

Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften
Lehrstuhl für Politische Wissenschaft III, Vergleichende Regierungslehre
Prof. Dr. Marc Debus

Selected Topics in Comparative Government (VR 1): Scaling Down: Polity, Policy, and Politics on the Sub-national Level

Type of event: Seminar (Advanced Level, 3rd and 4th year course)
Place and time: Thursday, 17:15 – 18:45 (weekly) in B 6, 23-25 Bauteil A (Hörsaalgebäude) – A 102
Lecturer: Martin Gross, MA
E-Mail: martin.gross@uni-mannheim.de

Description:

Comparative studies on the national level often face two problems: (1) a limited number of cases, and (2) many results, like in coalition formation studies, are highly country-sensitive. By focussing on the sub-national level, we are able to deal with these two problems. In this seminar, therefore, we study and analyse the institutional setting, the policy-making process, and the party competition both on the regional and the local level in a variety of different countries (West Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America). We will also discuss the impact of different degrees of decentralisation on the behaviour of parties and their representatives in multi-level political systems.

Literature:

Caramani, Daniele (eds.) (2014): *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (3rd edition).
Clark, William Roberts/Golder, Matt/Golder, Sona N. (2013): *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Los Angeles: CQ Press (2nd edition).
Hooghe, Liesbet/Marks, Gary/Schakel, Arjan H. (2010): *The Rise of Regional Authority. A Comparative Study of 42 Democracies*. New York: Routledge.
Landman, Todd (2003): *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction*. London/New York: Routledge (2nd edition).
Loughlin, John/Hendriks, Frank/Lidström, Anders (eds.) (2011): *The Oxford Handbook of Local and Regional Democracy in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Newton, Kenneth/van Deth, Jan W. (2010): *Foundations of comparative politics. Democracies of the modern world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
The Modern Language Association of America (2009): *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America (7th edition).

Recommended for:

Students in the fourth semester.

Basic information:

- 2 hours per week.
- 7 ECTS credits.
- Teaching language is English.

Grading:

- 25 % oral presentation, handout and discussion leadership.
- 25 % summary and discussion of two other students' research proposals.

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- 50 % seminar paper.

Registration:

Students have to register for this lecture online.

Office hours:

Wednesday, 16-17 in A5, Bauteil A, room A 340 and by appointment

Telephone: 0621-181 2052

E-Mail: martin.gross@uni-mannheim.de

Online access to course material:

<https://portal.uni-mannheim.de>

Goals to achieve:

- Gaining insight in theoretical and empirical analyses of comparative government research concerning sub-national polities, policies and politics.
- Finding an answer to a comparative research question.
- Practice of presentation techniques.
- Practice of being a discussant.
- Preparation for bachelor thesis by gaining skills on how to write a seminar paper.

How to succeed:

1. Regular attendance and active participation.
2. Oral presentation with printed handout to one of the topics included in the syllabus.
3. Oral presentation of the research proposal for the seminar paper, and summary and discussion of two other students' research proposals.
4. Seminar paper.

Readings:

For each week there are two required readings. The required readings are either recent classics which are commonly taken as reference point for starting off new research in the field, or examples of innovative studies in a subfield. Please note: it is essential that you read these pieces of literature prior to the sessions in order to participate in the class discussions. Moreover, you have to consult additional literature for the preparation of your oral presentation. The guiding questions outlined at the end of each session should help you with the preparation of the readings for the next session. Your input in discussions is needed to make our weekly meetings productive and beneficial to everyone. All essential readings are available electronically via Ilias. Every reference is marked with an asterisk. This indicates the recommended sequence of reading (1. = *; 2. = **).

Assessment:

Class participation

Class participation is absolutely necessary to make our weekly sessions interesting and helpful for the preparation of your seminar paper. One of the main goals of this course is to gain insight in theoretical and empirical analyses of comparative government research (in a

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broad sense) concerning sub-national politics, policies, and politics. This is why students are expected to complete the readings for each week in order to engage actively in discussions and other tasks in class.

Oral presentation, handout, and discussion leadership

Each session kicks off with an oral presentation held by one or two students. The goal is for you to practice how to present a complex subject in a compelling and easily understandable way. Students shall answer an overall research question by presenting the key arguments of the readings and providing additional empirical and theoretical evidence. The empirical part of the presentation has to compare a minimum of two cases (countries, states, local units, governments, parties, ...). The presentation should last no longer than 15 minutes (20 minutes for presentations held by two students), followed by a discussion led by the presenters. To make the discussion more meaningful, the presenters should prepare three guiding questions in advance. Finally, a 1-2-pages handout should be printed out and distributed in class. The presentation should be sent via e-mail to martin.gross@uni-mannheim.de one day before the class. The presentation, handout, and discussion leadership make up **25 % of the final grade**. Students are expected to come to my office hour on Wednesday one week in advance of the respective seminar session to discuss the content of their presentation, having sent a preliminary content overview and three guiding questions for the discussion the day before.

Oral presentation of the research proposal and discussion of two other students' research proposals

All students are expected to present their research proposal for the seminar paper in max. 5 minutes and with no more than two slides. The presentation should include topic, outline, research question, and the planned use of data for the seminar paper. The research proposal needs to be handed in by **27th April 2014** via e-mail to martin.gross@uni-mannheim.de. Every student is expected to discuss two other research proposals during class. Which research proposals you will have to discuss and on which date you will have to present your research proposal will be assigned by me. As discussant, you are expected to summarize the research proposal (goal of the paper, central argument, methods, points that are good, points that might strengthen the paper, and questions) in bullet points. This summary makes up **25 % of the final grade** and needs to be handed in by **4th May 2014** via e-mail to martin.gross@uni-mannheim.de.

Seminar paper and research proposal

All students are expected to find their own research topic for the seminar paper. The topic of your seminar paper should be related to the seminar and include a comparative analysis. To make sure the topic is satisfactory, manageable and of appropriate size, you should hand in a research proposal for your seminar paper. This research proposal should include the preliminary title of the paper, the overall topic and the specific research question which will be answered. It should list the cases which will be analysed and explain the reasons for the case selection. The research proposal should also include a preliminary content overview indicating the main arguments of the seminar paper as well as a provisional bibliography. The research proposal needs to be handed in by **27th April 2014** via e-mail to martin.gross@uni-mannheim.de.

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The seminar paper needs to meet the scientific requirements discussed in the tutorial “Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten” during the first semester of your B.A. course. Moreover, it should answer a research question in the field of comparative government and apply an empirical method discussed in the seminar. An extra focus lies on the comparative moment of your research paper: you are required to compare at least two countries, states, local units, governments or parties, depending on your research question. The writing language is English. The seminar paper maximum length is 20 pages (Arial or Times New Roman, font size 12, 2.5 cm margin, 1.5 line spacing). For general questions regarding how to write a research paper, I recommend to consult the “MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers” by The Modern Language Association of America. The seminar paper makes up **50 % of the final grade** and needs to be handed in by **27th June 2014** (both as pdf via e-mail to martin.gross@uni-mannheim.de and as hard copy to my office or the secretariat of the chair). Together with the seminar paper you are required to hand in a declaration of authorship.

Please be aware of the fact that plagiarism will not be tolerated at all and that plagiarist work counts as failed. Plagiarism refers to a form of cheating and has been defined as “the false assumption of authorship: the wrongful act of taking the product of another person’s mind, and presenting it as one’s own” (Lindey 1952: 2).¹

Syllabus

- (1) **13.02. Introduction and organisation of the seminar**
[20.02.] [ECPR Winter School in Methods and Techniques]
- (2) **27.02. Why and how to ‘scale down’ in multi-level settings**
 - *Jeffery, Charley (2008): The challenge of territorial politics. *Policy & Politics* 36 (4): 545-557.
 - **Snyder, Richard (2001): Scaling Down: The Subnational Comparative Method. *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36 (1): 93-110.
- (3) **06.03. Politics on the sub-national level: Consequences of political decentralization**
 - **Faguet, Jean-Paul (2009): Governance from Below in Bolivia: A Theory of Local Government with Two Empirical Tests. *Latin American Politics and Society* 51 (4): 29-68.
 - *Gélineau, François/Remmer, Karen L. (2005): Political Decentralization and Electoral Accountability: The Argentine Experience, 1983-2001. *British Journal of Political Science* 36 (1): 133-157.

¹ Lindey, Alexander. 1952. *Plagiarism and Originality*. New York: Harper.

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- (4) 13.03. **Politics on the sub-national level: Local government reforms in European democracies**
- *Heinelt, Hubert/Hlepas, Nikolaos-K. (2006): Typologies of Local Government Systems. In: Bäck, Henry/Heinelt, Hubert/Magnier, Annick (eds.): *The European Mayor. Political Leaders in the Changing Context of Local Democracy*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: 21-42.
 - **Hendriks, Frank/Loughlin, John/Lidström, Anders (2011): European Subnational Democracy: Comparative Reflections and Conclusions. In: Loughlin, John/Hendriks, Frank/Lidström, Anders (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of Local and Regional Democracy in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 715-742.
- (5) 20.03. **Politics on the sub-national level: Party competition in multi-level settings**
- **Moreno, Erika (2003): Subnational Determinants of National Multipartism in Latin America. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 28 (2): 179-201.
 - *Swenden, Wilfred/Maddens, Bart (2009): Introduction. Territorial Party Politics in Western Europe: A Framework For Analysis. In: Swenden, Wilfried/Maddens, Bart (eds.): *Territorial Party Politics in Western Europe*. London: Palgrave Macmillan: 1-30.
- (6) 27.03. **Politics on the sub-national level: Government formation**
- *Bäck, Hanna/Debus, Marc/Müller, Jochen/Bäck, Henry (2013): Regional Government Formation in Varying Multilevel Contexts: A Comparison of Eight European Countries. *Regional Studies* 47 (3): 368-387.
 - **Skjæveland, Asbjorn/Serritzlew, Soren/Blom-Hansen, Jens (2007): Theories of coalition formation: An empirical test using data from Denmark. *European Journal of Political Research* 46 (5): 721-745.
- (7) 03.04. **Policies on the sub-national level: The regional sphere**
- *Hecock, Douglas R. (2006): Electoral Competition, Globalization, and Subnational Education Spending in Mexico, 1999-2004. *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (4): 950-961.
 - **Vatter, Adrian/Rüefli, Christian (2003): Do Political Factors Matter for Health Care Expenditure? A Comparative Study of Swiss Cantons. *Journal of Public Policy* 23 (3): 301-323.
- (8) 10.04. **Policies on the sub-national level: Same-sex unions**
- **Debus, Marc/Knill, Christoph/Tosun, Jale (2013): Registration Fees for Same-Sex Unions, Local Party Politics and Societal Demand. *Local Government Studies* 39 (6): 756-776.

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- *Díez, Jordi (2013): Explaining Policy Outcomes: The Adoption of Same-Sex Unions in Buenos Aires and Mexico City. *Comparative Political Studies* 46 (2): 212-235.

[17.04.] [Spring Break]

[24.04.] [Spring Break]

[01.05.] [Official holiday]

(9) 08.05. **Presentation and discussion of research proposals: Part I**
(extended by max. 45 minutes if needed)

(10) 15.05. **Presentation and discussion of research proposals: Part II**
(extended by max. 45 minutes if needed)

(11) 22.05. **How to write an English seminar paper and evaluation of the seminar**

- *Zigerell, L. J. (2011): Of Publishable Quality: Ideas for Political Science Seminar Papers. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44 (3): 629-633.
- **Zigerell, L. J. (2013): Rookie Mistakes: Preemptive Comments on Graduate Student Empirical Research Manuscripts. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44 (3): 142-146.

[29.05.] [Official holiday]