

Class 14: Social Movements online, in effect, dying out, and going forward

Contemporary social movements and beyond: climate, migration

Dr. Michael C. Zeller

Agenda for the day

- Opening notes
- Klausur instructions and brief review
- Pointers on research papers
- Summarising and moving forward
- Any questions, concerns, feedback for this class?

Opening notes



Presentations line-up

Date	Presenters	Method
4 Dec:	Daichi, Seongyeon, Jehyun	ethnography
8 Jan:	Ayla, Tara, Theresa, Annabelle	discourse analysis
15 Jan:	Luna, Emilene, Raffa, Sofia	TBD

Klausur instructions and brief review

- exam-day instructions
- quick review of Vorlesung material, themes:
 1. historical experience
 2. Constitutional Court
 3. parliamentary system, executive dominance
 4. cooperative federalism
 5. elections, parties, and party system change



Klausur instructions

- 2 February (Monday) at (promptly!) 8.00 in the AudiMax
- arrive at 7.45 to get checked in
- bring your ID!
- consider going to the toilet before entering Audimax...

- time management: e.g., 15 minutes each for 3 Vorlesung questions; 45 minutes for 1 essay question
- FIVE questions provided – THREE must be answered
- Questions consist of **factual** knowledge component and **analytical** component
- Overview of central topics in the lecture plan (under '*Organisatorisches*'). Exam questions relate to these central topics
- Reference to central articles of the Basic Law relevant for some questions (e.g. Eternity clause Art. 79, Paragraph 3 of the Basic Law; Art. 21 bz Regulation of parties)
- details about other countries are not required knowledge

Quick review of Prof. Bolleyer's course material

- FIVE themes in the Vorlesung course
 1. Germany as system shaped by historical experience
 2. Federal Constitutional Court as above day-to-day politics vs. strategic actor (Vanberg model)
 3. Germany classified as parliamentary system that invites executive dominance
 4. Germany classified as case of cooperative federalism
 5. Elections, parties, and party system change

1. Germany as system shaped by history - basics

1. Germany as system shaped by history

- Lessons from Weimar: e.g., Eternity clause Art. 79 Abs. 3
- Areas of focus:
 1. **constitutional principle vs. democratic principle** (BRD: constitutional sovereignty, UK: parliamentary sovereignty);
 2. **substantive vs. procedural understanding of democracy** (different from the Weimar Constitution)
- Key concept: *wehrhafte Demokratie*
 - “defensive democracy” –> intended to prevent democracy from abolishing itself through democratic procedures
 - e.g., **Eternity clause**; **forfeiture of basic rights** (Art. 18 GG); **group ban** (Art. 9 Abs 2 GG); **party ban** (Art. 21 Abs 2 GG); constitutional protection offices; officials’ **duty to be loyal** to the constitution (Article 5, 33 GG)
- Logic of **consensus democracy**: gov. responsive to as many citizens as possible; maximal interests integrated into decision-making process –> prevent tyrannous majority

2. Federal Constitutional Court

3. Germany: parliamentary system, executive domin

- separation of powers (less helpful to understand exec.-leg. relation in parliamentarism — different in presidentialism)
- Primary characteristic of parliamentarism: dependence of the executive on the legislature
 - result: functional interlocking of powers - government & government majority/factions dominate legislation (“interlocking” also through the government’s right of initiative)
 - opposition factions exercise ‘control rights’
- Central institutional mechanisms:
 - election of the chancellor (chancellor majority)
 - confidence vote and constructive vote of no confidence – promotes stability (cf. Weimar!)

4. Germany classified as case of cooperative federalism

- Cooperative federalism in Germany (vs. dual federalism/separate federalism (e.g. USA))
 - Essentially an executive federalism (state governments in the Bundesrat influence the national constitution, implementation of laws by state administrations centrally)
 - Distribution of powers that encourages cooperation: e.g. competing legislation; community tasks; also: financial integration (community taxes) (vs. clear “separation” in dual/separate federalism)
 - Article 72, Paragraph 2 of the Basic Law “establishment of equal living conditions in the federal territory” (“unitary federalism”) –> Political integration also through voluntary, horizontal cooperation: Conferences of Ministerpräsidenten
- Bundesrat - strong second chamber: legislative power of consent
 - Composition: government representatives of the states (unlike the classic Senate model)

5. Elections, parties, and party system change

- **Political participation:** *all activities that citizens do voluntarily with the goal to influence the political system*
 - **conventional** (e.g., voting) vs. **unconventional** (e.g., protesting)
 - **trend towards individual participation** forms—away from collective forms (societal changes such as individualisation, secularisation)
 - Voting/elections are central form of participation
 - **responsiveness mechanism** (according to voter preference) –
> increasing tension here
 - generates: *legitimation, mobilisation, recruitment, representation*, etc.

5. Elections, parties, and party system change

- **Parties:** *political groups that present candidates for public office* (Sartori 1976/2000)
 - parties as “**transmission belts**” (like interest groups), but operate in society and within political institutions
 - in DE, parties are ‘**institutional actors**’ or ‘**state organs**’ (Art. 21 GG)
 - central aspects: participation in political **decision-making**; obligation of **intra-party democracy**; state **financing** (and accountability); possible party ban

5. Elections, parties, and party system change

Vorlesung: example question

“How has political participation in Germany changed over the last four decades and what are the key explanatory factors for this?”

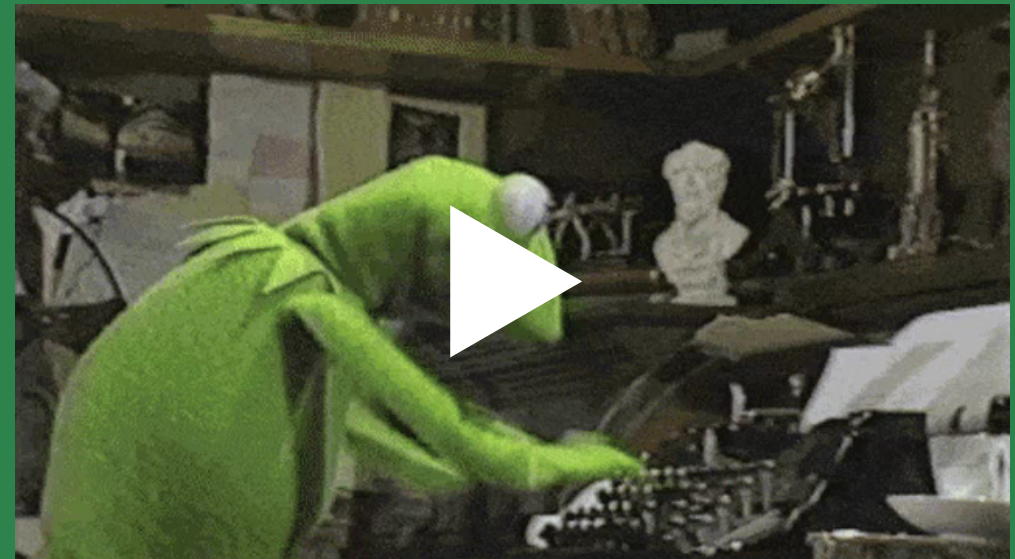
„Wie hat sich politische Partizipation in Deutschland in den letzten vier Jahrzehnten gewandelt und was sind zentrale Erklärungsfaktoren dessen?“

- Remember: questions consist of **factual** knowledge component and **analytical** component

- no Pro/Contra discussion – not enough time
- Here, **political participation** is the key concept (*factual knowledge*)
 - what does it mean? Explain it briefly in your answer
 - Discuss briefly: less party participation; expansion of participation forms (e.g., protests, petitions); emergence of online participation –> more individualised participation, less collective
- Causes for these changes (*analytical knowledge*)
 - secularisation (less religious adherence), expansion in education, change in values, technological innovations (for digital participation) –> all favour more individual participation, less collective

Pointers on research papers

- basics of a good paper:
 - introduction
 - main body
 - conclusion
- golden rules for any paper



Basics of a good paper - introduction

- What?
 - What is the *puzzle* or *research question*?
 - There are two types of questions: **interesting** questions and **researchable** questions – unfortunately, there is quite limited overlap between them...
 - a main challenge in research is to *find a way to transform a big, interesting question into a researchable one* (this is the intricacy of **research design**)
- Why? Theoretical, methodological, and/or practical relevance
- How? Structure of the argument/paper
- About 10% of entire paper

Basics of a good paper - main body

Basics of a good paper - conclusion

- Brief summary of argument (and findings)
- What is it that you are NOT saying and investigating?
- Future research
- Maximum 10% of text

Golden rules for any paper

Summarising and moving forward

- SMs in the round: big course take-aways
- movements of the future: migration-related and climate-related



SMs in the round: big course take-aways

movements are **integral to modern democracies**, and many other systems/societies

movements are **shaped by the context (POS)** in which they emerge → but **movements can reshape context** (if they are lucky and very successful)

even *modestly successful* **movements can change how people understand issues (through framing)** and set the stage for later (more successful) movements

UN Global Compact for Migration (GCM)

UN info video

UN - IOM video

oppositional 'Rebel News' video



Migration-related - Rone and Fielitz (2023)

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- four country cases: **Austria, Belgium, Germany, and Italy** (different governing parties and mobilisation on migration)
 - strong anti-GCM campaigns: Germany (helped by AfD and *Junge Alternative* (Heinze 2024) and movement orgs. like Identitarians), Belgium (*Vlaams Belang* and nationalist youth groups) – **but ultimately unsuccessful; beaten in parliament**
 - anti-GCM campaign unnecessary: Italy (competitive collaboration between *Lega* and *FdI*)
 - complementary anti-GCM campaign: Austria (movement activity supporting ÖVP and FPÖ government decision)
- **is it all down to the strength of parliamentary allies?**

Climate-related - Zhang (2023)

- investigating (informational) diffusion and ‘connective’ action of Germany’s FFF using Twitter data
 - retweeting sequences and the following/follower relationships
- development of digitally networked movements depends on their ability to influence and spread among different networked publics
- right-leaning actors’ attempted to delegitimise the movement; left-leaning actors engaged to condemn leading parties and bring digital politics into the discourse

diffusion mechanisms of information, discourses, and beliefs of digitally networked movements were mainly enabled by... preexisting networks rather than situational spontaneity. However, they varied according to issue salience and were distinguished by the network structures, political positions, ideological lines, and geographical proximities of the involved communities

Final thoughts and further questions

Movements in the future

- intensifying competition of movements and states/targets
- danger of social media companies' self-regulation
- transnationalism of movements (climate movement[s], anti-migration movement[s])

THANK YOU!

- No class next week – good luck on your exam!
- Essays (for those not taking Klausur) due **2026-03-07**
- Thank you for the feedback on course evaluations: **if you have any follow-ups, please write to me or see me during office hours**

Thanks for coming and being great students!

Any questions, concerns, feedback for this class?

Anonymous feedback here: <https://forms.gle/AjHt6fcnwZxkSg4X8>

Alternatively, please send me an email: m.zeller@lmu.de

References

- Heinze, Anna-Sophie. 2024. “Drivers of Radicalisation? The Development and Role of the Far-Right Youth Organisation ‘Young Alternative’ in Germany.” *International Political Science Review*, January, 01925121231221961. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01925121231221961>.
- Rone, Julia, and Maik Fielitz. 2023. “‘Stop the Pact’! The Foreign Policy Impact of the Far-Right Campaigning Against the Global Compact for Migration.” *Geopolitics*, October, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2023.2260314>.
- Zhang, Xixuan. 2023. “Diffusion Dynamics and Digital Movement: The Emergence and Proliferation of the German-speaking #FridaysForFuture Network on Twitter.” *Social Movement Studies*, May, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2023.2211015>.