

Abstracts

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Caught between personal characteristics, constituency interests and party line: Determinants of the legislative behaviour of Bundestag members in the debate on the regulation of pre-implantation genetic diagnosis

Most theoretical and empirical accounts focus on the policy preferences of political actors and institutional constraints when explaining the patterns of legislative decision-making in parliamentary democracies. In doing so, incentives of MPs originating from their personal characteristics and experiences which motivate them to take a particular position are often ignored. The latter can, however, play an important role when it comes to parliamentary votes on issues related to ethical or religious aspects. In this paper, we argue that personal traits like the religious denomination play a decisive role for the behaviour of MPs in legislative decision-making processes on issues related to moral policy. We select the German Bundestag as an example for generally highly disciplined MPs and a high degree of parliamentary party unity. Our analyses of the parliamentary debate and votes on the regulation of pre-implantation genetic diagnosis show that the legislative behaviour of MPs is not only influenced by partisan issues and the preferences of the MPs respective constituency, but also by MPs' personal traits such as their religious denomination, gender and parental status.

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Innovations in Rolling-Cross-Section Design New Approaches to Analyze Voting Behavior

By conducting our Ipsos Democracy Pulse we collected constant RCS-data so that not only all respondents but also the respondents for each day constitute random samples of the population. From this it follows that a sufficient number of hard-to-reach persons are included in the sample. Furthermore, the combination of landline and mobile phone samples increases the cardinality of the sample space. This results in a higher degree of representativeness and a significantly better sampling quality. The structural equality of the RCS-design can be precisely quantified with an internal and external RCS-efficiency.

Dominic Heinz

Institutional Reform of Public Broadcasting Funding despite of Joint-Decision-Making

Public broadcasting has a particular institutional structure in Germany. This is illustrated for instance by such institutions are a special commission for determining the financial needs of public broadcasting and the broadcasting commission of the Länder prime ministers. This institutional structure assures the independence of public broadcasting from markets and politics. For Länder governments this institutional structure consists of a functional compulsory negotiation system. The concept of joint-decision-making argues that the requirement to find unanimous decisions stimulates incremental changes instead of institutional reforms. Nevertheless, since January 1st 2013 public broadcasting funding experienced an institutional reform. A device-dependent fee was replaced by a device independent, flat fee per household or work place. Reasons for the reform lay in the negotiation process. Among Länder a veil of ignorance, a segmented decision-making process and a combination of positive and negative coordination resulted in the institutional reform.