What is political behaviour?

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L2929 Political behaviour

School of Government & Public Policy

University of Strathclyde

Friday 23 September 2022

Agenda

- Introductions
  - Name, what you're studying, why you chose this class, and your earliest political memory
- Overview of classes
  - Readings
- Assessments
- Contacts
- What is political behaviour?
- Discussion of readings

Overview of classes

Political Behaviour	
Week 1 (23.09.2022)	Introduction: What is political behaviour?
Week 2 (29.09.2022)	Approaches: Rational choice
Week 3 (06.10.2022)	Approaches: Psychological
Week 4 (13.10.2022)	Approaches: Sociological
Week 5 (20.10.2022)	Methods: Qualitative, quantitative and experimental
Week 6 (27.10.2022)	Behaviour: Voting
Week 7 (03.11.2022)	Behaviour: The role of knowledge, beliefs and opinions
Week 8 (10.11.2022)	Behaviour: Online engagement
Week 9 (17.11.2022)	Behaviour: Organisational involvement
Week 10 (24.11.2022)	Behaviour: Protest and direct action
Week 11 (01.12.2022)	Elites and masses: Different or similar?

Assessments

Assessment	Words	Percentage	Deadlines
Essay	2,000	30%	12:00 on 21.10.2022
Draft blog post	1,000	5%	12:00 on 11.11.2022
Blog response	500	10%	12:00 on 18.11.2022
Final blog post	1,000	20%	12:00 on 02.12.2022
Reading response	1,000	20%	Any week but by 12:00 on 02.12.2022 at the latest
Participation	N/A.	15%	Throughout

Contacts

- Everything is on Myplace

- Use the Q&A forum
  - With your permission, I will post my answers to your questions here

- My contact details:
  - Email: joe.greenwood-hau@strath.ac.uk
  - Office: McCance room 431
  - Office hours: Thursdays, 14:00 – 15:00
  - Working hours: Monday to Friday, 09:00 to 18:00

- Alexander Moir's contact details:
  - Email: a.moir@strath.ac.uk
  - Office: McCance room 439

What is political behaviour?

- Examples of political behaviour?
- Can we group them?
- What are the boundaries of political behaviour (if any)?

Voting

- National elections
- State or local elections
- Supra-national elections
- National referendums
- State or local referendums
- Within membership organisations
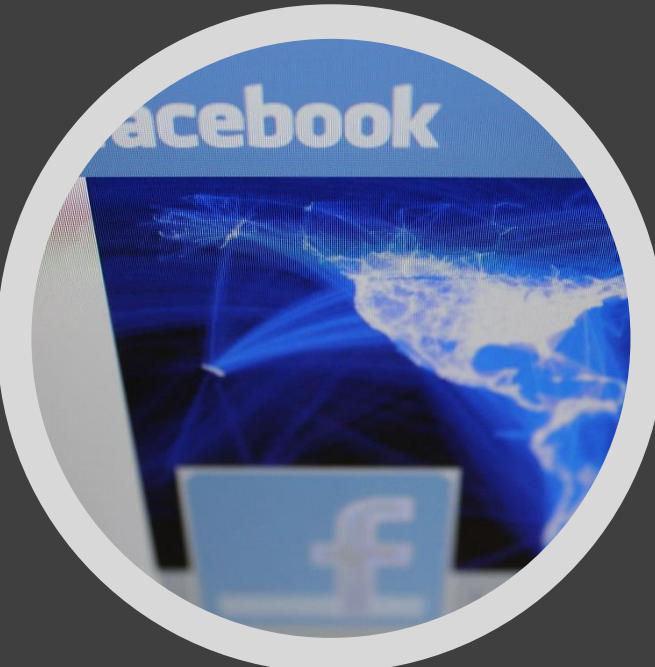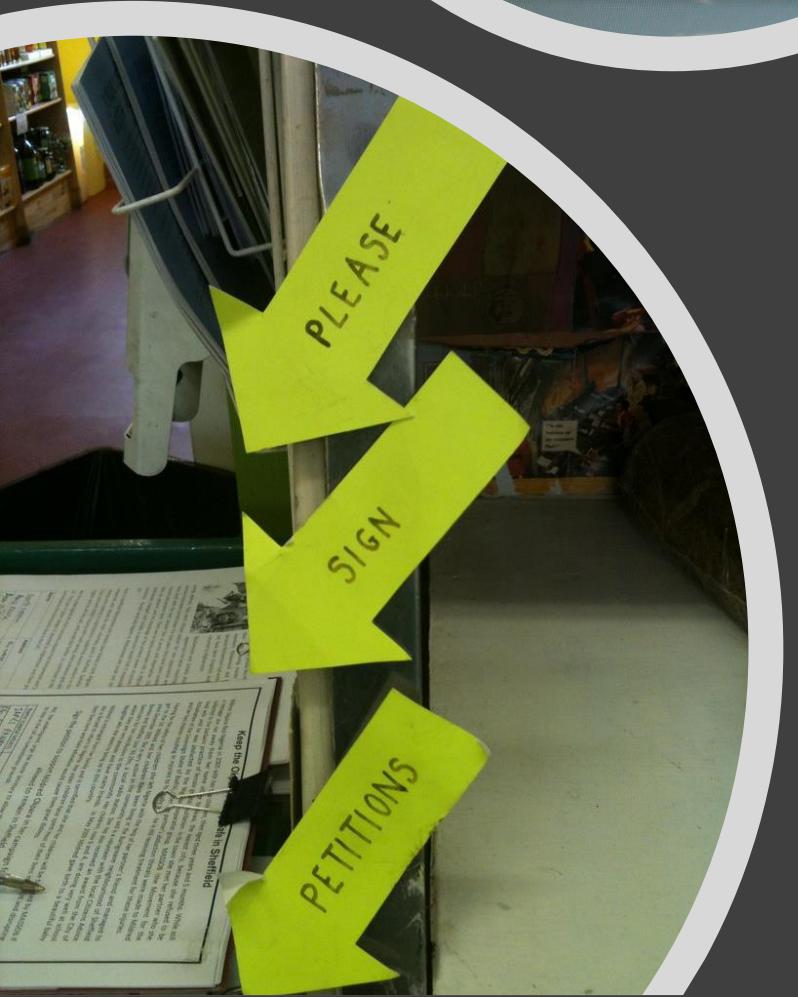
Petitions & Online Action

- In the street
- At events
- Government
- Organisations

- Sharing posts or actions
- Commenting on content
- Liking or joining groups
- Following the news

Contacting

- Meeting ministers
- Meeting national representatives
- Meeting state or local representatives
- Responding to consultations
- Writing to representatives
- Writing to the media
- Writing to official bodies
- Writing to companies

Meetings

- Public
- Local branches
- General meetings

- Committees
- Conferences
- Online

Organisational involvement

- Political parties

- Trade unions

- Students' unions

- Campaigning organisations

- Charities

- Tenants' and residents' associations

- Neighbourhood watch associations

Protest & Direct Action

- Stalls
- Demonstrations
- Marches
- Rallies
- Civil disobedience

- Sit-ins
- Lock-ons
- Blockades
- Riots

Definitions and Typologies

- Definitions:
  - 'activity that is intended to or has the consequence of affecting, either directly or indirectly, government action.' (Verba et al., 1995)
  - Any attempt by an individual, in interaction with an institution or organisation, to change or conserve an element of society at some level. (Me, now)

- Typologies:
  - Organised and 'not as well' organised (Kaufman and Pichler, 2010)
  - Levels of influence, initiative, conflict, and scope of outcome (Leighley, 1995)
  - Conventional and unconventional (Spannring et al., 2008; Milbrath & Goel, 1977)
  - Individual, contacting and collective (Goerres, 2009; Pattie et al., 2004)

Frequency of Participation
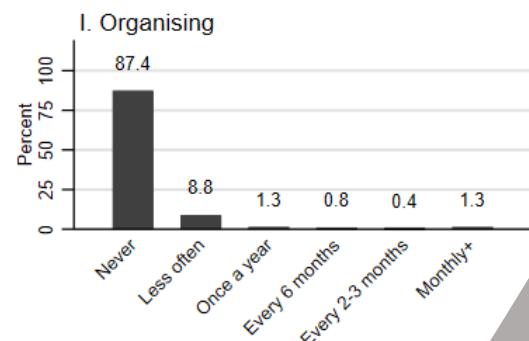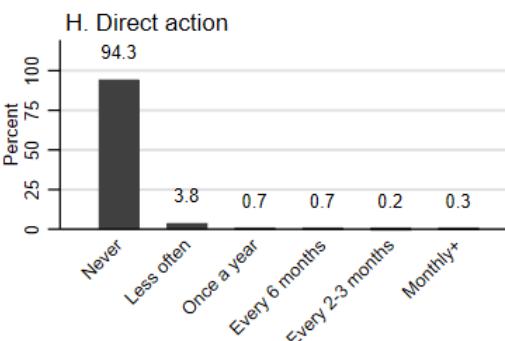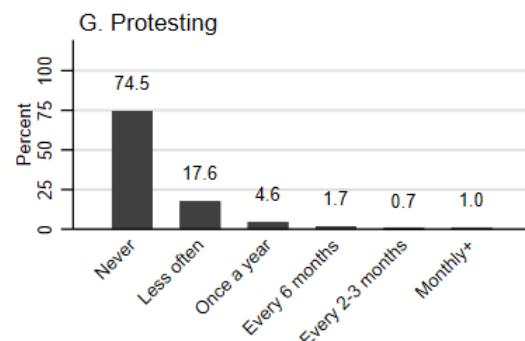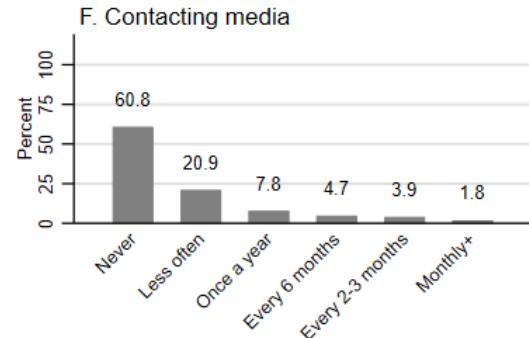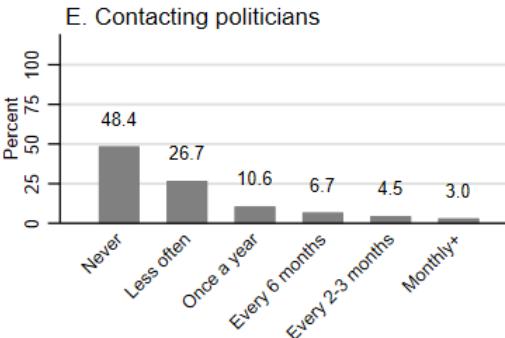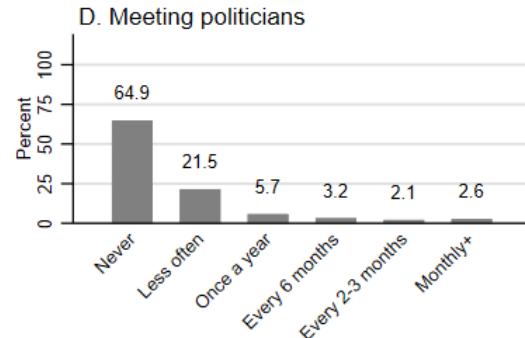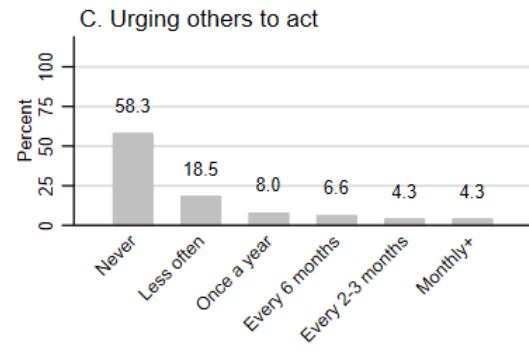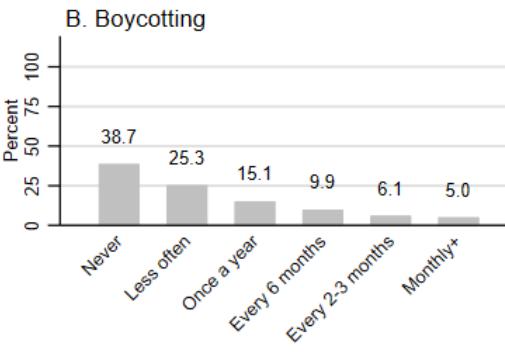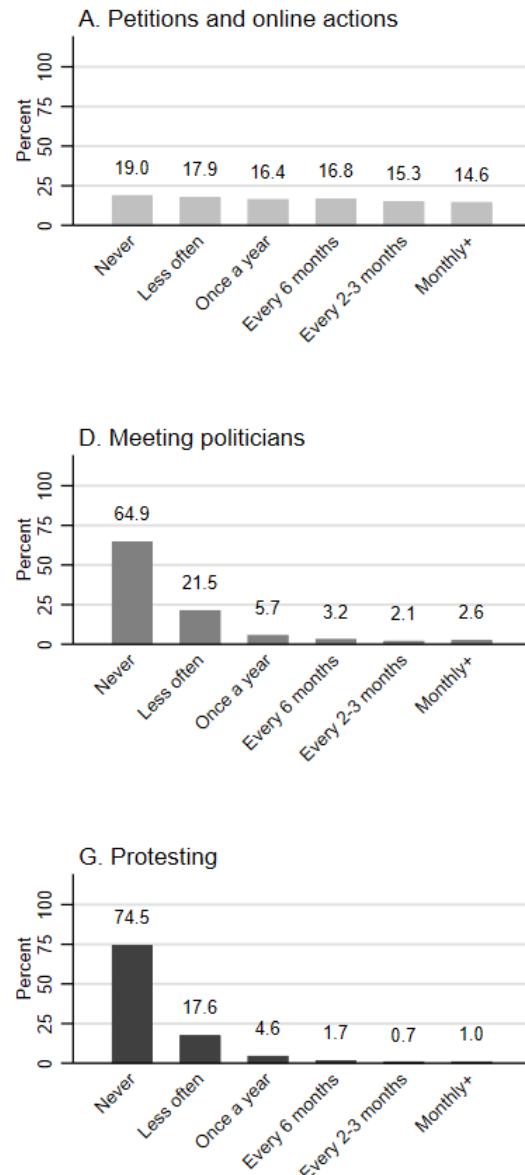
Questions

- Is my definition too broad?

- Does running this cricket club count? →

- What is your definition?

Essential reading overview

Dalton and Klingemann identify and consider six key considerations in contemporary research on political behaviour: the sophistication of mass publics, modernization processes, political values, voting choice, political participation, and representation.

van Deth argues that we should move beyond nominal definitions of political participation. He proposes a decision-tree approach that can identify a minimalist definition of political participation (type I), targeted definitions of political participation (types II and III), and a motivational definition of political participation (type IV).

Group discussion

- In a random order, each group chooses two questions from the handout, which is available via Myplace (L2929 > Week 1 – Introduction: What is political behaviour?)

- Each group discusses their questions and summarises the discussion on padlet, including any uncertainties or questions about the ideas, concepts or arguments:
    - https://padlet.com/joegreenwoodhau/L2929

- At least one group member should be prepared to feed back