
Socio-Structural Explanations of Political Behavior

HS Ausgewählte Themen der Politischen Soziologie

Universität Mannheim, FFS 2019

Logistics

Time: Mon, 15:30 - 17:00

Location: A5, 6, B318

Instructor

Dr. Denis Cohen

Office: A5, 6, A218

Office Hours: Mon, 17:15-18:00 (Doodle)

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Course Description

Socio-structural characteristics such as gender, age, class, and ethnicity often constitute focal points in analyses of voting behavior and political attitudes. Among many recent examples, support for Brexit, radical right populists, same sex marriage, or liberal immigration policies display pronounced socio-structural underpinnings.

While the socio-structural makeup of proponents and opponents of parties and policies is easily observed and broadly discussed in politics, news media outlets, and political science, moving from mere descriptions toward causal explanations of these phenomena constitutes a challenging task. As mostly “immutable” (i.e., permanent) characteristics,

socio-structural characteristics often defy the logic of causality known from randomized experiments and formalized in the potential outcomes framework.

How, then, can we study the role of socio-structural characteristics in causal theories of political behavior and attitude formation? To approach this question, we will divide our attention between theoretical and empirical approaches to the problem in the extant literature on the one hand and discussions of causality, research design, and applied quantitative methods on the other.

This class will prompt students to develop a research question and to conduct their own applied research (e.g., in preparation for a BA thesis). Participation therefore requires familiarity with the methods covered in both semesters of *Basismodule Methoden und Statistik* (or equivalent).

The general language of instruction and communication in this class is English. Written assignments may be submitted in either English or German.

Overview

Session (1)	11.02.2019	A1	Introduction
Session (2)	18.02.2019	A2	Socio-Structural characteristics: Classical Theories
Session (3)	25.02.2019	B1	Causality I: Potential Outcomes
Deadline	03.03.2019		Technical Exercise I
Session (4)	04.03.2019	B2	Causality II: Identification Strategies
Session (5)	11.03.2019	C1	Race and Ethnicity
Session (6)	18.03.2019	C2	Gender
Session (7)	25.03.2019	C3	Class
Session (8)	01.04.2019	C4	Religion and Age Disparities
Deadline	07.04.2019		Submit Question Papers I + II by this date
Session (9)	08.04.2019	C5	Contextual Repercussions Context
Deadline	28.04.2019		Research Proposal
Session (10)	29.04.2019	D1	Applied Statistics I: (Generalized) Linear Models
Session (11)	06.05.2019	D2	Applied Statistics II: Modeling Heterogeneity
Deadline	12.05.2019		Technical Exercise II
Session (12)	13.05.2019	E1	Socio-Structural Characteristics of Objects of Evaluation
Deadline	19.05.2019		Peer Reviews
Session (13)	20.05.2019	E2	Interactions of Characteristics of Subjects and Objects
Session (14)	27.05.2019	F	Wrap-Up
Deadline	31.07.2019		Final Paper

Course Requirements

I: Attendance, Readings, and Active Participation (2 Credit Points)

Active participation is central to this class. Participants are expected to have read the assigned readings prior to class and should be able to engage critically with the contents.

Participants are encouraged to use the Discussion Forum on ILIAS to post questions of any sort (clarification or discussion) in advance of the weekly sessions.

II: 2 Question Papers (1 Credit Point)

Question papers will prompt students to answer a few questions on the topic of the weekly readings. Questions will be distributed one week in advance. Question papers will prompt students to engage with empirical material and to develop ideas and perspectives for possible research paper topics. Question papers may be completed *collaboratively in groups of 2-3 students*.

Students must submit a total of two question papers. The length of a question paper should be no more than *600 words*. Question papers will be assigned on a weekly basis.

Deadlines: Sunday, 23:59, before sessions 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 (choose two)

III: 2 Technical Exercises (1 Credit Point)

Technical exercises prompt students to engage with the methods and technical concepts discussed in class. This may involve answering some conceptual questions or solving an analytical and/or data exercise. Technical exercises may be completed *collaboratively in groups of 2-3 students*.

Deadlines: Sunday, 23:59, before sessions 4 and 12

IV: Research Proposal & Reviews (1 Credit Point)

The main requirement of this class is a research paper (see point V below). In preparation for the research paper (your *Prüfungsleistung*), students should prepare and submit a *research proposal* of no more than 750 words (featuring research question, theoretical argument, initial hypothesis, as well as proposed research design, data, and methods).

While the final research paper must be written and submitted individually, participants may draft their research proposals *collaboratively in groups of 2-3 students*.

Deadline: Sunday, 23:59, before session 10

I will then distribute your research proposals for peer review. Each student should prepare and submit a review of about *450 words* for the proposal they received. The review should entail constructive feedback, i.e., it should specify which aspects of the proposed research you found convincing, apply criticism where necessary, and include a list of suggestions for improvement. I will direct all reviews back to the initial authors.

Deadline: Sunday, 23:59, before session 13

V: Research Paper (1 Credit Point)

The research paper will give participants the chance to explore a substantive problem in the subject area of this class from both a theoretical and applied empirical perspective. The research paper should be brief, i.e., no longer than 4,000 words (excluding references and appendices). It should focus on a concise connection of (a) developing an argument by deductively theorizing *one* theoretical mechanism directed at explaining an outcome, (b) briefly motivating and situating your argument against the background of the extant literature, (c) the development and application of a corresponding empirical strategy, and (d) a critical assessment of the limitations of the implemented empirical strategy and the outline of hypothetical alternative strategies.

Deadline: Wednesday, July 31, 23:59

Grading & Accreditation

By default, participants of *Hauptseminare* receive a course grade, which is determined by their performance in the final examination (*Prüfungsleistung*; in this case, the research paper). In accordance with the regulations of the University of Mannheim, coursework (*Studienleistungen*; i.e., course requirements II-IV) is graded as pass/fail. Note that successfully passing all coursework is a prerequisite for being admitted to the final examination.

Participants who successfully complete all course requirements will earn **6 ECTS** credit points. Participants cannot obtain credits for partial completion of the course requirements.

Submissions

All written assignments should be submitted through the corresponding upload modules on ILIAS. The deadline for all participation requirements (II-IV) is Sunday before class, 23:59.

The deadline for the research paper is July 31, 2018, 23:59.

Please keep track of your schedules to ensure submissions without delay. Late submission of the research paper will result in deductions of 1/3 of a grade point per day.

Academic Integrity

Participants must adhere to the University Code of Academic Integrity (*Richtlinie zur guten wissenschaftlichen Praxis*). Students are expected to be familiar with the Code and must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct. For further information, see https://www.uni-mannheim.de/media/Universitaet/Dokumente/Richtlinie_gute_wissenschaftliche_Praxis_en.pdf.

Overviews and Repositories

Textbooks on Statistics

- Jeffrey M. Wooldridge. 2002a. *Econometric Analysis of Cross-Section and Panel Data*. 1st. 752. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Jeffrey M. Wooldridge. 2002b. *Introductory Econometrics. A Modern Approach*. 2nd. 805. Oklahoma City, OK: South-Western.
- Ulrich Kohler and Frauke Kreuter. 2008. *Datenanalyse mit Stata. Allgemeine Konzepte der Datenanalyse und ihre praktische Anwendung*. München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag. (DE/EN; newer editions available)
- William H. Greene. 2012. *Econometric Analysis*. 7th. 1189. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kosuke Imai. 2017. *Quantitative Social Science. An Introduction*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Textbooks on Causal Identification and Experimental Design

- Stephen L Morgan and Christopher Winship. 2007. *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference. Methods and Principles for Social Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Joshua D Angrist and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2008. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Alan S Gerber and Donald P Green. 2012. *Field Experiments. Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*. New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company.

Literature Search Engine

The *Web of Science* provides a comprehensive search engine for academic publications:

- webofknowledge.com

Course Schedule*

Part A: Introduction

(1) February 11, 2019: Introduction

- Introduction
- Course outline
- Administrative issues

(2) February 18, 2019: Social-Structural Characteristics in Classical Theories of Political Behavior

Mandatory Readings

- Kai Arzheimer and Jürgen W Falter. 2008. "Voter Behavior." In *Encyclopedia of Political Behaviour*, edited by Linda Lee Kaid and Christina Holtz-Bacha. London: Sage.
- Joshua D Angrist and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2008. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1.

Background Readings

- Paul F Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet. 1944. *The People's Choice. How the Voter Makes Up his Mind in a Presidential Campaign*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Anthony Downs. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York, NY: Harper.
- Angus Campbell et al. 1960. *The American Voter*. New York: Wiley.
- Seymour M Lipset and Stein Rokkan. 1967. *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*. 1-64. New York: Free Press.
- Cyrus Samii. 2016. "Causal Empiricism in Quantitative Research." *The Journal of Politics* 78 (3): 941-955.

*. Subject to change. All changes to the schedule will be announced on ILIAS.

Part B: Approaches to Causality

(3) February 25, 2019: Potential Outcomes

Mandatory Readings

- Alan S Gerber and Donald P Green. 2012. *Field Experiments. Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*. New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company. Chapters 1-1.2 and 2.

Background Readings

- Joshua D Angrist and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2008. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapters 2 and 3.
- Kosuke Imai. 2017. *Quantitative Social Science. An Introduction*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 2.
- Stephen L Morgan and Christopher Winship. 2007. *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference. Methods and Principles for Social Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

(4) March 4, 2018: Causal Identification and Research Design

Mandatory Readings

- Luke Keele. 2015. "The statistics of causal inference: A view from political methodology." *Political Analysis* 23 (3): 313–335.

Background Readings

- Joshua D Angrist and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2008. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapters 4-6.
- Stephen L Morgan and Christopher Winship. 2007. *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference. Methods and Principles for Social Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 3-9.
- Guido W Imbens and Jeffrey M Wooldridge. 2009. "Recent Developments in the Econometrics of Program Evaluation." *Journal of Economic Literature* 47 (1): 5–86.

Part C: Socio-Structural Characteristics, Attitudes, and Behavior

(5) March 11, 2018: Race and Ethnicity

Mandatory Readings

- Maya Sen and Omar Wasow. 2016. "Race as a Bundle of Sticks: Designs that Estimate Effects of Seemingly Immutable Characteristics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19:499–522.
- Aida Just and Christopher J Anderson. 2015. "Dual Allegiances? Immigrants' Attitudes toward Immigration." *Journal of Politics* 77 (1): 188–201.

Background Readings

- Aida Just. 2017. "Race, Ethnicity, and Political Behavior." In *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, edited by William R Thompson. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Achim Goerres, Sabrina J. Mayer, and Dennis C. Spies. 2018. "Immigrant voters against their will: a focus group analysis of identities, political issues and party allegiances among German resettlers during the 2017 bundestag election campaign." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.
- Achim Goerres, Dennis Spies, and Sabrina Mayer. 2018. "How Did Immigrant Voters Vote at the 2017 Bundestag Election? First Results from the Immigrant German Election Study (IMGES)." *SSRN Electronic Journal*.

(6) March 18, 2018: Gender

Mandatory Readings

- Eelco Harteveld et al. 2017. "Gender Differences in Vote Choice: Social Cues and Social Harmony as Heuristics." *British Journal of Political Science* First View.
- Mark Setzler and Alixandra B. Yanus. 2018. "Why Did Women Vote for Donald Trump?" *PS - Political Science and Politics* 51 (3): 523–527.

Background Readings

- Amanda Bittner and Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant. 2017. "Sex isn't Gender: Reforming Concepts and Measurements in the Study of Public Opinion." *Political Behavior* 39 (4): 1019–1041.

- Miki Caul Kittilson. 2016. "Gender and Political Behavior." In *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, edited by William R Thompson, 1–17. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Katelyn E. Stauffer and Diana Z. O'Brien. 2018. "Quantitative Methods and Feminist Political Science." In *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, edited by William R Thompson. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

(7) March 25, 2018: Class

Mandatory Readings

- Herbert Kitschelt and Philipp Rehm. 2014. "Occupations as a Site of Political Preference Formation." *Comparative Political Studies* 47 (23): 1670–1706.
- Thomas Kurer. 2018. "The Declining Middle: Political Reactions to Occupational Change." Working paper available online.

Background Readings

- Geoffrey Evans. 2000. "The Continued Significance of Class Voting." *Annual Review of Political Science* 3:401–417.
- Peter Achterberg and Dick Houtman. 2006. "Why do so many people vote 'unnaturally'? A cultural explanation for voting behaviour." *European Journal of Political Research* 45:75–92.

(8) April 1, 2019: Religion and Age

Mandatory Readings

- Daniel Stegmueller. 2013. "Religion and Redistributive Voting in Western Europe." *The Journal of Politics* 75 (4): 1064–1076.
- Maria Teresa Grasso et al. 2018. "Socialization and generational political trajectories: an age, period and cohort analysis of political participation in Britain." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* First View.

Background Readings

- Daniel Stegmueller. 2014. “Bayesian hierarchical age-period-cohort models with time-structured effects: An application to religious voting in the US, 1972–2008.” *Electoral Studies* 33 (March): 52–62.
- Anja Neundorff and Richard G. Niemi. 2014. “Beyond political socialization: New approaches to age, period, cohort analysis.” *Electoral Studies* 33:1–6.

(9) April 8, 2019: Contextual Repercussions

Readings I

- Christopher J. Anderson. 2009. “The Interaction of Structures and Voter Behavior.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*, edited by Russell J Dalton and Hans-Dieter Klingemann. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mandatory Readings II (choose one)

- Race and Ethnicity: Matt A Barreto, Gary M Segura, and Nathan D Woods. 2004. “The Mobilizing Effect of Majority-Minority Districts on Latino Turnout.” *American Political Science Review* 98 (1): 65–75.
- Gender: Nathalie Giger et al. 2014. “The gender gap in same-gender voting: The role of context.” *Electoral Studies* 35:303–314.
- Class: Martin Elff. 2009. “Social Divisions, Party Positions, and Electoral Behaviour.” *Electoral Studies* 28:297–308.

— Spring Break —

Part D: Applied Statistics

(10) April 29, 2019: Fundamentals of (Generalized) Linear Models

Mandatory Readings

- Gary King, Michael Tomz, and Jason Wittenberg. 2000. “Making the Most of Statistical Analyses: Improving Interpretation and Presentation.” *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (2): 341–355.

Background Readings

- Jeff Gill. 2001. *Generalized Linear Models. A Unified Approach*. 101. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

(11) May 6, 2019: Modeling Heterogeneity

Mandatory Readings

- Thomas Brambor, William Roberts Clark, and Matt Golder. 2006. “Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses.” *Political Analysis* 14:63–82.

Background Readings

- Andrew Gelman and Jennifer Hill. 2007. *Data Analysis Using Regression and Multilevel/Hierarchical Models*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 11.

Part E: Socio-Structural Characteristics of Objects of Evaluation

(12) May 13, 2019: Examples

Readings

- Nicholas Carnes and Noam Lupu. 2016. “Do voters dislike working-class candidates? Voter biases and the descriptive underrepresentation of the working class.” *American Political Science Review* 110 (4): 832–844.
- Jens Hainmueller and Dominik Hangartner. 2013. “Who gets a swiss passport? A natural experiment in immigrant discrimination.” *American Political Science Review* 107 (1): 159–187.

(13) May 20, 2019: Subject-Object Interactions

Readings

- Andrew C. Eggers, Nick Vivyan, and Markus Wagner. 2018. “Corruption, accountability and gender: do female politicians face higher standards in public life?” *Journal of Politics* 80 (1): 321–326. arXiv: arXiv:0811.2183v2.
- Jens Hainmueller and Daniel J. Hopkins. 2015. “The Hidden American Immigration Consensus: A Conjoint Analysis of Attitudes toward Immigrants.” *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (3): 529–548.

Part F: Wrap-Up

(14) May 27, 2019: Concluding Discussion

- Q&A on the research paper
- General course feedback
- Review of evaluations