Abstracts

Thomas Milic

Do Parties Control the People?
Parties and Information Processing of Party Followers in Swiss Referendums

Cognitive psychology differentiates between the systematic and the heuristic type of information processing. Research on Swiss referendums has demonstrated that cognitively demanding heuristics are rarely used. Even party slogans are hardly ever considered in making voting decisions – and only a fraction of the voting populace even knows them. However, that does not mean that Swiss voters systematically process political information. Empirical research shows that in spite of their lack of knowledge of party slogans party followers routinely vote in accordance with them. On the basis of an analysis of two similar referendums the article discusses explanations for this phenomenon. Systematic reception of arguments often depends on heuristics such as party support whereas systematic processing of content often takes place under the guidance of a preferred party.

Steffen Kailitz

On the Typology of Government Systems
An Answer to Frank Decker's Reply

In issue 2/09 Frank Decker replied to my empirically orientied article on party unity in parliamentarism and presidentialism in issue 3/08 of ZPol. His criticism of my typology suffers from a lack of familiarity with possible types of typology formation, particularly the characteristics of heuristic and polythetic typologies. Decker's critique is inherently inconsistent: He begins by dogmatically arguing in favor of the dichotomy of presidentialism and parliamentarism but goes on to suggest a typology of his own, in which he creates two mixed types – quasi-presidential and quasi-parliamentary.

Sebastian Jäckle/Rafael Bauschke

The Problem Remains
An Answer to Martin Brusis' Reply on Sustainable Governance Indicators

In his reply to our article on "Is measuring reform capacity possible? A Critical Appraisal of the Sustainable Governance Indicators" Martin Brusis discusses a number of reasons for the design of the Sustainable Governance Indicators (SDI). We do not share some of his arguments and believe that they do not properly address the critical points which we raised in our article. This short answer to his reply is intended to clarify our point of view.

Markus Kaim

Climate Change and Conflict?
Canada's Security Policy Adaption in the Arctic

It remains a pending question to what extent climate change and global warming increase the risk of violent conflict. This paper seeks to show the impact of climate change on the foreign policy of affected states by reviewing Canada's policy in the Arctic region. Lured by the opening of previously frozen sea routes and, potentially, an improved access to the area's natural resources, Arctic states have voiced competing claims. Consistent with its foreign policy tradition Canada, too, has recently pursued a policy of Arctic sovereignty. This, however, does not imply that the Arctic is on the road to conflict: Canada has sought to use international law to solve most conflicts. Domestically, Canada's native population successfully pushed policies of sustainable development and livelihoods. Existing patterns of cooperation in the Arctic have a positive effect on international conflict resolution.