

Summer Term 2023

## **Direct Democracy**

**Prof. Dr. André Kaiser**

Class Time: Tues 12.00 – 13.30 (except workshop on SAT 1 July, 9.00 – 16.00)

Classroom: Building 211, Room S103

First session: 11 April

### **Course description:**

We will explore empirically the manifold institutions of direct democracy. All of them allow citizens to decide directly on actual policies, however in very different ways. We concentrate on the positive analysis of direct legislation across space and over time and study its effects on political interaction and policy output. Hence, we are not concerned with normative considerations of the pros and cons of direct democracy. We simply start from the assumption that direct democracy is a complementary aggregation mechanism for decision making in modern democracies alongside representative democracy.

### **Logistics:**

Students are expected to:

- attend sessions regularly and hand in two questions on the assigned readings via E-mail on the day before the session takes place until 10:00h am (E-mail: [andre.kaiser@uni-koeln.de](mailto:andre.kaiser@uni-koeln.de)),
- actively contribute to classroom discussions (oral presentations, written questions on assigned readings, group work),
- complete assigned readings according to schedule,
- hand in one research paper of about 15 pages or two research essays of about 7 to 8 pages in length each on 6 September 2023 at the latest (late assignments will be penalized, unless prior arrangements are made). You are free to hand in individual research papers or group research papers.

### **Office Hour:**

Appointments to be arranged via E-mail, André Kaiser ([André.Kaiser@uni-koeln.de](mailto:André.Kaiser@uni-koeln.de)).

### **Readings:**

Maduz, Linda (2010). Direct Democracy. *Living Reviews of Democracy* 2 (<http://democracy.livingreviews.org/index.php/lrd/index>).

### **Course schedule:**

11 April                      **Course Introduction**

R: Lupia, Arthur and John G. Matsusaka (2004) Direct Democracy: New Approaches to Old Questions. *Annual Review of Political Science* 7: 463-82.

25 April                      **Types of Direct Democracy and Variations in Usage Across Space and Over Time**

- R: Setälä, Maija (1999) Referendums in Western Europe – A Wave of Direct Democracy? *Scandinavian Political Studies* 22(4): 327-40.

Morel, Laurence (2018) Types of Referendums, Provisions and Practice at the National Level Worldwide, in: Laurence Morel and Matt Qvortrup (eds): *The Routledge Handbook to Referendums and Direct Democracy*, Abingdon: Routledge, 27-59.

2 May                              **Effects on Voters: Participation and Knowledge**

- R: Marien, Sofie and Anna Kern (2018) The Winner Takes It All: Revisiting the Effect of Direct Democracy on Citizens' Political Support. *Political Behavior* 40:857-882.

Mendelsohn, Matthew and Fred Cutler (2000) The Effect of Referendums on Democratic Citizens: Information, Politicization, Efficacy and Tolerance. *British Journal of Political Science* 30: 685-98.

Smith, Mark A. (2002) Ballot Initiatives and the Democratic Citizen. *Journal of Politics* 64(3): 892-903.

16 May                              **Effects on Political Parties: In the Driver's or in the Back Seat?**

- R: De Vreese, Claes H. (2006). Political parties in dire straits? Consequences of national referendums for political parties. *Party Politics* 12(5): 581-598.

Uleri, Pier Vincenzo (2002) On Referendum Voting in Italy: YES, NO or non-vote? How Italian Parties Learned to Control Referendums. *European Journal of Political Research* 41(6): 863-83.

23 May                              **Effects on Social Movements and Interest Groups**

- R: Kriesi, Hanspeter and Dominique Wisler (1996) Social Movements and Direct Democracy in Switzerland, *European Journal of Political Research* 30: 19-40.

Gerber, Elisabeth R. (1999) *The Populist Paradox. Interest Group Influence and the Promise of Direct Legislation*. Princeton, NJ: University of Princeton Press, chapters 6-7 (pp. 101-36).

6 June                      **The Power of Money**

- R: Bowler, Shaun and Todd Donovan (2000) *Demanding Choices. Opinion, Voting and Direct Democracy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, chapter 8 (pp. 147-63).

20 June                      **Minority Rights**

- R: Frey, Bruno S. and Lorenz Goette (1998) Does the Popular Vote Destroy Civil Rights? *American Journal of Political Science* 42(4): 1343-8.

Gamble, Barbara S. (1997) Putting Civil Rights to a Popular Vote. *American Journal of Political Science* 41(1): 245-69.

Haider-Markel, Donald P., Alana Querze and Kara Lindaman (2007) Lose, Win or Draw? A Reexamination of Direct Democracy and Minority Rights. *Political Research Quarterly* 60 (2): 304-14.

Workshop 1 July        **Does Direct Democracy Make a Political System More Democratic?**

- R: Altman, David (2013). Bringing Direct Democracy Back In: Toward a Three-Dimensional Measure of Democracy. *Democratization* 20(4): 615-641.

**Direct democracy and the welfare state**

- R: Obinger, Herbert (1998) Federalism, Direct Democracy, and Welfare State Development in Switzerland. *Journal of Public Policy* 19(3): 241-63.

**Direct democracy and the tax state**

- R: Feld, Lars P. and John G. Matsusaka (2003) Budget Referendums and Government Spending: Evidence from Swiss Cantons. *Journal of Public Economics* 87: 2703-24.

**Direct democracy and economic performance**

- R: Feld, Lars P. and Marcel R. Savioz (1997) Direct Democracy Matters for Economic Performance: An Empirical Investigation. *Kyklos* 50(4): 507-38.

Optional:

Freitag, Markus and Adrian Vatter (2000) Direkte Demokratie, Konkordanz und Wirtschaftsleistung: Ein Vergleich der Schweizer Kantone. *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Volkswirtschaft und Statistik* 136(4): 579-606.

4 July

**The Brexit Referendum: A Turning Point in the History of  
Direct Democracy?**

R: Bellamy, Richard (2018) Majority Rule, Compromise and the Democratic Legitimacy of Referendums. *Swiss Political Science Review* 24(3): 312–319

Hobolt, Sara B., Thomas J. Leeper and James Tilley (2021) Divided by the Vote: Affective Polarization in the Wake of the Brexit Referendum. *British Journal of Political Science* 51: 1476-1493.