

National Sovereignty Referendums in the EU and Abroad

M.A. Seminar
University of Konstanz
Winter 2017/18

Instructor: Dr. Friederike Luise Kelle
Email: friederike.kelle@uni-konstanz.de
Office: D 230
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:30pm – 3:30pm

Course Location: D 433
Course Time: Monday,
3:15pm – 4:45pm

Overview

The failed push of the Catalans for a referendum in 2014, the 2016 negotiations over a new referendum in Scotland, the Russian annexation vote in Crimea in 2014, and the state building referendum in South Sudan in 2011 highlight the timeliness of the study of popular votes on issues of self-rule. This seminar investigates the causes, strategies, and chances for success of national sovereignty referendums on a global scale, both in post-conflict states and the advanced democracies. Motivations and opportunities of the contestant as well as the domestic framework in the host state are equally addressed. Integral to the course is the application of concepts and mechanisms to an individually chosen case study, which will be presented to the class at the end of the semester.

Objectives

- Understand central concepts and mechanisms
- Classify types of sovereignty referendums and describe strategies of political contention
- Evaluate the chances of referendum success
- Discuss the domestic and international reasons for success or failure
- Apply this knowledge to a specific case over the course of the semester

Requirements

Grading of the course will be based on in class participation, presentation, a news summary, a response paper, a case portfolio, and a research paper, which are described in detail below. The purpose of the requirements is to create an environment enabling for maximum learning success. I therefore expect everyone to come prepared to every session, complete the required readings, as well as to adhere to the deadlines and formal criteria laid out in this syllabus. The following assignments are to be completed:

- Regular and active participation (10%)
- Presentation (10%)
- Response paper (10%)
- Willingness to intensively engage with a case study on a regular basis, including the development of a portfolio (30%)
- Research paper (40%)

Failure to comply with the requirements will be reflected in the grading, and might even result in failing the course. Following the examination regulations, failure to submit or failing any of the examination requirements, also including plagiarism, results in failing the complete course.

Office hours are offered from the third week of the lecture period onwards, on Tuesdays 2:30pm to 3:30pm. Please sign up in advance on the list at my office door.

(1) Regular and Active Participation (10%)

Active participation is essential for making the seminar fruitful, and therefore constitutes a significant part of the final grade. Both the discussion of shortcomings of the literature as well as suggestions for improvement are essential components of class discussion. Regular and active participation, including the careful preparation of the week's readings, are therefore critical to make the seminar worthwhile and instructive.

Following the departmental guidelines, you are allowed to miss a maximum of two sessions. If you have to miss a third session due to serious reasons, I have to be informed in advance as soon as possible. Instead of the third session an additional assignment has to be completed. Details and the binding submission deadline will be communicated. If more than two sessions are missed and no additional assignment is completed instead of the third session, the participation requirement and therefore the complete course will be graded as failed. The grades for participation will be announced at the end of the lecture period on request.

(2) Presentation (10%)

Every student will prepare a presentation of around 10 min duration based on the literature assigned to the respective session, indicated by an asterisk (*). Summarizing the assigned piece is not the primary function of the presentation, as all participants prepared the readings in advance. Rather, I expect you to go beyond the arguments forwarded in the article and point your audience to possible flaws in the conceptual or empirical setup of the article. The purpose of the presentation is to engage with the literature and to develop and defend your own opinion. Please feel encouraged to do this in a non-conventional way if you feel that this better serves the message you want to communicate. The duration of the presentation might be extended if necessary following prior consultation with me. If you are unsure whether your presentation idea meets the requirements of the course, make sure to discuss it beforehand during the office hours.

I expect you to send me any supporting materials you plan to use during your presentation, such as power point presentations, handouts, etc., in .pdf-format **the day before the relevant session until 6pm**. Please inform me until the Friday preceding your presentation if you need a laptop.

(3) Response Paper (10%)

During the session on October 30 you will compose the Response Paper. The motivation is to assess the sources, strategies and chances for success of your selected case study after some initial research.

The Response Paper covers two pages plus bibliography (font size 12, Times New Roman or the like, 1.5 spacing, margins 2.5cm), and is submitted until **November 3** in digital (.pdf) and paper format. Please enclose the declaration of independent work, which is available at <https://www.polver.uni-konstanz.de/en/advice-and-service/academic-working/plagiarism/>.

(4) Portfolio (30%)

The portfolio is a way to reflect and work on your case study in a systematic fashion every week. Following your preparation for each individual session the new knowledge and insights are applied to your case study and summarized on one page maximum. The portfolio can have the format of a folder, but you can also find creative ways to present

the information, for example as a poster and handout. The work load should approximate the time invested into a folder. If you plan a creative way to present your work please consult with me in advance.

A summary of sources, strategies, and chances of success of your case should be the conclusion of the portfolio. This operates as a mirror of your Response Paper, highlighting the increase in your knowledge and skill throughout the semester. Please add the Response Paper to the portfolio, preceding the summary. The summary covers two pages plus bibliography (font size 12, Times New Roman or the like, 1.5 spacing, margins 2.5cm).

The portfolio is submitted during the last session on **February 12** in digital (.pdf) and paper format. Please enclose the declaration of independent work, which is available at <https://www.polver.uni-konstanz.de/en/advice-and-service/academic-working/plagiarism/>.

(5) Research Paper (40%)

The research paper will build on the aspects covered in the seminar, but has to involve a substantive amount of work outside of the approaches and literature discussed during the semester. Please keep in mind that you should not work on your Portfolio's case study for your research paper. The same applies to your presentation topic. I encourage you to find a topic you are interested in, and to think about what you want to do from early on. The purpose of the paper is to identify a puzzle, develop a theoretical argument responding to it, and to test the expectations empirically. Both quantitative and qualitative work is welcome. There will be a session at the end of the lecture period where you have a chance to present your ideas and receive feedback by your peers and the instructor. I am happy to comment on your research design throughout the lecture period, and encourage you to work on the paper topic during the session on December 18.

The paper has to meet the standards of good scientific practice. For general inquiries and writing support see the relevant webpages of the department (<https://www.polver.uni-konstanz.de/en/advice-and-service/academic-working/>) and of the University's Writing Center (<https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/writing-centre/>). The formatting of the paper is: 10-12 pages, font size 12, Times New Roman or the like, double spacing, margins 2.5cm. All papers are due until **March 18, 2018** in digital (.pdf) and paper format. You are, of course, welcome to submit earlier. Please enclose the declaration of independent work, which is available at <https://www.polver.uni-konstanz.de/en/advice-and-service/academic-working/plagiarism/>.

Questions to consider in formulating and evaluating social science research (by Hein Goemans)

1. What is the central question?
 - Why is it important (theoretically, substantively)?
 - What is being explained (what is the dependent variable and how does it vary)?
 - How does this phenomenon present a puzzle?
2. What is the central answer?
 - What is doing the explaining (what are the independent variables and how do they vary)?
 - What are the hypotheses (what is the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, what kind of changes in the independent variable causes what kind of change in the dependent variable)?
 - What are the causal mechanisms (why are the independent and dependent variables related as in the hypothesis)?
 - How do the independent variables relate to each other?
 - What assumptions does the theory make?
 - Is the theory falsifiable?
 - What does this answer add to our understanding of the question?
3. What are the possible alternative explanations?
 - What assumptions does the central answer make about the direction of causality?
 - What other answers might there be to the central question, and to what degree do they conflict with the central answer?
 - Could the hypothesized relationships have occurred by chance?
4. Why are the possible alternative explanations wrong?
 - What is the logical structure of the alternative explanations, and why do they fail?
 - What is the empirical reason for the failure of the alternative explanations?
5. What is the relationship between the theory and the evidence
 - What does the research design allow to vary (i.e., are the explanations variables or constants)?
 - What does the research design hold constant (i.e., does it help rule out alternative explanations)?
 - How are the theoretical constructs operationalized?
6. How do the empirical conclusions relate to the theory?
 - How confident are you about the theory in light of the evidence?
 - How widely do the conclusions generalize? What are the limitations of the study?
 - What does the provisionally accepted or revised theory say about questions of broader importance?

Topics and Readings

All readings listed are required to be completed by all participants for the respective sessions. Items with an asterisk (*) are presented by a fellow student. The readings will be uploaded to the ILIAS page of the course. A password is required to access the materials, which is announced in the first session. In addition, there is a "Semesterapparat" containing relevant literature in the library.

1. Session (October 23): Overview and Introduction

Part 1: Introduction

2. Session (October 30): Response Paper

- No session, instead research for and composition of response paper
- due November 3

3. Session (November 6): Definitions

- Direct democracy, sovereignty, referendums
- For literature see ILIAS folder

4. Session (November 13): Types of Referendums

- Qvortrup, Matt. 2014. *Referendums and Ethnic Conflict*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Ch. 2, 3, 5, 6
- Hug, Simon. 2004. Occurrence and Policy Consequences of Referendums: A Theoretical Model and Empirical Evidence. *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 16 (3):321-356. doi:10.1177/0951629804043205, read pp. 321-325 ONLY

5. Session (November 20): Rules and Motivations

- Ruth, Saskia, Yanina Welp, und Laurence Whitehead (Eds.). 2017. *Let the People Rule? Direct Democracy in the Twenty-First Century*. Colchester: ECPR Press, Ch. 7.
- *Qvortrup, Matt. 2014. *Referendums and Ethnic Conflict*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Ch. 8.

6. Session (November 27): Actors – Elites and Voters

- *Petersohn, B., Behnke, N., & Rhode, E. M. (2015). Negotiating Territorial Change in Multinational States: Party Preferences, Negotiating Power and the Role of the Negotiation Mode. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 45(4), 626-652. doi:10.1093/publius/pjv016Referenden
- Durán-Martínez, A. (2012). Presidents, Parties, and Referenda in Latin America. *Comparative Political Studies*, 45(9), 1159-1187. doi:10.1177/0010414011434010

Part 2: Process and Outcome

7. *Session (December 4): Campaigning and Framing*
 - *De Vreese, C. H., & Semetko, H. A. (2004). *Political Campaigning in Referendums: Framing the Referendum Issue*. Abingdon: Routledge, Ch.1, 6-9. (presentation on Ch 1, plus background)
 - Dekavalla, Marina. 2016. Framing referendum campaigns: the 2014 Scottish independence referendum in the press. *Media, Culture & Society* 38 (6):793-810. doi:10.1177/0163443715620929.

8. *Session (December 11): Decentralization*
 - Brancati, Dawn. 2006. Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism? *International Organization* 60 (3):651-685. doi:10.1017/S002081830606019X.
 - *Sorens, J. P. 2016. Secession Risk and Fiscal Federalism. *Publius - The Journal of Federalism* 46 (1):25-50. doi:10.1093/publius/pjv037.

9. *Session (December 18): no session*
 - Research for seminar paper, work on research design

10. *Session (January 8): Partition*
 - Griffiths, Ryan D. 2015. Between Dissolution and Blood: How Administrative Lines and Categories Shape Secessionist Outcomes. *International Organization* 69 (03):731-751. doi:10.1017/S0020818315000077.
 - *Sambanis, Nicholas. 2000. Partition as a Solution to Ethnic War: An Empirical Critique of the Theoretical Literature. *World Politics* 52 (04):437-483. doi:10.1017/S0043887100020074.

11. *Session (January 15): A Threat to Democracy?*
 - Hug, Simon. 2009. Some thoughts about referendums, representative democracy, and separation of powers. *Constitutional Political Economy* 20 (3):251-266. doi:10.1007/s10602-008-9065-1.
 - LeDuc, Lawrence. 2015. Referendums and deliberative democracy. *Electoral Studies* 38 (Supplement C):139-148.
 - Ruth, Saskia, Yanina Welp, and Laurence Whitehead (Eds.). 2017. *Let the People Rule? Direct Democracy in the Twenty-First Century*. Colchester: ECPR Press, Ch. 4 and Afterword.
 - Butler, David, and Austin Ranney. 1994. *Referendums Around the World: The Growing Use of Direct Democracy*. Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press, Ch. 2.

12. *Session (January 22): Measuring Sovereignty*
 - *Mendez, Fernando, and Micha Germann. 2016. Contested Sovereignty: Mapping Referendums on Sovereignty over Time and Space. *British Journal of Political Science* FirstView:1-25. doi:10.1017/S0007123415000563.
 - Hooghe, L., Marks, G., & Schakel, A. H. (2008). Operationalizing Regional Authority: A Coding Scheme for 42 Countries, 1950–2006. *Regional & Federal Studies*, 18(2), 123-142. DOI: 10.1080/13597560801979480

- *Marks, G., Hooghe, L., & Schakel, A. H. (2008). Patterns of Regional Authority. *Regional & Federal Studies*, 18(2-3), 167-181. doi:10.1080/13597560801979506

13. Session (January 29): Presentation of Research Paper Topics

14. Session (February 5): Supranational and External Actors (I)

- South Sudan, West Sahara, Timor Leste, Kosovo, Scotland

15. Session (February 12): Supranational and External Actors (II) & Summarizing Discussion