

Comparative Politics of Identity

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Course Description

The relevance of the concept of identity for political science is just proportional to its pervasiveness in political life: from party affiliation and voting to immigration attitudes and ethnic conflict, the phenomena which revolve around contrasting forms of self-identification are hard to quantify.

This course covers issues of identity in politics from a comparative perspective, and with an analytically rigorous approach. We will study the mutual relationship between ethnic, religious, racial, or territorial diversity, and the politico-institutional environment, with a central role being played by the state and the actors controlling it.

Our motivating questions will be, among others:

- How do identities come to be socially constructed or revived through political processes?
- How does the presence of different potential identities shape and constrain the strategies of political actors?
- How does social and cultural heterogeneity affect political outcomes?

The qualifier "comparative" for the course has a specific meaning: the order of weekly discussions will not follow geographic areas, periods of time, regime types, or functional roles of identity. Rather, every week we will address a different conceptual topic from multiple perspectives, bridging foundational contributions and quantitative research at the frontier of modern social science. Due to its comparativist lens and the attention to institutions, the course is intended to be complementary to treatments of identity politics in political behavior and psychology.

Prerequisites

No prerequisites. For students enrolled in the class from the NYU Politics PhD, it is recommended to have taken, or take in parallel, Comparative Politics Core (Developing nations) and Quantitative Political Analysis II (Causal Inference).

The following book is recommended as a methodological background reading: Ashworth, S., Berry, C.R., Bueno de Mesquita, E. (2021), *Theory and Credibility. Integrating theoretical and empirical social science*, Princeton University Press.

Course Objectives

Our main goals for this course are, among others:

- Become familiar with recent research on identity in comparative politics
- Learn how to critically read a scientific paper or book on the topic in light of the extant theoretical debates in the social sciences and the analytical tools currently available to political scientists
- Reflect "scientifically" on the implications of research for challenges of institutional design
- Identify intellectual tension between different contributions and gaps in the literature that can be filled through original research

Course Structure

Class Structure

Weekly readings and group discussion.

Weekly readings

Every week, the class will be assigned 3 to 5 readings, which will be discussed during the session. The readings combine theoretical and empirical work in political science and sister disciplines. During the class meetings, we will discuss the readings in depth, to highlight their theoretical contribution and identify open questions for future research. Although the focus of the class is substantive, part of the discussion will be devoted to methodological aspects of the readings: we will give particular emphasis to the congruence between theoretical statements and empirical analyses, and to the types of data and tools appropriate for addressing given questions.

Assessments

Evaluation for the course is based on weekly discussion memos, a paper report/replication, and a final research proposal. More information on each of these requirements will be given on the first week.

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- **Written memos (20%).** Every week you will write a 1-page memo commenting on the readings. The memos will be uploaded in a shared Google Drive folder and be read by the class before the meeting. In the memos you will comment on the readings in substantive terms, providing elements for the class discussion.
 - **Paper report and replication (30%).** You will select one of the readings for a week of choice, and write a critical report of it, including a replication and/or extension of its main findings using the available replication data, or other data of your knowledge. You may work in groups of 2 for this assignment.
 - **Final paper (50%).** At the end of the course you will write a research proposal for an empirical or theoretical paper. In this final project you should propose a research question, situate it in the existing literature, and formulate testable hypotheses about it. For an empirical project, you should include a description of the data and research design to be used, a discussion of the main challenges to identification and of the substantive meaning of the estimands of interest. For theoretical work, e.g. a formal model, you should discuss the basic features of the environment and the model parameters, and formulate expectations about the main results of the theory. Paper proposals are due before week 14, and will be circulated and discussed in class in the last two sessions.

Required Materials

Journal articles and working papers will be made available every week on the class site (NYU Brightspace). Book chapters are mostly freely accessible in physical or PDF format through NYU Library and will be made available on the class site when they are not.

Schedule

Week 1. Introduction: Politics and identity

- Chandra, K. (2012), *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics*, Oxford University Press. Ch. 1-2
- Fearon, J. D., and Laitin, D. D. (2000). Violence and the social construction of ethnic identity. *International Organization*, 54(4), 845-877.
- Breuilly, J. (1993). *Nationalism and the State*. Manchester University Press. Ch.1

Additional general readings:

- Wimmer, A. (2013). *Ethnic boundary making: Institutions, power, networks*. Oxford University Press.
- Horowitz, D. L. (2000). *Ethnic groups in conflict*, updated edition with a new preface. Univ of California Press.
- Laitin, D. D. (1998). *Identity in formation: The Russian-speaking populations in the near abroad*. Cornell University Press.

Week 2. Cohabitation

- Fearon, J.D. and Laitin, D.D. (1996), Explaining Interethnic Cooperation, *American Political Science Review*, 90:4 pp.715-735
- Jha, S. (2013), Trade, Institutions, and Ethnic Tolerance: Evidence from South Asia, *American Political Science Review*, 107:4 pp. 806-832
- Bazzi, S., Gaduh, A., Rothenberg A.D., Wong, M. (2019), Unity in Diversity? How Inter-group Contact Can Foster Nation Building, *American Economic Review*, 109:11 pp. 3978-4025
- Charnysh, V. (2019), Diversity, Institutions, and Economic Outcomes: Post-WWII Displacement in Poland, *American Political Science Review*, 113:3 pp. 423-441

Additional readings:

- Habyarimana, J., Humphreys, M., Posner, D.N., Weinstein J.M. (2007), Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?, *American Political Science Review*, 101:4 pp. 709-725
- Kukic, L. The Last Yugoslavs: Ethnic Diversity, National Identity, and Civil War, Working paper
- Pardelli, G., and Kustov, A. (forthcoming), When co-ethnicity fails. *World Politics*

Week 3. Territory

- Bazzi, S., and Gudgeon, M. (2021). The political boundaries of ethnic divisions. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 13(1), 235-66.
- Michalopoulos, S., and Papaioannou, E. (2016). The long-run effects of the scramble for Africa. *American Economic Review*, 106(7), 1802-48.
- Müller-Crepon, C. (2020). Building Tribes: How Administrative Units Shaped Ethnic Groups in Africa. *Working paper*
- McNamee, L., and Zhang, A. (2019). Demographic engineering and international conflict: Evidence from China and the Former USSR. *International Organization*, 73(2), 291-327.

Additional readings:

- Cederman, L. E., Rügger, S., and Schvitz, G. (2022). Redemption through Rebellion: Border Change, Lost Unity, and Nationalist Conflict. *American Journal of Political Science*, 66(1), 24-42.
- Bulutgil, H. Z. (2016). *The roots of ethnic cleansing in Europe*. Cambridge University Press. Ch.1

Week 4. Political competition

- Posner, D. N. (2005). *Institutions and ethnic politics in Africa*. Cambridge University Press. Ch. 5
- Eifert, B., Miguel, E., and Posner, D. N. (2010). Political competition and ethnic identification in Africa. *American Journal of Political Science*, 54(2), 494-510.
- Egan, P. J. (2020). Identity as dependent variable: How Americans shift their identities to align with their politics. *American Journal of Political Science*, 64(3), 699-716.
- Huber, J. D., and Suryanarayan, P. (2016). Ethnic inequality and the ethnification of political parties: Evidence from India. *World Politics*, 68(1), 149-188.

Additional readings:

- Posner, D. N. (2004). The political salience of cultural difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and adversaries in Malawi. *American Political Science Review*, 98(4), 529-545.
- Green, E. (2021). The politics of ethnic identity in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Comparative Political Studies*, 54(7), 1197-1226.
- Ichino, N., and Nathan, N. L. (2013). Crossing the line: Local ethnic geography and voting in Ghana. *American Political Science Review*, 107(2), 344-361.
- Huber, J. D. (2017). *Exclusion by elections: inequality, ethnic identity, and democracy*. Cambridge University Press.

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- Burgess, R., Jedwab, R., Miguel, E., Morjaria, A., and Padró i Miquel, G. (2015). The value of democracy: evidence from road building in Kenya. *American Economic Review*, 105(6), 1817-51.
 - Chandra, K. (2007). *Why ethnic parties succeed: Patronage and ethnic head counts in India*. Cambridge University Press.

Week 5. State capacity I

- Johnson, N. D., and Koyama, M. (2019). *Persecution & toleration: The long road to religious freedom*. Cambridge University Press. Ch.1 and 9
- Lieberman, E. S., and Singh, P. (2017). Census enumeration and group conflict: A global analysis of the consequences of counting. *World Politics*, 69(1), 1-53.
- Green, E. (2020). Ethnicity, national identity and the state: evidence from sub-Saharan Africa. *British Journal of Political Science*, 50(2), 757-779.
- Mor, M. (forthcoming), Government policies, new voter coalitions, and the emergence of ethnic dimension in party systems. *World Politics*

Additional readings:

- Wimmer, A. (2002). *Nationalist exclusion and ethnic conflict: Shadows of modernity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mazumder, S. (2019). Becoming White: How Military Service Turned Immigrants into Americans. *Working paper*
- Miguel, E. (2004). Tribe or nation? Nation building and public goods in Kenya versus Tanzania. *World Politics*, 56(3), 327-362.
- Cáceres-Delpiano, J., De Moragas, A. I., Facchini, G., and González, I. (2021). Intergroup contact and nation building: Evidence from military service in Spain. *Journal of Public Economics*, 201, 104477.
- Breuilly, J. (1993). *Nationalism and the State*. Manchester University Press. Ch. 3
- Cassan, G. (2015). Identity-based policies and identity manipulation: Evidence from colonial Punjab. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 7(4), 103-31.

Week 6. State Capacity II

- Wilfahrt, M. (2021). *Precolonial Legacies in Postcolonial Politics: Representation and Redistribution in Decentralized West Africa*. Cambridge University Press. Ch.1
- Michalopoulos, S., and Papaioannou, E. (2013). Pre-colonial ethnic institutions and contemporary African development. *Econometrica*, 81(1), 113-152.
- Charnysh, V. (2020). Explaining outgroup bias in weak states: religion and legibility in the 1891–92 Russian famine. *Working paper*

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- Suryanarayan, P., and White, S. (2021). Slavery, reconstruction, and bureaucratic capacity in the American south. *American Political Science Review*, 115(2), 568-584.
 - Qian, N., and Tabellini, M. (2021). Discrimination and State Capacity: Evidence from WWII US Army Enlistment. *Working paper*.

Additional readings:

- Alesina, A., Baqir, R., and Easterly, W. (1999). Public goods and ethnic divisions. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 114(4), 1243-1284.
- Kustov, A., and Pardelli, G. (2018). Ethnoracial Homogeneity and Public Outcomes: The (Non)effects of Diversity. *American Political Science Review*, 112(4), 1096-1103
- Lecce, G., and Ogliari, L. (2019). Institutional transplant and cultural proximity: evidence from nineteenth-century Prussia. *The Journal of Economic History*, 79(4), 1060-1093.
- Suryanarayan, P. (2021). Status politics hollows out the state: Evidence from Colonial India. *Working paper*

Week 7. Education

- Clots-Figueras, I., and Masella, P. (2013). Education, language and identity. *The Economic Journal*, 123(570), F332-F357.
- Fouka, V. (2020). Backlash: The unintended effects of language prohibition in US schools after World War I. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 87(1), 204-239.
- Bozcaga, T., Cansunar, A. (2021), The Education Dilemma: Favoring the In-Group or Assimilating the Out-Group?, *Working paper*

Additional readings:

- Weber, E. (1976). *Peasants into Frenchmen: the modernization of rural France, 1870-1914*. Stanford University Press. Ch.18
- Aspachs-Bracons, O., Clots-Figueras, I., Costa-Font, J., and Masella, P. (2008). Compulsory language educational policies and identity formation. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 6(2-3), 434-444.
- Darden, K., and Mylonas, H. (2016). Threats to territorial integrity, national mass schooling, and linguistic commonality. *Comparative Political Studies*, 49(11), 1446-1479.

Week 8. Discrimination

- Fouka, V. (2019), How Do Immigrants Respond to Discrimination? The Case of Germans in the US During World War I, *American Political Science Review*, 113 (2) pp.405–422
- Abdelgadir, A., Fouka, V. (2020), Political Secularism and Muslim Integration in the West: Assessing the Effects of the French Headscarf Ban, *American Political Science Review* 114(3) pp.707–723

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- Belmonte, A., Di Lillo, A. (2021) Backlash against Affirmative Action: Evidence from the South Tyrolean Package, *European Economic Review*, 137

Additional readings:

- McMurry, N. (2021). From Recognition to Integration: Indigenous Autonomy, State Authority, and National Identity in the Philippines. *American Political Science Review*, 1-17.
- Dahis, R., Nix, E., and Qian, N. (2019). Choosing racial identity in the United States, 1880-1940. *Working paper*
- Meyersson, E. (2014), Islamic Rule and the Empowerment of the Poor and Pious, *Econometrica*, 82(1) pp.229-269

Week 9. Repression I

- Johnson, N. D., and Koyama, M. (2019). *Persecution & toleration: The long road to religious freedom*. Cambridge University Press. Ch. 3, 4, and 5
- Rozenas, A. (2020), A Theory of Demographically Targeted Repression, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 64(7-8) pp. 1254-127
- Grosfeld, I., Sakalli, S. O., and Zhuravskaya, E. (2020). Middleman minorities and ethnic violence: anti-Jewish pogroms in the Russian empire. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 87(1), 289-342.

Additional readings:

- Mylonas, H. (2013). *The politics of nation-building: Making co-nationals, refugees, and minorities*. Cambridge University Press. Ch.2

Week 10. Repression II

- Lupu, N., Peisakhin L., (2017), The Legacy of Political Violence across Generations, *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(4) pp. 836-851
- Haffert, L. (2020). The Long-Term Effects of Oppression: Prussia, Political Catholicism, and the Alternative für Deutschland. *American Political Science Review*, 1-20.
- Dehdari, S., Gehring, K. (forthcoming), The origins of Common Identity: Evidence from Alsace-Lorraine, *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*

Additional readings:

- Blaydes, L. (2018), *State of Repression*, Princeton University Press. Ch. 9
- Rozenas, A., Schutte, S., Zhukov. Y. (2017), The Political Legacy of Violence: The Long-Term Impact of Stalin's Repression in Ukraine, *Journal of Politics*, 79(4) pp.1147-1161

Week 11. Information

- Blouin, A. and Mukand, S. W. (2019), Erasing Ethnicity? Propaganda, Nation Building, and Identity in Rwanda, *Journal of Political Economy*, 127:3, pp. 1008-1062
- Esposito, E., Rotesi, T., Saia, A. and Thoenig, M. (2021), Reconciliation Narratives: The Birth of a Nation after the US Civil War, *Working paper*
- Russo, G. (2021), Media and Assimilation: Evidence from the Golden Age of Radio, *Working paper*

Additional readings:

- Anderson, B. (2006 [1983]), *Imagined Communities*, Verso Books. Ch. 2-3.
- Lemoli, G. (2022), Ethnic Media, Repression and the Mobilization of Ethnic Identity, *Working paper*

Week 12. Historical legacies

- Pengl, Y. I., Roessler, P., and Rueda, V. (2022). Cash Crops, Print Technologies, and the Politicization of Ethnicity in Africa. *American Political Science Review*, 116(1), 181-199.
- Ali, M., Fjeldstad, O. H., Jiang, B., and Shifa, A. B. (2019). Colonial legacy, state-building and the salience of ethnicity in sub-Saharan Africa. *The Economic Journal*, 129(619), 1048-1081.
- Ochsner, C., and Roesel, F. (2017). Activated history-the case of the Turkish sieges of Vienna. *Working paper*
- Rozenas, A., and Zhukov, Y. M. (2019). Mass repression and political loyalty: Evidence from Stalin's 'terror by hunger'. *American Political Science Review*, 113(2), 569-583.

Additional readings:

- Laitin, D. (1986), *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Religious Change among the Yoruba*, University of Chicago Press. Ch.6-7
- Robinson, A. L. (2014). National versus ethnic identification in Africa: Modernization, colonial legacy, and the origins of territorial nationalism. *World Politics*, 66(4), 709-746.
- McNamee, L. (2019). Indirect colonial rule and the salience of ethnicity. *World Development*, 122, 142-156.
- Besley, T., and Reynal-Querol, M. (2014). The legacy of historical conflict: Evidence from Africa. *American Political Science Review*, 108(2), 319-336.
- Fouka, V., and Voth, H. J. (2021). Collective Remembrance and Private Choice: German-Greek Conflict and Behavior in Times of Crisis. *Working paper*

Week 13. Immigration

- Hangartner, D., Dinas, E., Marbach, M., Matakos, K., and Xefteris, D. (2019). Does exposure to the refugee crisis make natives more hostile?. *American Political Science Review*, 113(2), 442-455.
- Fouka, V., Mazumder, S., and Tabellini, M. (forthcoming). From immigrants to Americans: Race and assimilation during the Great Migration. *Review of Economic Studies*
- Shertzer, A. (2016). Immigrant group size and political mobilization: Evidence from European migration to the United States. *Journal of Public Economics*, 139, 1-12.
- Gagliarducci, S., and Tabellini, M. (2021). Faith and assimilation: Italian immigrants in the US. *Working paper*

Additional readings:

- Fouka, V., and Tabellini, M. (2021). Changing In-Group Boundaries: The Effect of Immigration on Race Relations in the United States. *American Political Science Review*, 1-17.
- Charnysh, V., and Peisakhin, L. (2022). The Role of Communities in the Transmission of Political Values: Evidence from Forced Population Transfers. *British Journal of Political Science*, 52(1), 238-258.

Weeks 14-15. Discussion of research proposals