discipline. First is related to the classical texts, focused on the main theoretical problem -- to what extent political sociology is paradigmatically political and to what extent sociological. Section two covers the crux of political sociology – the research and literature on formation, determinants and decline of socio-political cleavages. Section three focuses on parties and party systems – the main 'linkage' between citizens and the state, with special attention concentrated on recent developments in the nature of parties themselves as well as on the socio-psychological phenomenon of party identification. Part four deals with the most fundamental aspect of contemporary democracies – the representation bond, the relationship between citizens and elected elite, the mechanisms of delegation of power, the nature of representativeness and accountability. Contemporary issues of democracy, its alleged crisis and visions of how to mitigate it are part of the readings assigned.

Expectations and Assignments:

I expect students to attend classes, be active and prepared for the discussion of a given topic. Usually I will have an introductory note on the topic covered, but the main part of the seminar will be devoted to presentations of the readings and their thorough discussion. Let me emphasize that we will stick to the format of our enterprise which is **seminar**.

Course Objectives:

The aim of the seminar is to familiarize students with the most fundamental writings in the domain of political sociology as well with its contemporary currents. It will allow students to understand the different theoretical and disciplinary approaches to the study of power, political institutions and political behavior. The seminar program is designed in such a way that maximizes the interactions between different schools of thoughts, approaches and methods of studying political sociology.

Learning outcome

During the course students enhance their capacity of critical thinking and ability to express their own opinions. They are expected to learn how to analyze and interpret political processes and political behavior from a sociological perspective and – on the other hand and at the same time - understand the political impact on social structure, on citizens social and labor market position and their attitudes, aspirations and values.

Course Requirements and Assessment

- (1) Active seminar participation - which means: (intellectual presence at the seminar meetings - comments, questions), written comments (handouts) on chosen topics (selected by students and sent to the instructor and course participants no later than 24 hours before class presentation)
- (2) Position paper; each student is expected to prepare one position paper, which critically reviews selected reading; it should be no longer than 3 pages.
- (3) Final paper; topic of the final paper to be agreed with the instructor at least three weeks prior to its final submission

Course Sections, Topics and Readings

1. Sociology of Politics vs Political Sociology

Topic 1.1 Sociology of Politics or Political Sociology? Does it really matter?

Sartori, Giovanni. 1969. 'From the Sociology of Politics to Political Sociology', in:
S. M. Lipset, ed.: *Politics and the Social Sciences*. London--Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Topic 1.2 Social Forces and Political Alignments

Lipset, Seymour Martin & Stein Rokkan. 1967. 'Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction', in: S. M. Lipset and S. Rokkan, eds. *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspective*. New York—London: The Free Press, pp. 1-64

Topic 1.3 Order and Change I

Huntington, Samuel. 1968. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven—London: Yale University Press, pp. 1-98

2. Socio-Political Cleavages

Topic 2.4 Cleavages: Ontological Issues

Bartolini, Stefano & Peter Mair. 1990. *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability. The Stabilization of European Electorates 1885-1985*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, pp. 212-49.

Mair, Peter. 2001. 'The Freezing Hypothesis: An Evaluation', in: Lauri Karvonen & Stein Kuhle, eds. *Party Systems and Voter Alignments Revisited*. London: Routledge, pp. 27-44

Topic 2.5 Cleavage Development and Decline

Enyedi, Zsolt. 2005. 'The Role of Agency in Cleavage Formation', *European Journal of Political Research*, 44 (5), pp. 697-720.

Rossteutscher, Sigrid & Daniel Stegmueller. 2014. 'Network Politicization and Political Integration: from Grand Cleavages to Private network Structures', in: Bernhard Wessels et al. (eds) *Voters on the Move or on the Run?*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.167-192

Topic 2.6 Party Identification – The Orthodoxy and Controversies

Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. New York: Wiley, pp. 120-167

Weisberg, Herbert & Steve Greene. 2003. 'The Political Psychology of Party Identification', in: Michael MacKuen & George Rabinowitz, eds. *Electoral Democracy*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, pp. 83-124

Gerber, Alan and Donald P. Green. 1998. 'Rational Learning and Partisan Attitudes', *American Journal of Political Science*, 42 (3): 794-818

4. Political Representation

Topic 4.7 Political Representation - The Classics

Pitkin, Hanna F. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley –Los Angeles – London: University of California Press, pp. 60-143

Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. "Rethinking Representation", *American Political Science Review*, 97 (4), 515-28

5. Democracy and Crisis:

Topic 5.8 Normative Visions and Evaluations of the Performance of Democracy

Merkel, Wolfgang. 2013. 'Is there a crisis of democracy?' Paper presented at the 2013 APSA Annual Meeting, August 29- September 1

Ferrin, Monica & Hanspeter Kriesi, eds. 2016. *How Europeans View and Evaluate Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford UP, pp. 1-21; 307-326 (chapters 1 and 14)

Topic 5.9 The Consequences of the Crisis

Bermeo, Nancy & Larry Bartels. 2015. *Mass Politics in Tough Times*. Oxford: Oxford UP, pp. 1-39

Wessels, Bernhard, Hans Rattinger, Sigrid Rossteutscher & Rudiger Schmitt-Beck, eds. 2014. *Voters on The Move or on the Run*. Oxford: Oxford UP, pp. 263-310 (chapters 12, 13)

Topic 5.10: The Future of Democracy and Capitalism

Ringen, Stein. 2004. 'A Distributional Theory of Economic Democracy', *Democratization*, Vol.11, No.2, pp. 18-40

Obinger, Herbert & Peter Starke. 2015. 'Convergence and the Rise of the Supply-Side Model', in: *Transformations of the State*. Oxford: Oxford UP, pp. 465-81