



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

21st ECPR Standing Group Summer School “Political Parties in Modern Democracies”

Academic Programme

With special thanks to:

- Académie Wallonie-Bruxelles
- Vrije Universiteit Brussel
- PARTIREP, Interuniversity research programme on Political Participation and representation
- Fonds de la recherche Scientifique (FNRS)
- The Institute for European Studies (IES)
- The journal Party Politics (final reception and prize for best paper)

Summary of the programme

Monday September 12

Arrival of participants / Welcome drink

Tuesday September 13

Kris Deschouwer, Jean-Benoit Pilet & Emilie van Haute

Basic concepts and measurements for the analysis of parties and party systems

Wednesday September 14

Romain Lachat

Restructuring West-European Party Systems in the Age of Globalization

Thursday September 15

David Farrell

Political Parties and Electoral System Change

Friday September 16

Anne Rasmussen

Political parties and the European Union

Visit to the European Parliament

Monday September 19

Bonnie Meguid

Strategies of electoral competition

Tuesday September 20

Zsolt Enyedi

Parties and Party Systems in the New European Democracies

Wednesday September 21

Petra Meier

Political Parties and the Representation of Gender

Thursday September 22

Nonna Mayer

Political Parties and the Challenge of Right Wing Extremism

Friday September 23

Peter Mair

Political parties and modern democracy

Reception sponsored by *Party Politics*

Saturday September 24

Departure

DETAILED PROGRAMME

Session 1: Basic concepts and measurements for the analysis of parties and party systems

Lecturers: Kris Deschouwer (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), Jean-Benoit Pilet & Emilie van Haute (Université libre de Bruxelles)

This session presents the basic concepts and main approaches of parties and party systems: What is a political party? How can we characterize party systems? How can we classify parties? The literature is rich with classifications and typologies. However, these typologies have different origins, are based on a wide range of (sometimes competing) criteria, and have constantly been updated since the early works of party scholars. Regarding to the literature, three main aspects will be covered.

The first aspect relates to the classification of party systems. Typologies of party systems try to capture the basic structure of the competition for power between political parties. The 'core' of party systems can be identified on the basis of different criteria: number of parties, ideological differences, alternation in power. Recent approaches also stress the importance of interactions between parties at different levels of political systems.

The second question refers to party types. Starting back from Duverger and discussing the structural-organisational approach of parties, this part of the presentation deals with ideal types and sequences of party organisational development. However, the focus will be put on the articulation of the three faces of party organisation (party in central office, party in public office, and party on the ground), rather than on the historical development of parties.

The third aspect focuses on party functions. Parties are often analysed as intermediate organisation performing (essential) functions in representative democracies. Scholars have developed classifications based on functional criterion, and the list of functions attributed to parties is plethoric. This part of the presentation will be organised around V.O. Key's three 'meta'-functions: parties in the electorate, parties as organisations, and parties in government.

The presentation will strongly emphasise the intertwined character of these three aspects. Certain party organisations tend to favour specific functions in the system to the detriment of others. Parties all perform system related functions, but these functions might vary according to the party system.

Core readings

Katz, Richard S. and Mair Peter (1995), "Changing Models of Party Organizations and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party", *Party Politics* 1(1): 5-28.

Sartori, Giovanni (2005), "Party Types, Organisation and Functions", *West European Politics*, 28(1): 5-32.

Mair, P. (2002), Comparing party systems, in L. LeDuc, R. Niemi & P. Norris, *Comparing democracies 2. New challenges in the study of elections and voting*, London: Sage, p. 88-107

Suggested reading

Gunther, Richard and Diamond, Larry (2001), "Types and Functions of Parties", in Diamond, Larry and Gunther, Richard (eds), *Political Parties and Democracy*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press: 3-39.

Session 2: Restructuring West-European Party Systems in the Age of Globalization

Lecturer: Romain Lachat (Pompeu Fabra University- Barcelona)

This session presents the results of a project on the transformation of party systems, based on the analysis of the national elections of Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK in the 1970s, 1990s, and 2000s. The basic ideas have already been laid out in our two publications:

Kriesi, Hanspeter, Edgar Grande, Romain Lachat, Martin Dolezal, Simon Bornschier, Timotheos Frey 2008. *West European Politics in the Age of Globalization*. Cambridge University Press.

Kriesi, Hanspeter, Edgar Grande, Romain Lachat, Martin Dolezal, Simon Bornschier, Tim Frey 2006. 'Globalization and the transformation of the national political space: six European countries compared', *European Journal of Political Research* 45, 6: 921-957.

The point of departure is a Rokkanean perspective which assumes that the current processes of economic, cultural and political denationalization constitute a critical juncture which is transforming the structure of party competition in the West-European nation-states. The new populist right is expected to be the driving force of this transformation. With its appeal to the 'losers of globalization' in cultural terms, it is above all transforming the meaning of the cultural dimension of the competitive partisan space, and the configuration of the parties on the right. We try to substantiate these claims on the basis of data that go beyond the data used in the two previous publications.

Core reading:

Kriesi, Hanspeter, Edgar Grande, Romain Lachat, Martin Dolezal, Simon Bornschier, Tim Frey 2006. 'Globalization and the transformation of the national political space: six European countries compared', *European Journal of Political Research* 45, 6: 921-957.

Kitschelt, Herbert 2007. 'Review Article: Growth and Persistence of the Radical Right in Postindustrial Democracies: Advances and Challenges in Comparative Research', *West European Politics* 30, 5: 1176-1206.

Van der Brug, Wouter and Jost van Spanje 2009. 'Immigration, Europe and the 'new' cultural dimension. / *European Journal of Political Research* 48(3): 309-334.

Session 3: Political Parties and Electoral System Change

Lecturer: David Farrell (University College Dublin)

What role have/do parties play in (1) the design and (2) the reform of electoral systems? The first of these questions relates to ongoing debates over Duverger's laws about how electoral systems determine party systems (seen generally as the closest thing there is in political science to a 'social scientific law'). There are debates over the direction of causality, and particularly over whether the laws have things the wrong way around (or 'upside down'). The second question refers to reform of existing electoral systems. Given that electoral system determines who wins power, parties (certainly the established ones) are very nervous about any changes that might be proposed. Nowhere else does that adage of 'turkeys not voting for Christmas' fit better than this, which helps to explain why large-scale reform of electoral systems in established democracies remains rare. But changes there have been, and certainly there are plenty of instances (some still ongoing) about possible future reforms. Inevitably the available theoretical frameworks (most notably those from a rational choice tradition) place parties centre stage in the analysis.

Core reading:

Benoit, Ken (2007), 'Electoral Laws as Political Consequences: Explaining the Origins and Change of Electoral Institutions', *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10: 363-90.

Colomer, Josep (2005), 'It's Parties that Choose Electoral Systems (or, Duverger's Laws Upside Down)', *Political Studies*, 53: 1-21.

Leyenaar, Monique & Hazan, Reuven, *Reconceptualising Electoral Reform, West European Politics*, vol 34, no 3, 437-455

Suggested reading:

Gallagher, Michael and Paul Mitchell (eds), (2005, 2008), *The Politics of Electoral Systems* (OUP)

Renwick, Alan (2010), *The Politics of Electoral Reform: Changing the Rules of Democracy* (CUP)

Blais, Andre (ed.), (2008), *To Keep or to Change First Past the Post? The Politics of Electoral Reform* (OUP)

Session 4: The Role of Political Parties in the European Union

Lecturer: Anne Rasmussen (Leiden University)

Scholars have raised doubts about the ability of political parties to fulfill their traditional role as 'transmission belts' between citizens and legislators in the EU. We will discuss how the different institutional environment of the EU affects the assumptions and predictions of theories of political parties developed for the national context and discuss how political parties can influence EU legislative decision making.

We will distinguish between partisan effects in the electoral and legislative arena by considering partisan effects in all the most important EU institutions, i.e. the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council of Ministers and the European Council. When studying EU party politics, we will make a clear distinction between the effects of national parties, national party delegations and transnational party groups. The discussed empirical literature shows that, whereas parties play a role in most institutions, they are not always the dominant players, and their effect varies both across and within these institutions.

Core Reading

Bjorn Lindberg, Anne Rasmussen and Andreas Warntjen (2008), "Party Politics as Usual? The role of political parties in EU legislative decision-making" *Journal of European Public Policy* 15 (8), 1107-26

Anne Rasmussen (2008), "Party Soldiers in a non-partisan Community? Party Linkage in the European Parliament" *Journal of European Public Policy* 15 (8), 1164- 83

Arndt Wonka (2008), "Decision-making Dynamics in the European Commission: partisan, national or sectoral?" *Journal of European Public Policy* 15 (8), 1145-63

Sara Hagemann and Bjorn Hoyland (2008), "Parties in the Council?" *Journal of European Public Policy* 15 (8), 1205-21

Suggested reading

Bjorn Hoyland and Simon Hix (2011) *The Political System of the European Union*, London: Palgrave, chapters 3 and 6.

Session 5: Political Parties and Electoral Strategies

Lecturer: Bonnie Meguid

What are the tools that political parties use to compete for voters, and what are the effects of their tactics? These questions are at the heart of the burgeoning literature on party competition. For most of the twentieth century, the dominant answer to these questions was shaped by the spatial model: as argued famously by Downs (1957), political parties – conceived of as unitary actors – compete with neighboring parties for voters by altering their positions on one or more fixed issue dimensions. The resulting strategies of convergence and, to a lesser extent, divergence have become standard lenses through which to understand party behavior and party electoral fortunes. But insights from more recent work have begun to challenge the dominance of this perspective. The emergence of new issue dimensions, such as the environment and immigration, and fluctuations in the perceived importance of existing issues across and within electoral campaigns suggest that the content of the issue space may not be exogenously given and beyond actor manipulation. Similarly, the fact that two equally positioned parties are not necessarily seen by voters as being equally supportive of or competent with regard to that policy stance implies that parties may be competing for voters on the basis of non-positional factors. Furthermore, the development of new types of party raises questions about the generalizability of mainstream-oriented predictions of party tactics and party fortunes.

In this session, we will explore the nature of party electoral competition. Our focus will be on the various strategies that political parties employ and the effects of those tactics on party fortunes and the structure of the electoral arena and party system.

Core Readings:

Budge, Ian and Dennis Farlie. 1983. "Party Competition- Selective Emphasis or Direct Confrontation?" in *Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change*. eds. Hans Daalder and Peter Mair. London: Sage Publications. 267-306.

Kitschelt, Herbert. 1994. *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. Chapter 4.

Meguid, Bonnie M. 2005. "Competition Between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success." *American Political Science Review*. 99 (3): 347-59.

Suggested Readings:

Adams, James, et al. 2006. "Are Niche Parties Fundamentally Different from Mainstream Parties? The Causes and the Electoral Consequences of Western European Parties' Policy Shifts, 1976-1998." *American Journal of Political Science*. 50 (3): 513-29.

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row. Chapters 7-8.

Meguid, Bonnie M. 2008. *Party Competition between Unequals: Strategies and Electoral Fortunes in Western Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Petrocik, John R. 1996. "Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study." *American Journal of Political Science* 40: 825-50

Riker, William. 1982. *Liberalism against Populism*. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press. 197-232.

Session 6: Parties and Party Systems in the New European Democracies

Lecturer: Zsolt Enyedi (Central European University – Budapest)

The status of political parties and the functioning of party systems in new European democracies have a number of distinctive features. Parties are typically weak on the ground but often lack domestic rivals in determining public policies, public agenda, and in some cases even national identities. Party systems are characterized by considerable fragmentation and volatility, but the intra-regional differences are larger than what one would expect given the common challenges and the similarity of historical backgrounds. Electoral accountability functions well: the electorates frequently oust the incumbents for weak performance. But only in a few countries do parties function as ‘political credit institutions’ (Pizzorno): the level of turnout is low, the personalization of politics is high and corruption is endemic. Parties typically reach voters not through large scale bureaucratic organizations but through postmodern media politics, and, in certain instances, by sponsoring pseudo-civic movements.

The research on postcommunist countries has used the region as a laboratory to test a large number of hypotheses derived from the general political science literature. Most attention focused on phenomena that are particularly salient in these countries: volatility, new parties, questions of institutionalization and the colonization of state by parties. Given the elitist nature of the transition to democracy and of decision making, many findings underline the relevance of the supply side of politics. This session will focus on recent findings about the relations among party elites, ideological configurations - that often look idiosyncratic from the point of view of classical party families -, and the crystallization and change in fundamental party system attributes in Eastern Europe.

Core reading:

Robert Rohrschneider and Stephen Whitefield 2009. Representational Consistency: Stability and Change in Political Cleavages in Central and Eastern Europe, *Politics & Policy*, Volume 37, No. 4: 667-690.

Zsolt Enyedi and Fernando Casal-Bertoa 2010. Patterns of Inter-Party Competition in Eastern Europe 1990-2009 in: Paul G. Lewis and Radoslaw Markowski (eds.) *Europeanising party politics? Comparative perspectives on Central and Eastern Europe after Enlargement*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Margit Tavits and Natalia Letki 2009. When Left Is Right: Party Ideology and Policy in Post-Communist Europe, *American Political Science Review*, 103(4): 555-569.

Scott Mainwaring and Mariano Torcal 2006. Party System Institutionalization and Party System Theory After the Third Wave of Democratization, in Richard S. Katz and William Crotty (eds.) *Handbook of Political Parties*. London: Sage Publications, 204-227.

Session 7: Political Parties and the Representation of Gender

Lecturer: Petra Meier (University of Antwerp)

The last two decades saw an increasing interest in the position of women in politics and in the representation of gender in public policies. Political parties are important players in these matters, given the role they fulfill in recruiting and selecting candidates and in making public policies. This session focuses on the nexus of political parties and gender, more particularly on how gender interacts with processes of representation in political parties and in party politics. The session will address three issues that are prominent in research on the subject. First, there is the question of gender related thresholds to party politics. Are political parties gendered institutions? Do women face different and more thresholds than men, when they try to engage with the party and are these thresholds gender related? Why and how are political parties specific gate keepers when it comes to women? Which role do party structures, characteristics and processes play in these matters? What effects do party systems have on the representation of gender? Under what conditions do women gain seats in elected office? Early literature on political parties and gender focused on this issue, arguing that the problem does not reside in women's lower interest in politics, but rather in parties' lower interest in women as their representatives and stakeholders. Based on this assumption, the literature addresses a second issue, namely, how (organized) women have tried to deal with such a gender bias. What strategies did women's movements and political women's groups deploy in order to break into party structures and to safeguard their position within these structures? Which women's movements and political women's groups were active in these matters and why? What were the windows of opportunity? What explains success and failure in these matters? A third issue addressed by the literature is the question on the interaction between gender and political parties, once women made their way in. Do women active within and on behalf of the party face different challenges than their male colleagues? How gendered are processes and practices? And do women bring about change? Does a change in the representation of gender make parties change? Do rules and practices change, once women enter parties in a larger number? Why do some parties promote a gender balance? How do they do it? What accounts for these differences?

Core reading:

Hinojosa, Magda. 2009. "Whatever the Party Asks of Me: Women's Political Representation in Chile's Union Demócrata Independiente". *Politics & Gender* 5: 377-408.

Young, Lisa. 2000. *Feminists and Party Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 183-206 (chapter 6: Can Feminists Transform Party Politics?).

Cowley, Philip, and Childs, Sarah. 2003. "Too Spineless to Rebel? New Labour's Women MPs". *British Journal of Political Science* 33:345-365.

Session 8: Political Parties and the Challenge of Right Wing Extremism

Lecturer: Nonna Mayer (Centre d'Etudes Européennes de Sciences Po)

Since the eighties, one of the main political changes in Western Europe has been the electoral upsurge of a new family of “extreme”, “radical”, “populist” or “new” right parties, such as the French National Front, the Flemish Vlaams Belang, the Austrian FPÖ, the Danish Dansk Folkeparti or the Swiss People’s Party. The aim of this presentation is to outline the nature, the explanatory factors and the political impact of these parties on the existing party order. We will start with the uneasy task to define the terms of extreme right, populism and right wing populism. Then we will outline the diversity of this political family, drawing from comparative surveys. Last we shall focus on the different strategies adopted by the mainstream parties in response and how in return they contribute to the success or decline of the extreme right parties.

Core reading:

- Arzheimer, K., 2009, “Contextual Factors and the Extreme Right Vote in Western Europe, 1980-2002”, *American Journal of Political Science*, (53(2)), 259-275.
- Downs W.M. (2001), ‘Pariahs in their midst: Belgian and Norwegian parties react to extremist threat’, *West European Politics*, 24(3), 23-42.
- Van Spanje J., Van der Brug W. (2009), “ Being intolerant of the intolerant. The exclusion of Western European anti-immigration parties and its consequences for party choice”, *Acta Politica* (2009) 44, 353–384.

Suggested reading

- Art, D. (2007), “*Reacting to the Radical Right: Lessons from Germany and Austria*”, *Party Politics* 13 (3), 331-349.
- Bornschiefer S. (2010), *Cleavage Politics and the Populist Right. The New Cultural Conflict in Western Europe*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Capoccia G. (2002), “Anti-system Parties: A conceptual Reassessment”, *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 14(1), 9-35
- Kriesi H., Grande E., Lachat R., Dolezal M., Bornschiefer S. et Frey T.(2008), *West European Politics in the Age of Globalization*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Rydgren J. (2005), “Is Extreme Right-Wing Populism Contagious? Explaining the Emergence of a New Party Family”, *European Journal of Political Research* 44, 413-437.

Session 9: Political Parties and Modern Democracy

Lecturer: Peter Mair (European University Institute)

Party scholars have long been aware of the tensions that exist between the demands of representative government, on the one hand, and the constraints imposed by responsible government, on the other. Since the 1980s, however, not least as a result of a deepening European integration, these tensions have become substantially more acute. For a variety of reasons, partly to do with the parties themselves, and partly to do with the context in which they operate, it has become increasingly difficult for parties in government to function as representative agencies. At the same time, for a host of other reasons, these same parties face increasingly powerful constraints imposed by the demands of responsible government. In the past, this sort of tension was overcome through the mobilisation capacities of the parties themselves. Now, these capacities have waned, while the tension itself has become more acute. One consequence of coping with these problems can be seen in the growing trend towards bipolar competition in many contemporary democracies, in which the primary contest revolves around a reinvigorated divide between government and opposition, and in which even multi-party systems begin to behave like two-party systems. Another consequence is the rise of a populist opposition on both left and right. This session will deal with all of these issues, and will propose that there is a link between the changing structures of competition, on the one hand, and the shift in the role of parties, on the other, with more direct competition for office serving to enhance the procedural rather than the representative functions of parties. At the same time, there are limits to how well party systems can function in this way, and these do not bode well for the legitimacy of party government and party democracy.

Core reading:

Richard Bellamy, 2010. Democracy without Democracy? Can Democratic 'Outputs' be Separated from the Democratic 'Inputs' provided by Competitive Parties and Majority Rule? *Journal of European Public Policy* 17:1, 2-19.

Peter Mair, 2005. Democracy Beyond Parties. Center for the Study of Democracy. Working Paper 05-06. <http://repositories.cdlib.org/csd/05-06>. A version is also available as Ruling the Void, *New Left Review* 42, Nov-Dec 2006, 25-52.

Peter Mair, 2009. *Representative versus Responsible Government*. MPIfG Working Paper 09/8. Cologne: Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies, 2009. <http://www.mpifg.de/pu/workpap/wp09-8.pdf>

Background reading:

Simon Bornschier, 2010. Cleavage Politics and the Populist Right. The New Cultural Conflict in Western Europe. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

See also Mark Blyth on austerity on You Tube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmsjGys-VqA>