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Master Seminar

Seminar on Political Economy

Elections, Legislative Behavior and Policy Outcomes

Content

In this seminar we analyze determining factors of voter participation, differences in electoral rules, legislative process, and political institutions. We want to concentrate on how these differences shape incentives of the main political actors and which policy outcome they foster. Thereby, we scientifically discuss topics frequently debated in the media and politics such as low turnout, the allocation of resources or legislative shirking.

Do less people cast a ballot when the number of seasonal infections is high in their municipality? Do overrepresented constituencies or states get a larger share in the allocation of common resources? How do legislators elected by proportional rule differ to their counterparts elected by majoritarian rule? Does political competition raise the quality of elected legislators and their attempts to extract personal rents? Is there really a positive effect of the number of legislators on government size? And what role do personal characteristics play in politics?

While analysing elections, legislative behavior and policy outcomes, we get to know several strategies to identify causal relationships in political economy.

Target Group

This seminar requires a very good understanding of how to read and interpret econometric results and economic models as well as an understanding of general economic principles. Students should be familiar with econometric methods like OLS, Instrumental Variables, Difference-in-Differences or RDD. Master students in Economics, Internationale Wirtschaft & Governance, Development Studies

as well as Philosophy & Economics form the target group for this course. The seminar language is English.

Accreditation

Students can earn credit points for the following degree programmes:

- Economics (M.Sc.): “Theorie und Empirie der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung”
- Internationale Wirtschaft und Governance (M.A.): “Theorie und Empirie der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung”
- Philosophy & Economics (M.A.): “Theorie und Empirie der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung”
- Development Studies (M.A.): substitute for A6 after individual consultation. Please contact the lecturer before registering.

Requirements

Seminar participants are asked to give an academic presentation (30 minutes) on topics based on an article which is published in an academic journal (see list below). Participants are expected to inform themselves on additional related literature. Participants prepare a discussion (8 minutes) of a research article presented by another participant. Active participation in discussions during the seminar is expected of all participants and attendance is compulsory. Students write their seminar paper of approximately 4500 words about a self-developed topic that relies or relates to the seminar’s content. The grade will be given on basis of the seminar presentation, prepared discussion and the written seminar paper.

Participants may also work on a topic that includes own empirical work (see list of potential topics below). In this case, both presentation and seminar paper will be about the topic and results of this own empirical work. Please contact the lecturer in due time if you are interested in a topic that includes own empirical work.

Seminar Organisation

Lecturer: Marco Frank (Ph.D. student), Volkswirtschaftslehre E, Marco1.Frank@uni-bayreuth.de

The seminar will be held in presence if actual regulations related to the Covid-19 pandemic allow for it. For those students who are not able to participate in person, a streaming will be offered. If actual regulations do not allow for meeting in presence, the seminar will be held online.

A mandatory **introductory lecture** on the topics of the seminar and the assignment of presentation topics will take place on the 20th of October 2021 from 17:00-20:00 (room tba). This session serves to

present the structure and goals of the seminar, to introduce the topics and requirements for presentations and seminar papers and to allocate the articles for the presentations. All potential questions regarding the seminar (e.g. difficulty of topics, presentation style, accreditation etc.) will be answered during the introductory lecture. In addition, the lecturer will provide an exemplary presentation of own research related to the seminar.

The **presentations** will take place on the 10th and 11th of December 2021 (time and room tba). Presentations must be handed in electronically in PDF-versions on the 9th of December 2021 (“NameFirstname_pres.pdf”).

The deadline for the submission of the final **seminar paper** is the 31st of March 2022.

To register for the seminar (first-come-first-served basis), please fill out the following form until the 15th of October:

<https://forms.gle/MBGww7Wh8vtA7ona8>

For **remaining questions** regarding content or organization of the seminar please send an email to the above.

Outline of Topics and Literature

The following list provides an overview of topics discussed in the seminar. Students are required to choose one article and to search additional literature for their presentations and seminar papers. Alternatively, they may work on an own empirical project (see section 7).

1. Elections and turnout

- Garmann, S. (2016). Concurrent elections and turnout: Causal estimates from a German quasi-experiment. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 126, 167-178.
- Godefroy, R., & Henry, E. (2016). Voter turnout and fiscal policy. *European Economic Review*, 89, 389-406.
- Lind, J. T. (2020). Rainy day politics. An instrumental variables approach to the effect of parties on political outcomes. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 61.
- Morton, R. B., Muller, D., Page, L., & Torgler, B. (2015). Exit polls, turnout, and bandwagon voting: Evidence from a natural experiment. *European Economic Review*, 77, 65-81.
- Potrafke, N., & Roesel, F. (2019). A banana republic? The effects of inconsistencies in the counting of votes on voting behavior. *Public Choice*, 178(1-2), 231-265.

2. Representation and the law of 1/n

- Egger, P., & Koethenbueger, M. (2010). Government Spending and Legislative Organization: Quasi-Experimental Evidence from Germany. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 2(4), 200-212.
- Maaser, N., & Stratmann, T. (2016). Distributional consequences of political representation. *European Economic Review*, 82, 187-211.
- Pettersson-Lidbom, P. (2012). Does the size of the legislature affect the size of government? Evidence from two natural experiments. *Journal of Public Economics*, 96(3-4), 269-278.

3. Electoral rules: proportional vs. majoritarian rule

- Gagliarducci, S., Nannicini, T., & Naticchioni, P. (2011). Electoral rules and politicians' behavior: A micro test. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 3(3), 144-174.
- Maaser, N., & Stratmann, T. (2018). Election rules, legislators' incentives, and policy outcomes: Evidence from the mixed member system in Germany. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 54, 227-239.
- Stadelmann, D., Portmann, M., Eichenberger, R. (2016). Preference Representation and the Influence of Political Parties in Majoritarian vs. Proportional Systems: An Empirical Test. *British Journal of Political Science*, 49(1), 181-204.

4. Political competition

- Becker, J., Peichl, A., & Rincke, J. (2009). Politicians' outside earnings and electoral competition. *Public Choice*, 140(3), 379.
- Dal Bó, E., Dal Bó, P. D., & Snyder, J. (2009). Political Dynasties. *Review of Economic Studies*, 76(1), 115-142.
- De Paola, M., & Scoppa, V. (2011). Political competition and politician quality: evidence from Italian municipalities. *Public Choice*, 148(3), 547-559.
- Gavaille, N., & Vershelde, M. (2017). Electoral competition and political selection: An analysis of the activity of French deputies, 1958–2012. *European Economic Review*, 92, 180-195.

5. Legislative shirking

- Besley, T., & Larcinese, V. (2011). Working or shirking? Expenses and attendance in the UK Parliament. *Public Choice*, 146(3-4), 291-317.
- Mocan, N., & Altindag, D. T. (2013). Salaries and Work Effort: An Analysis of the European Union Parliamentarians. *The Economic Journal*, 123(573), 1130-1167.

6. Personal characteristics

- Berggren, N., Jordahl, H., Poutvaara, P. (2010). The looks of a winner: Beauty and electoral success. *Journal of Public Economics*, 94(1-2), 8-15.
- Brollo, F., & Troiano, U. (2016). What happens when a woman wins an election? Evidence from close race in Brazil. *Journal of Development Economics*, 122, 28-45.
- Dal Bó, E., Finan, F., Folke, O., Persson, T., & Rickne, J. (2017). Who Becomes A Politician? *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 132(4), 1877-1914.
- Kozlov, V., Libman, A., & Schultz, A. (2018). Testosterone and Repression in Non-Democracies: Evidence from a Sample of Russian Governors. *Kyklos*, 71(2), 244-278.
- Mavisakalyan, A., & Tarverdi, Y. (2019). Gender and climate change: Do female parliamentarians make difference? *European Journal of Political Economy*, 56, 151-164.
- Stadelmann, D., Portmann, M., & Eichenberger, R. (2015). Military careers of politicians matter for national security policy. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 116, 142-156.

7. Topics for own empirical project

Please contact the lecturer in due time if you are interested in working on an own empirical project. Participants may also propose an own topic if it is analyzable within the context of the seminar.

- Distance to the seat of government and absence in parliament: An analysis for German parliamentarians
- Emotions and voting behavior in the German Bundestag
- Analysing the response rates of politicians on the platform Abgeordnetenwatch
- Are closely elected conservative politicians more progressive in salient roll-call votes than safely elected conservatives?
- Does the flood catastrophe in 2021 affect turnout and voting behavior in the upcoming federal elections?
- Does cabinet size affect the performance of governments?

- Heuristics in elections: do voters use information provided on ballot papers?
- Electoral reforms: do voters are discouraged from voting when their constituencies change?