

Abstracts

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Problems of evaluative democracy research

Measuring the democratic quality of political systems has to cope with the double challenge of specifying a convincing normative concept of democracy against the background of normative pluralism as well as adequately applying such a conception when research questions, objects of research etc. vary. The coherentist methodological framework that we employ to discuss the first challenge suggests a second-order conception of democracy that could allow empirical research to bridge the pluralism of existing conceptions or at least to identify and acknowledge normative trade-offs were they cannot be overcome. With regard to the second challenge, we address those issues, which arise during the application of democracy concepts in empirical research and which differ from typical problems of operationalization in that they follow from the concept's inherent normativity.

Frieder Wolf

On the Representation of Civil Society in the German *Länders*' Hardship Case Committees: Scope, Determinants, Consequences

In 2004, the red-green-coalition governments immigration law gave the *länder* the opportunity to set up hardship case committees. These committees may ask the respective ministry of the interior to grant persons subject to pending extradition a residence permit for humanitarian reasons. All *länder* have by now installed such committees, and in fifteen of the sixteen cases non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are represented in these bodies.

This paper describes the considerable scope this representation of civil society in the hardship committees exhibits, scrutinizes its determinants, and analyzes its consequences. Partisan differences are found to be the main cause for the variation in committee cast. Among the consequences, the widely differing quotas of cases heard by the committees, cases commended to the ministries for approval, and cases finally are traced back to their more idiosyncratic roots, and problems of identity and legitimacy on the part of the NGOs involved are looked at. The paper concludes with some suggestions for future practice.

Eike-Christian Hornig

Never mind a public vote? Comparing the gap between party elites and voters in the context of EU- and Non-EU-Referenda in Western Europe

The article analyses the relationship between political parties and direct democracy by testing the hypothesis of a gap between political elites and voters in the process of European Integration, as prevalent in the respective literature. Referring to the concept of the partyiness of direct democracy the indicator for the gap is realized as the coherence of positions in the representative arena with referendum results measured as partyiness. Accordingly, the partyiness of 31 EU and 133 Non-EU-votes is calculated by drawing on an extensive original data set of party positions and standard vote and election results from various countries. This first large scale comparison of both referenda groups reveals the partyiness of EU-votes to range about 7% of the electorate lower than the partyiness of Non-EU-Votes. The integration of additional independent variables into the analysis further specifies the nature of this gap.