Norms and Identities in Western Politics

Spring Semester 2023

Instructor:	Dr. Ronja Sczepanski	Time:	14.04: 14.00-15.30
			15.04: 9.00-16.00
			16.04: 8.30-15.30
			10.06: 9.00-16.00
			11.06: 8.30-15.30
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			Other: 216 S132

Course description:

What are norms? What are identities? How are they interconnected? And how do they influence politics, and how does politics influence norms and identities? These are the important questions we will tackle in this class. As these questions are at the heart of political science, students will get insights into the foundations of politics in democracies. We will learn that identities are deeply intertwined with political and social norms. However, we will also see that political events – such as Brexit - can change people's identities or lead to the development of new identities.

Theoretical Learning Goals

In this class, you will learn what norms and identities are. We will discuss their effects on political behavior, such as voting and support for international organizations. We will also discuss and learn that norms and identities are related to each other and how the combination of the two can feed into stereotypes. In an additional step, we will also investigate how identities and norms develop and how they can change by persons – such as football/soccer players as well as political events – such as the success of radical right parties. We will read literature based on political psychology and political sociology. Therefore, the approach of this class is interdisciplinary.

Methodological learning goals

Next to theoretical insights, students will also receive their first experience with survey(experiment)s and the analysis of those with the statistical software R. We will apply simple statistics – difference in means, OLS-regressions – to analyze the survey data. After this class, students

will be able to develop their surveys online, have their first experience designing simple survey experimental treatments, and analyze the results statistically. Students will also learn how to evaluate the ethical implications of survey experimental research.

Requirements: Download and install R and R Studio. If you do not have a Laptop available, please get in touch with me beforehand. In addition to RStudio, we will also use Qualtrics. Please set up a free qualtrics account before the block seminar sessions.

Student hours: Upon request. Please contact me via e-mail (including a short description of your problem or question).

Important Deadlines:

1) Submission of tests .... 2 days before the block seminar sessions
2) Research design 04.06.2023
3) Presentation of research designs .... 11.06.2023 (in class)
4) Seminar paper 20.08.2023

Submissions (1), (2), and (4) must be handed in electronically at 23:59 (the latest) on a respective day.
Giving a brief presentation of the research designs (3) is expected in-class.

ECTS requirements (6 ECTS)

- **(Bonus points - up to 8 Points)** Answer short questions about the assigned readings

- **(30 percent/points of the overall grade - 15 for the presentation, 15 for the research design)** 1000-1500 words describing a research design idea to test a research question related to norms and identities (either experimentally or observationally). The important part of this exercise is to present your ideas of what interests you the most about norms and identities. Here, rather than digging into a very extensive literature review, you should propose your own theoretical idea, the mechanism of why the factors are related, and how this idea might be tested empirically. Here you can either suggest an experiment (be creative, it is your chance to test something you care about) or use some observational data. But be clear about the aim of your study. However, consider the ethical aspect of your study design (could the answer to your research question make matters worse for your study objects? Do you lie to your research participants?) You will present this research design in a 10-minute presentation in the last session of the seminar. Be also prepared to comment on the presentations by others! The presentation of the research design will be the basis for the seminar paper, so the work you invest in this part is work you do not need to do later on. Presenting your research design is also a chance to receive valuable feedback on how to conduct your study.

- Execution of the design with friends and family (N<=30)

- **(70 percent/points of the overall grade)** Paper of 3000-5000 words in which you present your theoretical argument, and your research design and present and discuss the results of your study (you can find an example structure at the end of this document).

Teaching approach: In the morning sessions, I will present some theoretical concepts and discussions around norms and identities in a lecture-style format. Students are encouraged to engage in the sessions with questions and comments. During these sessions, you will also get tasks to solve as a group. In the afternoon sessions, we will have a more practical approach to the topic, enabling students with the first methodological skills to conduct studies on their own. In these sessions, students will learn how to load data into R, assess relationships between variables, and evaluate the outcomes of the experiments statistically.

Plagiarism: Please do not plagiarise. Plagiarised work will not be accepted.

Grading policy: How will I evaluate your papers? A brief indicative overview: 1) Motivation of research questions (academically and beyond) 2) structure and logic of argumentation 3) quality of literature review (e.g., do you cover a debate in which it becomes clear why we need the answer to your research idea) 4) adequate expansion of readings used in the seminar 5) quality of theoretical argument (e.g., mechanisms clear; logical derivation of hypotheses) 6) quality of research design (e.g., limitations correctly discussed) 7) correct, adequate and embedded discussion of findings 8) meaningful discussion of limitations, scope conditions, and frame.

Resources on how to read a scientific paper and write a seminar paper:

Reading scientific papers is often difficult and requires practice, especially if English is not your first language. Here are some of the resources the web provides to help you read the papers more effectively (needing less time to read them)

- A. H. Green: How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps

- S. Keshav: How to Read a Paper

Writing seminar papers: This part is tough but becomes much easier if you start to read the literature carefully. The more your read, the easier it gets. However, also be reminded here that writing seminar papers takes practice. Other important resources on how to make your own case in a seminar paper are listed below.

- King: Writing a Political Science Essay

- The Manchester Phrasebank

Course outline:

Preparation

Before starting with the course, I want you to download R, RStudio and set up a Qualtrics account so that we can depart from a similar level.

Session 1: Introduction to the seminar (14.04.2023)

In this session, we will discuss organizational details (what has to be done for what number of credits, how to write a research design and a seminar paper)

Session 2: Basics of Norms and Identities in Politics (14.04.2023):

Morning session

Guiding questions: What are norms and identities? Are people aware of their own identities? What does it mean to have an identity?

 Readings

- Huddy, Leonie (2001). "From social to political identity: A critical examination of social identity theory". *Political psychology* 22(1). Publisher: Wiley Online Library: 127–156. ISSN: 0162-895X

- Bornschier, Simon et al. (2021). "How "us" and "them" relates to voting behavior—social structure, social identities, and electoral choice". *Comparative Political Studies*. Publisher: SAGE Publications Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA: 0010414021997504. ISSN: 0010-4140

Afternoon session

Guiding questions: What is a methodologically good experiment? How to design good survey questions (that measure what you want to measure). How can you implement them in an online survey programming tool?

Session 3: The consequences of norms and identities for politics (15.04.2023)

Morning session

Guiding questions: How are norms and identities interrelated? How are norms and identities linked to stereotypes? Can norms and identities reduce prejudice?

 Readings

- Álvarez-Benjumea, Amalia (2022). "Uncovering hidden opinions: social norms and the expression of xenophobic attitudes". *European Sociological Review*

- Hooghe, Liesbet and Marks, Gary (2009). "A postfunctionalist theory of European integration: From permissive consensus to constraining". *British journal of political science*. Publisher: JSTOR: 1–23. ISSN: 0007-1234

- Levendusky, Matthew S (2018). "Americans, not partisans: Can priming American national identity reduce affective polarization?" *The Journal of Politics* 80(1). Publisher: University of Chicago Press Chicago, IL: 59–70. ISSN: 0022-3816

Afternoon session

What is the software R, and how can we test the difference in a specific outcome between two groups from an experiment? What is a t-test and what is an OLS-regression, how to load data into R, how to clean variables, how to look at associations between variables, and how to test for differences between two groups)

Session 4: How can norms and identities change (10.06.2023)

Morning session

Guiding questions: Can norms and identities change? How do new identities develop?

 Readings

- Valentim, Vicente (Dec. 2021). "Parliamentary Representation and the Normalization of Radical Right Support". *Comparative Political Studies* 54(14). Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc: 2475–2511. ISSN: 0010-4140. DOI: 10.1177/0010414021997159. URL: https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414021997159 (visited on 03/20/2022)

- Hobolt, Sara B, Leeper, Thomas J, and Tilley, James (2021). "Divided by the vote: Affective polarization in the wake of the Brexit referendum". *British Journal of Political Science* 51(4). Publisher: Cambridge University Press: 1476–1493. ISSN: 0007-1234

- Kane, John, Mason, Lilliana, and Wronski, Juliana (2020). "Who's At The Party? Group Sentiments, Knowledge, and Partisan Identity". *Journal of Politics*

Afternoon session

Put your skills into practice!
Replication of study: Álvarez-Benjumea 2022

Session 5: The dark side of identities and norms - stereotypes and prejudices (11.06.2023)

Morning session

Guiding questions: How are identities and norms related to stereotypes? Can norms and identities help to reduce stereotypes

 Readings

- Alrababah, Ala et al. (2019). "Can exposure to celebrities reduce prejudice? The effect of Mohamed Salah on Islamophobic behaviors and attitudes". Publisher: SocArXiv

- Baekgaard, Martin, Herd, Pamela, and Moynihan, Donald P (2022). "Of 'Welfare Queens' and 'Poor Carinas': Social Constructions, Deservingness Messaging and the Mental Health of Welfare Clients". *British Journal of Political Science.* Publisher: Cambridge University Press: 1–19. ISSN: 0007-1234

Afternoon session

Presentation of research designs

Example outline of a seminar paper

Content

1. Introduction

   - Relevance

   - Analytical research question

   - Overview of the paper's structure

2. Literature Review

   - What have others said about (parts of) this question?

   - What kind of puzzles in the literature can be solved based on the answer to your research question

3. Theoretical part: Theory and Hypotheses

   - Briefly: Theoretical argument and argumentative structure

   - Generate one hypothesis

4. Empirical part

   3.1 Research Design

      - Discussion of sample and time span/case selection

      - Discussion operationalization

   3.2 Discussion

      - Testing hypotheses using data visualization

      - Describe and interpret your results

5. Conclusion

   - Summary and critical discussion

   - Answering the research question